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January / February 2016
Issue 364

jazz
& **blues** report

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PDX JAZZ FESTIVAL



Portland, Oregon
February 18-28

Celebrating Coltrane at 90

jazz & blues report

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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

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"Buffalonious"

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

BIAMP® PDX JAZZ FESTIVAL

Portland, Oregon • February 18-28
Celebrating Coltrane at 90



Charles Lloyd (Photo: D. Darr)

Headliners Ravi Coltrane, Charles Lloyd, Dianne Reeves
Compliment Tributes to Alice Coltrane, Elvin Jones,
Freddie Hubbard, Wes Montgomery, Joni Mitchell

Spanish Harlem Orchestra, Sonny Fortune, Sullivan Fortner to Open
Plus Rare Performances by Reggie Workman, Gary Bartz,
Gary Peacock, Chano Domínguez, Jimmy Cobb

Special Double Bills: Kenny Barron and Pat Martino
Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band and Alicia Olatuja

John Scofield & Joe Lovano Quartet
Set For Historic Reunion Festival Finale

The 13th Annual Biamp PDX Jazz Festival is set to commence Thursday, February 18 through Sunday, February 28 with 30 featured concerts at venues throughout the Portland metro region.

This year's 11-day celebration will also boast the second annual Jazz Forward Competition, a high school competition drawing students throughout the western region. In partnership with Portland State University, the JFC was created to establish a scholarship program in the tradition of other prestigious regional events held in Reno, Nevada; Monterey, California and Moscow, Idaho. Finalists will compete in seven categories (two college level solo categories have been added) and the winners will receive main stage exposure.

The thematic centerpiece performances are two For Portland Only concerts featuring special guest Ravi Coltrane in celebration of his father's 90th birthday and mother's influence and artistry. Friday, February 26, The Africa



Ravi Coltrane (Photo: Deborah Feingold)

Brass Ensemble, under the direction of Portland Jazz Master Charles Gray, will re-imagine the five singular pieces from John Coltrane's debut *Impulse!* sessions. Anchoring this performance is Philadelphia pianist and McCoy Tyner inspired, Orrin Evans and his esteemed rhythm mates. On Saturday, February 27, Ravi will pay tribute to his revered mother, Alice Coltrane, in a highly anticipated program titled, *Universal Consciousness*, featuring Reggie Workman (a prominent collaborator with John and Alice Coltrane), pianist Geri Allen (she and Alice are both Detroit natives), harpist Brandee Younger and drummer Andrew Cyrille.

Coltrane's mastery will be reflected through legacy performances in special groupings through tribute projects: Gary Bartz (*Coltrane Rules*) and Javon Jackson/Jimmy Cobb (*We FOUR*); *Olé Coltrane* featuring the Bobby Torres Ensemble with special guest Azar Lawrence, the West Coast debut of Reggie Workman's *RW WORKz*, and a week-long residency of nightly Coltrane tributes from top Portland performers.

Coltrane will also be explored through his association with Elvin Jones around a seminal project titled *Puttin' It Together*, featuring Jones' celebrated sidemen Sonny Fortune and Azar Lawrence, led by Portland icon Alan Jones (no relation). Fortune, a Philadelphia native, will make his Portland debut as a leader on the Festival's opening night at Jimmy Mak's. Coltrane's stellar collaborations with guitarist Kenny Burrell and lesser known work with Wes Montgomery will be honored in two programs: *Freight Trane* featuring Dan Balmer under the direction of Tony Pacini and *West Coast Blues*, under the leadership of Portland drummer Mel Brown with special guest guitarist and former *Impulse!* recording artist Henry Johnson. The Festival will also pay homage to the historic Saxophone Summit - which originally featured

Michael Brecker, Joe Lovano, and David Liebman and later Ravi Coltrane. Recast For Portland Only as the Saxophone Summit Supreme, the Orrin Evans Trio will be joined by JD Allen, Jimmy Greene and Devin Phillips. Allen will also collaborate on another program with Evans' Trio billed as The Classic Quartet.

States Executive Artistic Director, Don Lucoff, "This will be the first themed Festival since 2011. I can't think of a more fitting figure than John Coltrane, who transcends jazz music and serves as a guiding influence for so many human beings in their daily lives. Through the ensuing generations, Coltrane has served as a cultural touchstone, and it's an honor to have his son, Ravi Coltrane represent his cherished legacy, and pay loving tribute to his mom, Alice Coltrane."

"We are presenting music for the first time during the Festival at Revolution Hall, Alberta Abbey and Al's Den. We look forward to nine exciting shows at Jimmy Mak's, including the anticipated return of Portlander Nicole Glover, our popular PDX Piano Perspectives series including Chano Domínguez, Brandee Younger, David Goldblatt, Aaron Goldberg and the American Pianist's Association's 2015 Cole Porter Fellow - Sullivan Fortner. Six shows at the Newmark and three at the Winningstad Theatres, complimented by free Jazz Conversations, music in the Art Bar Atrium of P5, and



Dianne Reeves (Photo: Jerris Madison)



Alicia Olatuja (Photo: Courtesy of Alicia Olatuja)

various hotels and restaurants throughout the downtown corridor," concludes Lucoff.

The BIAMP PDX Jazz Festival was co-founded in 2004 with Travel Portland to establish a cultural tourism initiative in the metro Portland area, and to celebrate Black History Month through education and outreach programming.

For more information, and to purchase tickets, visit online at www.pdxjazz.com

New England Conservatory's Jazz Lab

**One-Week Intensive Jazz Program
for Students Ages 14–18**

Sunday, June 26 – Friday, July 1, 2016

**Faculty Includes Ken Schaphorst, Ran Blake,
Dominique Eade, Rakalam Bob Moses,
Allan Chase and more**

BOSTON – Students ages 14–18 are invited to spend a week in the city eating and breathing jazz with some of the best musicians in the country and make friendships that will last a lifetime at New England Conservatory's *Jazz Lab*. It's a one-week intensive program for students from throughout the United States and abroad. Instrumentalists and vocalists are welcome, as are small ensembles. No pre-audition is required. The program takes place Sunday, June 26 – Friday, July 1, 2016. Both day and overnight students are welcome.

During *Jazz Lab* students surround themselves with like-minded musicians and take their jazz training to the next level. Unlike many other summer jazz programs, NEC's Jazz Lab offers both an intimate setting for learning com-

bined with the rich urban landscape of Boston. Students work with NEC's premier jazz faculty and participate in a curriculum full of improvisation, small group training, jam sessions, entrepreneurial workshops and college audition prep.

Jazz lab faculty include NEC Jazz Studies Department Chair Ken Schaphorst, pianist David Zoffer, bassist Rick McLaughlin and trombonist/Jazz Lab Artistic Director Tim Lienhard. Special guest artists include the legendary pianist Ran Blake, renowned vocalist Dominique Eade, percussionist Rakalam Bob Moses and saxophonist Allan Chase.

In addition to daily theory/improvisation classes, small ensemble coaching, and one on one instruction, *Jazz Lab* will feature seminars in entrepreneurship and training for careers in music. NEC jazz alumni talk about what it takes to promote music, produce concerts, build a private teaching studio and find success as a 21st century jazz musician. Faculty will also instruct students on applying to conservatories, schools of music and universities; what to look for in potential colleges and techniques for a successful audition.

Tuition is \$895, which includes all classes, nightly faculty concerts, jam sessions, one private lesson with faculty, t-shirt, lunch and dinner daily (dietary needs are accommodated). Overnight students pay an additional \$495 for five nights' housing, including daily breakfast. For more information about or to register for this dynamic program, visit <http://necmusic.edu/jazz-lab>. Questions? Contact: jazzlab@necmusic.edu.

NEC's Jazz Studies Department was the first fully accredited jazz studies program at a music conservatory. The brainchild of Gunther Schuller, who moved quickly to incorporate jazz into the curriculum when he became President of the Conservatory in 1967, the Jazz Studies faculty has included six MacArthur "genius" grant recipients (three currently teaching) and four NEA Jazz Masters, and alumni that reads like a who's who of jazz. Now in its 45th year, the program has spawned numerous Grammy winning composers and performers. As Mike West writes in *JazzTimes*: "*NEC's jazz studies department is among the most acclaimed and successful in the world; so says the roster of visionary artists that have comprised both its faculty and alumni.*" The program currently has 95 students; 48 undergraduate and 47 graduate students from 13 countries.

For more information: <http://necmusic.edu/jazz-lab>

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CHARLIE PARKER'S YARDBIRD

Opera Philadelphia at The Apollo Theater

**Opera Philadelphia and the Apollo Theater partner to present
New York Premiere of Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD
starring Lawrence Brownlee, April 1 and 3**

PHILADELPHIA - The Apollo Theater and Opera Philadelphia have announced that Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD will have its New York premiere in a co-production between the two institutions, April 1 and 3, 2016. The engagement marks the first time opera will be performed on the Apollo Theater stage, and the first time Opera Philadelphia will play New York.

Set in the famed Birdland jazz club on March 12, 1955, the day Charlie Parker died, the opera invites audiences directly into the mind and heart of the great saxophonist as he composes his final masterpiece, and revisits the inspirations, demons, and women who fueled his creative genius. The New York premiere reunites Lawrence Brownlee, the "energetic, bright-voiced tenor" (The New York Times) in the lead role as the legendary jazz saxophonist, with much of the original cast alongside Maestro Corrado Rovaris and the Opera Philadelphia Orchestra, who performed the work's world premiere to five sold-out audiences in June.

Parker had a rich history with the Apollo and performed at the Theater many times, beginning in 1943 with the Earl Hines Orchestra—including Little Benny Harris, Dizzy Gillespie, and Charlie "Yardbird" Parker. During his many engagements at the Apollo, Parker developed the bebop style and also experimented with classical and other musical forms.

"The real Charlie Parker played the Apollo Theater, and I am honored to be bringing this opera about Bird's life and music to Harlem with Opera Philadelphia and the Apollo,"

said Lawrence Brownlee. "Taking on this role is a challenge that I have greatly enjoyed and I am thrilled to revisit it in New York, where Charlie enjoyed some of his greatest triumphs and endured some of the hardships and trials that ultimately brought his life to a premature end. I think this opera will bring people an even greater appreciation for the man behind the music that we all love so much."

"The world premiere of Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD was a watershed moment in the history of Opera Philadelphia, capping our 40th Anniversary Season with a nationally-acclaimed new work as we were expanding the company's impact in both our community and as a leader in our field," said David B. Devan, General Director and President of Opera Philadelphia. "We are thrilled to partner with the incredible Apollo Theater, a driving force in shaping America's music landscape, to bring this opera to New York City, where Bird helped to create bebop."

"The Apollo Theater gave platforms to so many of America's great artists, providing a forum for experimentation and innovation that is reflected so richly in Charlie Parker's development of bebop and crossover work bringing together jazz and classical music," said Mikki Shepard, the Apollo Theater's Executive Producer. "This legacy of innovation across genres continues to inform the Apollo's mission and programming, as a home for emerging and established artists to push the boundaries of their art forms—from jazz to hip hop to dance to comedy, and now opera. We are continuing to grow and deepen our engagement with artists



and audiences, with a record more than 100 performances on our stages this season. We are so proud to partner with Opera Philadelphia to bring YARDBIRD to New York, and to produce opera on the Apollo stage for the very first time.”

The Apollo Theater led the way in introducing a broader audience to bebop when, in 1943, Theater owner Frank Schiffman booked the experimental bebop band The Earl Hines Orchestra, including Little Benny Harris, Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie “Yardbird” Parker. Parker and Gillespie would perform their new style of music at the Apollo as well as at other jazz clubs and after-hours venues, ushering in a new era that resulted in the transformation of big band swing to bebop. Parker was widely considered one of the architects of the bebop sound and conducted bold musical experiments during his engagements at the Apollo. Parker realized a lifelong dream in 1949 to record with string instruments. In 1950, the first live performances of his cutting edge Charlie Parker with Strings, a recording which bridged the gap between jazz and classical music, was presented at the Apollo.

The June 2015 engagement of Charlie Parker’s YARDBIRD was Opera Philadelphia’s first world premiere production from its renowned American Repertoire Program, a commitment to present at least one new American opera each season. Described as a “major achievement from a company that is committed to creating a fresh work every year” (The Denver Post), the 90-minute chamber opera was celebrated by Philadelphia audiences for its many powerful performances. Soprano Angela Brown was “astonishing” as Parker’s mother, Addie, showing “tremendous moral authority” in her acting and “the kind of singer-role affinity that is hard to imagine ever untangling” (The Philadelphia Inquirer). As The Wall Street Journal reported, “When the trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie (baritone Will Liverman) appears and he sings with Parker, his friend and colleague, it feels like a jam session.” Mezzo-soprano Tamara Mumford, as Baroness Pannonica de Koenigswarter, “offered elegant stage presence and beautifully sculpted tone” (Opera News). Soprano Rachel Sterrenberg “makes an ideal Chan” (The New York Times) while mezzo-soprano Chrystal E. Williams “sounded fiery and gorgeous” (Opera News) as Rebecca Parker. The role of Charlie’s second wife Doris Parker, performed by soprano Angela Mortellaro in Philadelphia, will be performed

by soprano Elena Perroni in New York. The company will again be joined by stage director Ron Daniels. The New York premiere is something of a homecoming for Swiss-American composer Daniel Schnyder and librettist Bridgette Wimberly, both of whom currently reside in Harlem.

Charlie Parker’s YARDBIRD owes its inception to Colorado Rovaris, Opera Philadelphia’s Jack Mulroney Music Director, who first met Schnyder in 2011. It was Rovaris who brought the composer and Brownlee together, and upon hearing Brownlee sing Schnyder immediately likened the color of his voice, the virtuosity of his singing, and his technical command to that of Charlie Parker. In YARDBIRD, Schnyder created “a wide-ranging, genre-mixing sonic world” (Downbeat) which is “often striking, with a jazzy groove and an audible response of sound to emotional state” (The Washington Post).

The Apollo Theater and Opera Philadelphia are especially grateful to the Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, Merrill Lynch, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, and a coalition of funders for their generous support.

Tickets to Charlie Parker’s YARDBIRD went on sale and may be purchased through Ticketmaster or at apollotheater.org or by calling (800) 745-3000.

Opera Philadelphia is committed to embracing innovation and developing opera for the 21st century. Described as “one of the leading instigators of new work in the country” by Opera News, Opera Philadelphia was the only American finalist for the 2015 International Opera Award for Accessibility, a category that recognizes innovative ideas that broaden access to opera. The company is charting a bold new path to September 2017, when Opera Philadelphia will open its 2017-2018 season with an immersive, 12-day festival featuring seven operatic happenings in six venues throughout the city. The first festival, “O17,” will feature three World Premieres, plus the exclusive East Coast appearance of Barrie Kosky’s groundbreaking production of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, and a recital by superstar soprano Sondra Radvanovsky. Opera Philadelphia will continue to present a spring season each year, including three additional productions in February, March, and April, making it the only U.S. opera company producing an annual opera season that begins with a dynamic festival. For more information, visit www.operaphila.org.

The legendary Apollo Theater—the soul of American culture—plays a vital role in cultivating emerging talents and launching legends. Since its founding, the Apollo has served as a center of innovation and a creative catalyst for Harlem, the city of New York, and the world.

With music at its core, the Apollo’s programming extends to dance, theater, performance art, spoken word initiatives, and more. This includes the October 2014 premiere and 2015 international tour of the dance celebration project *James Brown: Get on the Good Foot*, the annual *Africa Now! Festival*, *Apollo Club Harlem*, and the upcoming New York premiere of the opera *Charlie Parker’s YARDBIRD*. The Apollo is a presenting organization that also produces

festivals, large-scale dance and music works organized around a set of core initiatives: Apollo Music Signature Programs—Amateur Night, Salon Series, Apollo Music Café; Legacy Series—work that celebrates and extends the Apollo’s legacy through a contemporary lens; Global Festivals including the Women of the World (WOW) Festival and Breakin’ Convention, international and U.S.-based artist presentations focused on a specific theme; and Special Projects, multidisciplinary work with partner organizations.

Since introducing the first Amateur Night contests in 1934, the Apollo Theater has served as a testing ground for new artists working across a variety of art forms, and has ushered in the emergence of many new musical genres—including jazz, swing, bebop, R&B, gospel, blues, soul, and hip-hop. Among the countless legendary performers who launched their careers at the Apollo are D’Angelo, Lauryn Hill, Machine Gun Kelly, Miri Ben Ari, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, James Brown, Michael Jackson, Gladys Knight, Luther Vandross, and Stevie Wonder; and the Apollo’s forward-looking artistic vision continues to build on this legacy.

The Apollo Theater is a not-for-profit organization and currently in the midst of fundraising for its 21st Century Apollo Campaign, created to extend the institution’s role in fostering artistic innovation and in building appreciation of American culture around the world. For more information, visit www.apollotheater.org.

Photo: Lawrence Brownlee stars as Charlie Parker Credit: Dominic M.



BLIND PIG

Farewell From The Pig

Blind Pig Records, as we know it, has turned the reins over to The Orchard, ad Sony Music owned distribution company. The Orchard quietly announced it earlier last year. The owners of Blind Pig sent out a Farewell Notice to those of us in the music business who have been reviewing their albums over the years, and in our case that dates back to the label’s inception. It appears that while The Orchard will be handling the label’s vast catalogue, it is not clear if there will be any new product. So, here is the letter from the owners, which should explain things for all.

Message from Edward Chmielewski and Jerry Del Giudice, Co-Founders of Blind Pig Records:

Blind Pig Records got its start in a very small basement blues club called the Blind Pig Café in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1977 and grew to become, as *Billboard* magazine put it, “one of the pre-eminent specialty labels in the world.”

Now, after a very great, rewarding, and challenging thirty-eight year run we are closing down the San Francisco and Chicago offices and turning the keys to the Pig Pen over to The Orchard, a fine, forward-looking organization that will care for the legacy of the label.

It’s been a great privilege to work with so many uncommonly gifted artists and to document their music. We’re proud to have produced recordings from traditional blues masters such as Big Walter Horton, Hubert Sumlin, Johnny Shines, Roosevelt Sykes, Otis Rush, and of course, the inimitable Magic Slim, who represents better than anyone the very DNA of the label and why we started it. And we’re proud to have preserved recordings from blues legends such as James Cotton, Muddy Waters, and Charlie Musselwhite.

It was also very gratifying to have introduced a new generation of blues stars to the world stage – talents like Tommy Castro, Big Bill Morganfield, John Németh, Damon Fowler, and Victor Wainwright. And, we were pleased to have the opportunity to work with music notables such as Bill Wyman, Ray Manzarek, Jeremy Spencer, and Commander Cody.

It’s been a great adventure, producing and preserving music that people get excited about. Just as nearly four decades ago we were changed by the music, we’d like to imagine that thirty-eight years from now there will be a moment when a young person listens to one of our recordings and it will change his or her life.

To all our friends, allies, and compatriots in the media and music biz who offered us support and encouragement for our endeavors, we, and the artists, thank you.

Message from Blind Pig publicist Debra Regur:

I want to thank everyone that I’ve worked with over the years...artists, writers, DJs, editors, promoters, booking agents, club owners, blues societies, and music lovers from all walks of life. I was very fortunate to be a part of such a rich musical history during my tenure at Blind Pig. I truly loved the fourteen plus years as Director of Publicity. Edward and Jerry were wonderful to work with. Blind Pig was family to me. The music will never die! I look forward to future opportunities to work with you again.

We enjoyed working with Edward and Jerry for all these years, and Debra Regur during her 14 years with the label. Here is the press release from The Orchard from last March - hence - it is a bit dated, and redundant with regard to the above at times, but I will run it anyway.:

New label acquisition is part of The Orchard’s ongoing focus to integrate strong independent labels and brands into its global ecosystem.

New York, NY – March 9th, 2015 – The Orchard, a pioneering independent music, film and video distribution company, has acquired the Blind Pig Records catalog as part of a long term strategic deal. The deal includes working with the Blind Pig founders and staff to release five albums in 2015 from Albert Cummings, Victor Wainwright, Cash Box Kings, Zac Harmon and Andy T & Nick Nixon.

The record label, which began in 1977 in the basement of the Ann Arbor blues club by the same name, is recognized as one of the world's premier American Blues and Roots labels. Now based in Chicago and San Francisco, Blind Pig's rich repertoire includes Muddy Waters, Magic Slim, Poppa Chubby, Charlie Musselwhite, James Cotton, The Cash Box Kings and Otis Clay.

"Jerry and I are extremely proud of the incredible music Blind Pig Records and our artists have produced over the last 38 years," says Blind Pig Co-Founder and President, Edward Chmielewski. "We look forward to working with The Orchard to carry on our rich legacy of uniquely American and timeless music."

"This dynamic company continues to develop successful business models for digital distribution that will give our artists the exposure they need in this new music market," adds Co-Founder Jerry Del Giudice. "The worldwide reach that The Orchard has achieved will benefit our artists and their music immensely, both today and in the years to come."

Through this deal, the Blind Pig catalog — previously distributed through eOne distribution — is now owned and will be distributed digitally and physically worldwide by The Orchard. The label will also release 5 new titles this year. This latest label addition is part of The Orchard's growing focus on catalog acquisitions. Over the years, the company has brought a number of independent labels under its roof from diverse backgrounds and genres, including TVT Records, Frenchkiss Records, Discos Joey, JDub, Xanadu and Membran, among others. Ownership of these prestigious catalogs positions The Orchard, which opened its doors 18 years ago, as a dominant 21st century distribution partner. With its owned repertoire, the company has a unique ability to test new business initiatives and provide real time feedback to its client base.

"Bringing genre-leading catalogs like Blind Pig to The Orchard helps us unlock strategic and financial growth opportunities for the company and our clients," says Colleen Theis, COO of The Orchard. "While our primary focus remains distribution, sales, marketing and business services to third party clients, we are proud to assume the responsibility of stewardship for important catalogs of music and to continue to develop their individual brands."

With this increased focus on label acquisitions, The Orchard has launched a new division of catalog specialists working specifically to acquire, rejuvenate, repackage and market owned content and brands. The Orchard has hired industry veteran Scott Ambrose Reilly (Amazon, X5 Music, eMusic, Bullethead Management) to run the new division.

"I am proud to be part of this deal with Blind Pig Records" says Reilly. "Having access to this historic Blues catalog and being able to continue to work with and learn from veterans such as Jerry and Edward is a win/win for everyone. This model of buying catalogs with continued involvement from label founders will be a bright spot in our business over the next several years".

jazz & blues report

Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival Presidential Weekend Jazz Fireworks February 12-15

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>.

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2016 NYC Winter JazzFest January 13-17

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

DECEMBER 2015 BLUES WATCH - New Release Blues.... Well, these were the final entries on this 2015's release schedule: Charlie Musselwhite- *I Ain't Lyin'...*; Eric Bibb and JJ Milteau- *Lead Belly's Gold: Live at the Sunset and More*; Bad New Barnes & the Brethren Of Blues Band- *90 Proof Truth*; Mississippi Bigfoot- *Population Unknown*; Micke Bjorklof & Blue Strip- *Ain't Bad Yet*; Wendy DeWitt with Kirk Harkwood- *Getaway*; Randy McAllister- *Grislto to Gold*; Stolen Hearts- *Dirty Southern Soul*; Sam Butler- *Raise Your Hands!*; Brad Vickers & His Vestapolitans- *That's What They Say*; Dave Weld & the Imperial Flames- *Slip Into A Dream*; Reverend Freakchild- *Hillbilly Zen-Punk Blues*; The Beat Daddys- *hoodoo that we doo*; Zora Young & Little Mike and the Tornadoes- *Friday Night*; Andy Santana & the West Coast Playboys- *Watch Your Step!*; Guy Davis-Kokomo Kidd; Bey Paule Band- *Not Goin' Away*; Zac Harmon- *Right Man Right Now*; Eddie Taylor Jr.- *Stop Breaking Down*; Robert Cray Band- *4 Nights of 40 Years Live*; Christian Collin- *Spirit of the Blues*; Walter Trout- *Battle Scars*; Joe Louis Walker- *Everybody Wants a Piece*; Leslie West- *Soundcheck*; Mike Zito & the Wheel- *Keep Coming Back*; Paul Butterfield- *Complete Albums 1965-1980 (14 CD set)*; Lester Bulter- *Live in Tamines: 1997*; Dana Fuchs- *Broken Down Acoustic Sessions*; Various Artists- *Cold & Bitter Tears: Songs of Ted Hawkins*; Various Artists- *Blues Harp Women*; Taj Mahal & the Hula Blues Band- *Live from Kauai*; Kevin Selfe- *Buy My Soul Back*; Chris James & Patrick Rynn- *Trouble Don't Last*; Climax Blues Band- *Live at the BBC 1978*; Eugene Hideaway Bridges- *Hold On a Little Longer*; Trudy Lynn- *Everything Comes with a Price*; Bob Lanza Blues Band- *From Hero to Zero*; Ironing Board Sam- *Super Spirit*; Bobby Rush- *Chicken Heads: A Fifty Year History of Bobby Rush*; Mighty Mike Schemer- *Blues In Good Hands*; Danielle Nicole- *Wolf Den*; Joe Bonamassa- *Live at Radio City Music Hall*; Albert Castiglia- *Solid Ground*; Too Slim & the Taildraggers- *Anthology...*

See ya.....Mark

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

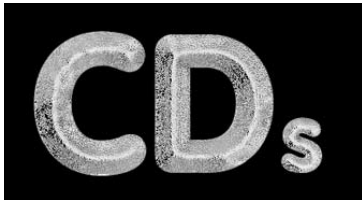


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LARA PRICE

I Mean Business

PRICE PRODUCTIONS/ VIZZTONE

Lara Price was born in the war torn country of Vietnam in 1975. Abandoned at birth, Lara became a part of the controversial Operation Baby Lift, the mass evacuation of orphans from South Vietnam to the United States, and was one of the small number who have survived. She has been singing since a youth and in 1997 moved to the San Francisco Bay area where she has been involved in a variety of musical productions. "I Mean Business" is her sixth album (the first for this writer) and is an impressive and mature recording by this Bay Area singer whose career has included several genre spanning recordings.

Recorded at Kid Andersen's Greaseland Studios, Price is supported by an A-List crew of musicians including Jim Pugh (Robert Cray Band), Chris Cain, and fellow VizzTone label-mates Mighty Mike Schermer (Marcia Ball) and Laura Chavez (who plays with Lara frequently when she's not touring with Candye Kane), along with Andersen and a tight, punchy horn section and backing vocal chorus. Price also wrote, co-wrote and collected songs for this release (some of the collaborations involved Schermer and Chavez) and the overall feel is of the classic soul and blues of the sixties and seventies.

This feel of classic soul and blues is fostered by her solid covers of the Candi Staton recording "Get It Where I Want It" and Ann Peebles' "Slipped, Tripped, Fell In Love," both of which were penned by George Jackson. She has a touch of vibrato in her singing and her vocal dynamics helps add to the power of her singing. Also strong is an interpretation of Freddie King's "Pack It Up." Her originals certainly are noteworthy as well including her collaboration with Schermer, "Happy

Blue Year," with some terrific guitar from him as well as keyboards from Pugh to enhance her moving vocal on this blues lament. Chavez (who added some terrific guitar to "Pack It Up") collaborated on the deep soul original "Time," probably the best example of Price's use of dynamics in her vocal with the performance's intensity building to its explosive climax (and Chavez is stunning here as well).

There are other delights including the title track with Chris Cain's sharp guitar break and a strutting groove behind Price's fervent singing and the closing blue lament "Love Lost" with Andersen on lead guitar. Price impressed this writer throughout and sounding convincing whether singing softly or forcefully. With excellent support and Kid Andersen's solid production, Lara Price's "I Mean Business" is a striking recording.

Ron Weinstock



BRAD ALLEN WILLIAMS

Lamar

ALLEGRO MUSIC/NAIL-SOJOURN RECORDS

While busy as a sideman with the likes of Kris Bowers, Cory Henry and Jose James), guitarist Brad Allen Williams debuts as a leader on "Lamar." On this recording he is joined by organist Pat Bianchi and drummer Tyshawn Sorey for a solid collection of performances of originals along with some recognizable pop and soul tunes.

Williams states that "This album is exclusively about creating and capturing a feeling ...," and this is reflected not simply in how they play but also in recording this "with the three of us in one great-sounding room together using the best analog tape machines and a great analog engineer." This analog recording is also available in vinyl.

This is a lively varied organ trio with Williams up front starting with the lively interpretation of Joe Jackson's "Steppin' Out," with Williams' fluid runs and Bianchi's greasy B-3. Williams blues, "201 Poplar," is a superb blues performance with an after hours feel with Bianchi helping color the leader's solo as Sorey deftly adds his accents. On the renditions of the Glen Campbell hit "Galveston" and The Stylistics' "Betcha By Golly Wow," Williams employs a vocalized approach in his playing centered around the songs lyrics, with Bianchi and Sorey adding light support. "Euclid and Lamar" is a briskly played Williams original that showcases all three players

and followed by a lovely rendition of the classic ballad “Stairway to the Stars.”

After the loping groove of a bluesy shuffle “Culver Viaduct Rehabilitation Project” by the trio, Williams closes “Lamar” with a solo rendition of “More Than You Know.” It is an exquisite closing to a highly entertaining, excellent organ trio recording.

Ron Weinstock



DALANNAH AND OWEN

Been Around A While

QUEST RECORDS

The Canadian duo of Dalannah and Owen is likely to raise comparisons to the jazz duo of Tuck and Patti, with the pairing of a vocalist against a string instrumentalist. In this case, the classically and jazz trained bassist and composer Owen Owen Owen (not a typo—Ed.) backs the dusky tones of Dalannah Gail Bowen, who was born of African-Canadian / Cherokee heritage, and who has been a part of the Canadian blues, rock and soul scene for almost 50 years.

This British Columbia duo made it to the finals of the International Blues Challenge and their Quest Records debut as a duo, “Been Around A While,” provides an indication of what makes their unique take on blues so appealing.

With the austere, sometimes stark backing of Owen, Dalannah is a most expressive singer whose nearly five decades of performing is reflected in the manner in which she wrings new meaning of such familiar numbers as Louis Jordan’s forties hit “Early in the Morning,” as well as her take on Robert Johnson’s “Come On In My Kitchen.” She has lived things and seen both the good and bad as she tells us in the opening title track with Owen displaying considerable virtuosity with a guitar-ish sounding solo (sounding overdubbed), nor does she put up with what her man is trying to do on “That Ain’t It.”

The way Dalannah stretches the lyrics along with her smoky voice can really grab one’s attention on “Blues, Mother Of Sin,” as well as get seductive on the slow, dirty dancing “Queen Bee.” Of note are the renditions of Marvin Gaye’s “Inner City Blues” and B.B. King’s “Why I Sing The Blues,” where Dalannah’s compelling voice remind us of the continuing relevance of the songs.

“Been Around A While” is fascinating and often spell-binding, with Dalannah’s moving, evocative vocals and Owen’s simple, backing.

Ron Weinstock



BILL O'CONNELL AND HIS LATIN JAZZ ALL-STARS

Heartbeat

SAVANT RECORDS

Pianist, composer, arranger and leader Bill O’Connell chose to immerse himself in Latin jazz at his career’s onset and four decades later with his Latin Jazz All-Stars he has a new Savant records release, “Heartbeat.”

His front-line includes trombonist Conrad Herwig, veteran of Eddie Palmieri’s group as well as someone who has explored the music of Coltrane and others through a Latin jazz prism; and the woodwinds of Steve Slagle who O’Connell has known since the eighties. The All-Stars core rhythm section is bassist Luques Curtis, drummer Richie Barshay and Cuban Conga drummer and percussionist Roman Diaz. Vocalist Melvis Santa is on three of the nine tracks, while Clemente Medina and Diego Lopez add bata drums to two selections. O’Connell contributed seven originals to join his arrangements of tunes from Jobim and Shorter.

One is impressed with the opening selection, “Vertigo,” with the leader and rhythm providing a percolating bottom for Slagle’s soprano sax, and the interplay of Slagle and Herwig is one of the delights throughout. “The Eyes of a Child” is a lovely ballad with Slagle on flute and on which Herwig displays his wooly tone and lyricism. “Awani” mixes fiery playing from the horns (Slagle on tenor sax) with a hot Afro-Cuban groove and vocal chorus.

It is followed by a delightful, pensive re-imagination of Jobim’s “Waters of March” with the horns singing at the opening and taken at an unhurried pace. Wayne Shorter’s “ESP” is freshly reworked with vocalist Santa providing an additional horn-like voice in addition to the tenor sax and trombone, and again the leader is heard on a marvelous solo. It is followed by the title track, which like most of this recording would make for good dance music as well as enjoyable listening.

The closing “Peace on Earth” is evocative of some of Pharaoh Sanders’ late sixties Impulse recordings, although without Sanders upper register tenor playing. O’Connell’s scoring of the horns, voices and rhythm adds to the magic on this selection as well as this entire recording.

There are plenty of pleasures for fans of both Latin and straight-ahead jazz on this marvelous recording.

Ron Weinstock



ERIC BIBB AND JJ MILTEAU

Lead Belly's Gold: Live at the Sunset and more STONY PLAIN RECORDS

Folk and blues singer Eric Bibb has recollections of Lead Belly's music growing up, whether by recordings by others singing his songs or a children's recording by him. His father Leon (who recently passed on), was at the time beginning to become known in folk circles. He told Eric of seeing Lead Belly perform at the Village Vanguard in the 1940s. Eric observes, with this background, that the sound of Lead Belly and his 12 string is part of his musical DNA.

He pays tribute to the great musical bard with French harmonica player JJ Milteau on "Lead Belly's Gold: Live at the Sunset and more" (Stony Plain). This was mostly recorded in performance at the Parisian club, The Sunset, and supplemented by a few studio recordings. With Larry Crockett on drums and percussion, and occasional vocals from Big Daddy Wilson and Michael Robinson, and Gilles Michel adding bass for a few selections, Bibb delivers 12 performances from Lead Belly's repertoire along with 3 originals inspired by Lead Belly.

There is much to enjoy from the life invested into the songs by Bibb. It starts with the formidable rendition of "Grey Goose." Milteau's harmonica playing also provides more than musical accompaniment. Often his playing suggests a button accordion as on the lively "Midnight Special" with Bibb's guitar sounding more like additional rhythm. There is a marvelous spiritual medley "When That Train Comes Along / Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," where Bibb's vocals is joined by Big Daddy Wilson. Bibb's gentleness of his approach adds to the appeal of "Bring A Little Water, Sylvie," with light, finger-style guitar and Milteau's buzzing harmonica accompaniment. Crockett's deft drumming adds to the musical delight.

"When I Get To Dallas" is an alluring original inspired by Lead Belly's early days as a street singer. Bibb's flowing guitar certainly provides a contrast to Lead Belly's more emphatic rhythmic 12-string playing on "Pick a Bale of Cotton," which is followed by a plaintive, "Goodnight, Irene." The concert portion concludes with a lively "Rock Island Line," while the studio portion opens with a soft spoken treatment of "Bourgeois Blues," Lead Belly's complaint about

segregation in the 1930s and 1940s Washington DC. The original "Chauffeur Blues," imagines Lead Belly speaking to John Lomax in the afterlife. This fervent performance, unlike "When I Get To Dallas," has less of Leadbelly's style in its performance. After Bibb plays a 6-string banjo on Lead Belly's retelling of the "Titanic" disaster, the album concludes with "Swimming' In A River Of Songs." Here, Bibb sings as if he was Lead Belly singing about his life story. It is a marvelous original that, like Bibb's renditions of Lead Belly's songs, shows how accomplished he is.

With the varied and sympathetic playing of Milteau, Eric Bibb has recorded a wonderful tribute to a man whose life and music still seems larger than life.

Ron Weinstock



DAVE MCDONNELL GROUP

The Time Inside a Year DELMARK RECORDS

While no longer resident in Chicago, alto saxophonist and composer, Dave McDonnell, is a product of the fertile Windy City music scene (jazz and rock), playing in a number of genre-crossing groups. Influenced by Fela Kuti, his playing may be rooted more in bop than funk, but as annotator Arief Sless-Kitain suggests, the layered sequences and interlocking rhythms so essential to Kuti's music factors heavily in McDonnell's songbook. On the second Dave McDonnell Group album, "The Time Inside a Year" (Delmark Records), he draws on these interests, and touchstones as varied as Thomas Mapfumo, Jon Hassell and Fletcher Henderson. Also included are interludes with cello-enhanced electronics reflecting his current interest and teaching of such.

Sless-Kitain observes that McDonnell has "a desire for his own music to be immediate and reactive, mindful of the pulse and body's innate rhythm but also cerebral." To achieve this on his compositions he is joined by a quartet of guitarist Chris Welcome and the rhythm section of bassist Joshua Abrams and drummer Frank Rosaly with Jason Adasiewicz adding vibes to two selections and Nate Lepine playing tenor on one. Three of the eleven selections are his three-movement piece "Aespe," with his computer generated tones interlaced with Tomeka Reid's Cello.

There is plenty of energy and an intriguing mix of

structure and free playing. Certainly the tone is set on the fervent drive of the opening “Bullitt,” with McDonnell’s hypercharged alto (with a very bluesy tone) riding over Welcome’s chording and the remarkable rhythm duo. Welcome’s guitar solo provides a contrast in its clean, less assertive tone. In contrast “Vox Orion,” one of the two compositions with Adasiewicz, opens with Welcome playing a vamp that is the foundation for this, with the shimmering vibes adding embellishments as well as brightening the mood of this which also has some fierce alto sax. “Baker’s Man” opens and closes with a bluesy groove bookending some free playing with Welcome suggesting Sonny Sharrrock as the leader’s blistering alto helps develop the performance’s intensity.

On “Discovery of the Ancient Geologist,” Rosaly imaginatively develops a solo against Abrams’ bass vamp, before Lepine and the leader state the theme to ride this out. “Brandywine” is a hard swinging number with O’Donnell taking no prisoners with his energized sax. The three movements of “Aespe,” with cello against the computer tones, have an ethereal mood that is a refreshing contrast to the heated playing on the quartet performances here.

McDonnell is a very passionate saxophonist who plays with plenty of fervor although there are times one wishes he would relax a bit and leave a little space in his playing. Guitarist Welcome and the free-bop interplay with the rhythm provides contrast and a bit of breathing space to the music. In any event, there is plenty to stimulate and engage a listener on “The Time Inside a Year.”

Ron Weinstock



DANIELLE NICOLE

Wolf Den
CONCORD

A couple of years ago, September/October 2013 in issue #350 to be exact, I reviewed a sibling trio from Kansas City called Trampled Under Foot. Two brothers and a sister and the bassist/sister of the act (assume they are dissolved), Danielle Nicole, is now out with her first full length solo project, iWolf Den, which was recorded down in New Orleans. She did release an EP in March, 2015.

An interesting mix of blues and R&B, the title piece kicks off the project with Nicole’s bass entangled with

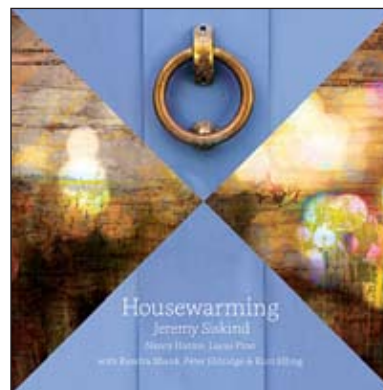
Mike “Shinetop” Sedovic’s B-3 work. Same for the next cut, the little more funkier “How You Gonna Do Me Like That.” Nicole has a sexy, sultry voice (hopefully natural and not brought on by smoking) throughout, especially the cover of Ann Peebles’ #13 charting R&B tune from 1972 “I Feel Like Breakin’ Up Somebody’s Home” (co-written by the late Al Jackson, Jr of Booker T & The MG’s fame).

Guitarist Anders Osborne gets the spotlight on “Easin’ Into The Night,” including a slow and easy solo as “Didn’t Do You No Good” flips the switch and comes out hard charging.

Oddest of the deck might be “You Only Need Me When You’re Down,” a first cousin rhythmically to “Tequila” by The Champs. “Just Give Me Tonight” is a blues personified cut as is “Take It All.”

A nice first step for Danielle Nicole and it will be interesting to see where she goes from here.

Peanuts



JEREMY SISKIND

Housewarming
BJU RECORDS

Jeremy Siskind’s “Housewarming” (BJU Records) is the second recording featuring the songs and piano of Siskind along with vocalist Nancy Harms and the woodwinds of Lucas Pino. This particular setting provides for the intimate rendition of original songs by Siskind with Pino’s woodwinds coloring the vocals, which are mostly by Harms.

There are four covers among the 13 songs here. The trio has also taken to the road performing a number of house concerts. On this recording there are also vocals by Kendra Shank, Kurt Elling and Peter Eldridge.

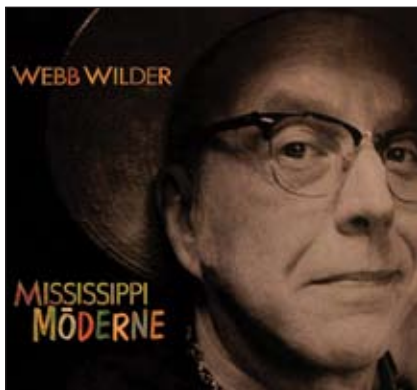
The publicity material observes that “[t]hemes of domesticity reverberate throughout the album, which reflects on what it means to have a place where you belong, a theme that Siskind grapples with often.” The title track, sung by Peter Eldridge, is perhaps most immediately an example of this, but there are so many marvelous performances including “New Old West Theme,” a lovely duet by Eldridge and Harms as they sing about the sharing of the home and their lives together.

Harms, the main vocalist, charms with an oft under-

stated, almost whispery delivery, although she is more than capable of singing in a more extroverted style. It's a delight to listen to her phrasing, her dynamics and her marvelous pitch, but that can be said about all the singers here. The opening "Whispering Grass" is enchanting as is her rendition of "Moonlight in Vermont." Elling's vocal adds to the charm of "Light," with Pino on tenor sax adding color to the vocal as well as taking a solo that displays his robust tone and attack, and also the restraint he plays with. "Hymn of Thanks" is a marvelous ballad that conveys the gratefulness of having a home where one belongs, with Pino adding another robust, restrained tenor sax solo.

Siskind's generally provides spare, deft backing (although he does showcase his technique on occasion here) with Pino providing buttery bass clarinet (listen to his interplay with Siskind on the opening "Whispering Glass"), lovely clarinet (which opens and helps add to the lovely "Moonlight in Vermont"), and tenor saxophone. The accompaniments contribute to the warmth and charm of "Homecoming," which is a most marvelous recording to sit back and simply savor like an after dinner cordial.

Ron Weinstock



WEBB WILDER

Mississippi Moderne
LANDSLIDE RECORDS

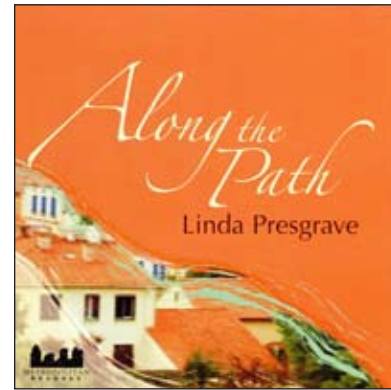
Webb Wilder hails from Nashville these days. That doesn't mean though that this is a country disc (or faux country as the case may be). Indeed, while Wilder may inhabit the geography of Nashville this disc is firmly informed by such disparate non-music row influences as the Kinks, "I Gotta Move," Otis Rush, "It Takes Time," Frankie Lee Sims, "Lucy Mae Blues" and Jimmy Reed, "I'm Gonna Get My Baby."

Even though Wilder does give nods to such country icons as Conway Twitty, "Lonely Blue Boy," and Charlie Rich, "Who Will the Next Fool Be?," his readings of the cuts is far from slavishly reverent and he seems more in tune with English rocker Nick Lowe in terms of not only his vocals on "Rough and Tumble Guy" and "I'm Not Just Anybody's Fool" but his turn of a phrase as on "Too Much Sugar For A Nickel" where he ruminates on things that are just too good to be true. He is also pretty fond of garage rock as revealed on the grungy

"Yard Dog" which could just as easily come from a Barrence Whitfield and the Savages release. "Only a Fool," which Wilder co-wrote with the legendary Dan Penn, is a soulful gem that will have people checking the liner notes to see if it is a long lost Roy Orbison outtake.

The disc ends on a blues note with "Stones in My Pathway," which starts as a raw acapella number before the rhythm section kicks in and takes it into Mississippi hill country.

Mark Smith



LINDA PRESGRAVE

Along the Path
METROPOLITAN RECORDS

Pianist, composer and arranger Linda Presgrave has a new recording "Along the Path" (Metropolitan Records). The recording is her fourth and has her in the company of Harvie S – bass, Allison Miller – drums & gongs, Stan Chovnick – soprano sax, Todd Herbert – tenor sax, Vincent Herring – alto sax and MJ Territo – voice/lyricist. With this ensemble, Presgrave takes the listener along on a musical journey from several ports of call in Asia to the Catalan region of France on two suites, "The Asian Suite" and "The French Suite" before the disc closes with soprano saxophonist Chovnick's "Universal Freedom."

The opening title track, the first of the four-part "The Asian Suite," evokes to this listener the Ellington-Coltrane collaboration with Presgrave, Chovnick, Harvie S and Miller each taking solos. Ms. Presgrave impresses with the lyricism and touch of her playing. The second part of this suite, "Where East Meets West (Macau)," is a lovely trio performance that Harvie S introduces. Chovnick returns to state the theme of "Harbor Lights (Hong Kong)" and then explores the lovely melody. The closing work of this suite, "Asakusa View (Tokyo)" was inspired by a view from a Tokyo hotel of the Sensoji Temple, and is the most energetic performance of the suite with some powerful driving soprano sax and a memorable solo from Miller.

"The French Suite," a six-part work, was inspired by a tour of France and includes an opening trio section, three quartet performances (with different horns), a song with all three horns and a final part with a vocalist. The opening trio, "Colors of Collioure," is a light beautiful waltz with Miller's deft use of brushes

under the lovely piano here. Chovick is featured on the enchanting “Bird of Céret,” inspired by a bird’s song Presgrave heard from her hotel balcony in the French Catalan town, with a feel to these ears akin to Brazilian jazz. Todd Herbert’s robust tenor sax is featured on “You Just Never Know,” a spirited performance that conjures up the classic John Coltrane Quartet. After Vincent Herring’s alto is spotlighted on the atmospheric, and aptly titled “Blues For a Rainy Night,” all three horns are present for highly spirited solos on “Place Picasso,” named after a lively plaza in the town of Céret. The final part of the suite is a vocal version of “Bird of Céret,” with lyrics and a vocal from MJ Territo who tells the story of the inspiration for the song.

Chovick contributed the final work “Universal Freedom” to this recording under the rubric of “Our Hope For the Future.” This minor blues (again evoking Coltrane) in 3/4 time has a fiery soprano solo along with solos from Presgrave, Herbert and Miller. It is a fervent performance that provides a strong ending to the outstanding “Along the Path.” **Ron Weinstock**



EDDIE COTTON
One At A Time
DECHAMP RECORDS

As I write this review, I note that Eddie Cotton’s new recording, “One At A Time” is a Blues Music Award nominee for Best New Artist Album. This is somewhat of a surprise since this is his second album for DuChamp in a couple years (2014’s “Here I Come” was the earlier release) and this is his fourth album overall. Cotton was the winner of the 2015 International Blues Challenge, and while I have not seen him perform, his music has impressed me from when I first heard his earlier albums. His music is highly reminiscent of the late Little Milton although vocally there is a strong dose of Bobby Rush in the mix.

The band on “One At A Time” includes Cotton’s cohorts from the earlier album, Myron Bennett (bass), Samuel Scott, Jr. (drums), and Carlos Russell (harmonica on ‘Be Careful’). They are supported by James “Hotdog” Lewis (organ/keys), Kimble Funchess (trumpet), Jessie Primer III (tenor sax) and Mike Weidick (trombone). Cotton produced this (and wrote all 14 songs) with Grady Champion being executive

producer.

There is a nice variety of songs from the shuffle “Be Careful,” to the low down back door man blues, “Better Deal,” where he sings about having sense to know that no one can work every night, and that it’s plain to see that the back door man is getting a better deal while Eddie lays down some scintillating guitar and Hotdog Lewis lays down some greasy organ on this superb slow blues. Set against a dance floor groove, Cotton’s high-pitched vocal celebrates his girl taking him to show how life can be so sweet on the back seat parked on a “Dead End Street.” Then there is the electric slide groove of “Filling Me With Pleasure,” as he wants to get to know this lady better. In the philosophical “Hard Time,” Eddie sings about the lessons learned from his minister father, including to always do the best one can because the race against time is a hard race to win. This slow blues has some of his most impressive guitar playing on the disc. Other songs include a celebration of his home state, “Mississippi,” and “My Money,” another back door man blues as he hustles for his woman but the love is gone with a neat harmonica riff in the backing.

I really like Eddie Cotton’s music although I found some performances here not as satisfying as on his earlier recordings. His vocals sometimes sound pinched and not as robust, and the backing not as supple as on his prior recordings. One might keep in mind that these comments are only relative to his earlier recordings, as Eddie Cotton is a significant blues performer finally getting his due. If not Cotton’s best recording, “One At A Time” still is a cut above most blues these days.

Ron Weinstock



JOSEPH DALEY
The Tuba Trio Chronicles
JODA MUSIC

Joseph Daley dedicates “The Tuba Trio Chronicles” to the memory of his good friend and mentor, Sam Rivers, with whom he played in the Rivbea Tuba Trio along with Barry Altschul.

Daley is heard on this album on tuba and euphonium and is joined by Warren Smith, heard on a drum set, bass marimba, marimba and a variety of percussive instruments, and Scott Robinson on a variety

of reeds including tenor sax, bass sax, a jazzophone, contra alto clarinet and theremin (an early electronic instrument from the 20s-Ed.).

As evident from the opening “Interplay” which Daley describes as “An exploration into the intervallic melodic concepts of Sam Rivers ...” which underlies improvisations by Daley on Euphonium (and he displays remarkable facility on this) and Robinson on tenor. “Modality” is centered on a modal line as a theme for the three with Daley on tuba, Robinson on bass sax and Smith adding bass marimba accents with remarkable interaction between Daley and Robinson. For “Emergence,” Smith is on tympani, gongs, bass drum and Chinese cymbal, with Daley on Euphonium while Robinson is on the sour sounding contrabass sarrusophone and the jazzophone (the latter a trumpet sounding instrument) and the feel of the performance is akin to some Art Ensemble of Chicago performances. “Sonorous” is a similar open improvisation vehicle with Robinson’s bass sax replacing the sarrusophone and Daley on tuba including playing it with a mute. These performances are like abstract paintings with sound as opposed to colors with bit of melody mixing with the tuba’s bass lines and the rhythmic accents of gongs and other percussion.

Daley prepared sound textures for ‘Terrarium,’ the longest performance with Smith’s marimba adding to his instruments while Robinson is on bass flute, theremin, waterphone and contra alto clarinet on a performance that sounds like a soundtrack to an experimental film

and at other times a spellbinding musical kaleidoscope. A lovely rendition of Sam Rivers’ “Beatrice” is the only composition that Daley did not write with Smith’s vibraphone adding a nice flavor here. The closing “Proclamation” is similar in concept to the opening “Interplay,” allowing for some remarkable improvisational segments on tuba and bass sax along with the counterpoint they exhibit at times. Daley, who is exceptional throughout, is remarkable on tuba here.

“The Tuba Trio Chronicles” is an exceptional release of challenging jazz that may not be for those with traditional tastes.

Ron Weinstock



THE LUCKY LOSERS

A Winning Hand

WEST TONE RECORDS

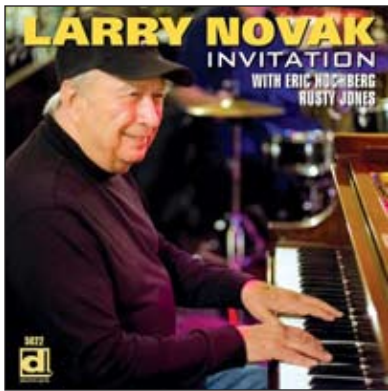
The Lucky Losers is a duo consisting of vocalist Cathy Lemons and harmonica player/vocalist Phil Berkowitz. The two are joined here by a high-end cast of players including Kid Anderson, Steve Freund and Ben Rice on guitars and a rotating cast of drummers, horn and key players.

The resulting disc features the two taking plenty of lead vocal turns along with tightly woven harmonies over the top of a diverse musical mix that includes a half dozen originals along with covers by the likes of Jimmy Rogers, “What Have I Done,” Allen Toussaint, “What Is Success” and Bob Dylan, “What Was It you Wanted.” The self-penned title track is a loping shuffle punctuated with Freund’s razor sharp lead guitar lines while “Suicide By Love” gives Lemon a chance to show off some jazzy vocal chops before Berkowitz throws down some laid back harmonica that brings her back to the blues. She’s real comfortable there as evidenced by the tough John Lee Hooker boogie groove and her saucy vocals on “Detroit City Man”.

For his part, Berkowitz shines brightest on vocals on “Long Hard Road” where he ruminates on the dues you have to pay to play the blues. The Brook Benton classic “Baby, You Got What It Takes” gets an upbeat treatment and high energy vocals that make it a highlight despite its placement deep into the disc. While the big guest list makes it unlikely that the broad mix of songs on this disc will be replicated live, the chemistry between Lemons and Berkowitz can carry a show without the extra ingredients.

Mark Smith





LARRY NOVAK
Invitation
DELMARK RECORDS

Neil Tesser, in the liner notes to "Invitation" (Delmark Records), observes that this is Larry Novak's first album in over a half century and its only the second album he's recorded under his own name, although one might have heard Novak on recordings by Louis Bellson (with whom he toured), Eddie Daniels, Terry Gibbs and Buddy DeFranco, and on the first disc pairing Von Freeman and Frank Catalano, as well as work he did with Sinatra and Sarah Vaughan. He had lengthy residences at Mr. Kelly's and The London House and gathered the admiration of many including Oscar Peterson and he became close to Bill Evans.

Evans had a great deal of impact on his music which is evident on the two opening numbers, a lovely solo opening "Waltz For Debby," and "Very Early," which introduces his trio of bassist Eric Hochberg and drummer Rusty Jones (who passed away in December of 2015). And it's a marvelous trio whose near telepathic interplay is terrific throughout, on an album on which the songs were (with two exceptions) recorded by Evans.

The aura of Evans might hover over these performances, but they stand on their own, as Novak is a pianist with a marvelous touch, whose playing displays a fertile imagination and a crisp rhythmic flow. There is delight in the lively "The Days of Wine and Roses," and a feverish rendition of Gigi Gryce's "Minority," a stunning bop piano workout. There is a lovely ballad playing on "Close Enough For Love," and the delightful interpretation of the often-recorded "Yesterdays." The album closes with a hauntingly lovely solo performance of "It's Too Late Now."

One cannot understate the contributions of Hochberg and Jones, both in their support of Novak, and their own solo breaks that flow naturally within the performances here. Neil Tesser states when noting that this was Novak's first album in half a century, "Let that sink in for a moment." Certainly listening to "Invitation," one shares his bewilderment that a pianist of Larry Novak's caliber could fly under the radar for so long. "Invitation" is a superb recording by an extraordinary pianist who will finally get his due. It certainly is a recording I will be returning to frequently. *Ron Weinstock*



JJ APPLETON & JASON RICCI
Dirty Memory
OLD BOY NETWORK

"Dirty Memory" by JJ Appleton & Jason Ricci is an energetic recording of unplugged blues by two quite accomplished players. Ricci is among the most accomplished harmonica players working in the blues and roots realms and he has an able partner in Appleton, a singer-songwriter and guitarist with support from either Tim Lefebvre or Neal Hiedler on double bass. There are six originals from Appleton, two from Ricci and covers of Blind Willie Johnson's "Nobody's Fault But Mine," The Rolling Stones' "Black Limousine" and "It Ain't No Use" from Gary "U.S." Bond.

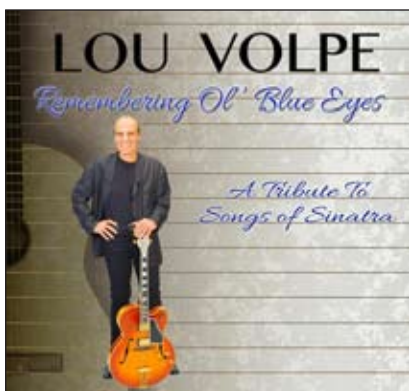
Appleton is a capable singer of the songs here and he brings a driving percussive approach to his steel guitar playing, as evident on the opening "Leaning Blues," rooted in the "Dust My Broom" riff with Ricci's harp all over the place. Blind Willie Johnson's classic "Nobody's Fault But Mine" is an interesting interpretation, but is dwarfed by Blind Willie's original. "Can't Believe It's Good" is a lively number that one could easily imagine being transformed into a full band performance and Ricci's unrestrained playing is very appealing here, like Sonny Terry on speed.

Ricci's "New Man" opens with some really nice and imaginative harmonica playing behind Appleton's wistful vocal and is followed by "Jason Solo," an unaccompanied virtuoso performance that might be viewed as a tribute to classic fox chase and train instrumentals. "At the Wheel Again" is another fine duet with spirited harp and steel guitar with Appleton singing about being the "devil's pawn singing an angel's song. I am not familiar with the Stone's rendition of "Black Limousine," but the enjoyable performance here (particularly Appleton's slide playing) evokes the Stone's cover of "Little Red Rooster." A similar groove (without slide) marks the cover of Gary 'U.S.' Bond's "It Ain't Use," which benefits from the restraint shown here.

A reflective, solo performance by Appleton, "Come On Over, Come On By," concludes a recording of acoustic blues that many will find to their liking.

Ron Weinstock

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LOU VOLPE
Remembering Ol' Blue Eyes
A Tribute to Songs of Sinatra
JAZZ GUITAR RECORDS

A guitarist who transcends the realms of jazz, R&B and adult contemporary, Lou Volpe's newest recording is his salute to Frank Sinatra whose centennial was in 2015. This recording has him performing 13 standards that are associated with Sinatra to which Volpe provides his personal interpretation while displaying his virtuosity and melodic sense. On eleven selections, Volpe is joined in a supportive role by Delmar Brown, Mel Davis and Onaje Allen Gumbs on keyboards; bassists Stanley Banks and Leo Traversa; Buddy Williams and Gary Fritz on drums and percussion respectively; with drummer Sipho Kunene offering his talents on one track. On the other three selections he plays solo.

There is plenty to like about listening to Volpe with spectacular single-note runs, riveting chordal playing, rich smears, edgy twang, swirling crescendos, filigreed delicacy and more backed by the various backing trios for performances that mix melodic ornamentation and scintillating improvisations. There is a Brazilian groove underlying the rendition of "Speak Low," while the version of "It Was A Very Good Year," with Gumbs on keyboards, is taken in a R&B tinged vein with plenty of smears and twang against the simple, steady groove. Volpe has big ears and there are tinges of Wes Montgomery on a swinging "A Foggy Day," while the late night melancholy of "One For The Road," is given a lively reworking with some twang and snap from the leader. "Days of Wine and Roses" is a lovely performance with Volpe effectively using overdub as he takes his lead over a simple chordal backing. Much the same can be said of the extremely lovely "Softly As I Leave You." There is more exquisite playing on the closing selection, Carlos Santana's "Europa" subtitled by Lou ("Dedicated to the Brilliance of Frank)," again with just Volpe and his guitars.

While I found a couple selections, such as "That's Life," not completely successful, "Remembering Ol' Blue Eyes (Songs of Sinatra)" is easy to listen to and full of considerable musical substance. He may be a guitar virtuoso, but Lou Volpe also is also one who knows how to intrigue and entertain his listeners.

Ron Weinstock



THE JIMMYS
Hot Dish
BROWN COW PRODUCTIONS

The Madison, Wisconsin based The Jimmys, sure know how to turn out some hot jumping blues and rhythm sounds. Their disc, "Hot Dish" (Brown Cow Productions), is a showcase for this band led by vocalist and keyboard player Jimmy Voegeli (pronounced "vaguely") which includes Pete Weber (ex-Hubert Sumlin) on guitar; Mauro Magellan on drums; Johnny Wartenweiler on bass and The Amateur Horn Stars; Darren Sterud (trombone/vocals), Pete Ross (saxophones), and Mike Boman (trumpet). Voegeli, Weber and Magellan contributed all the songs here.

This is a terrific band with the horns adding musical colors and texture far beyond the simple riffs of a number of groups with the songs ranging from the scorching "Loose That Woman," a rumba blues that evokes classic Ray Charles with some strong piano and a booting saxophone solo. There is a more stately tempo to Weber's "You Say You Will," which has a blistering guitar solo. Voegeli and Magellan contributed the funky "Freight Train" with Weber's guitar exhibiting a bit of twang. The aptly titled "Funk Schway" and a driving shuffle "Jacqui Juice" are two instrumentals that allow the players to stretch out. The T-Bone Walker style shuffle "What Gives" has a slightly muffled vocal and some nice growling trombone embellishments and solo, while Vocelli lays down boogie woogie inflected piano. There is even a hint of Little Richard on the frenzied "She's Wild." If one track stands out it is the Charles Brown meets Ray Charles sounding "Saddest Man," with superb piano, a marvelous horn arrangement and terrific guitar and tenor sax solos support Voegeli's world weary vocal about a love that is lost.

The Jimmys are terrific whether playing jump blues, rock and roll, or Memphis funk, and the songs here are both idiomatic yet fresh. Tinsley Ellis (quoted on the cover) is right on, "The Jimmys have mined pure R&B gold with 'Hot Dish.'" **Ron Weinstock**

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JEFF DENSON TRIO

+ Lee Konitz

RIDGEWAY RECORDS

It is always a treat for my ears to hear a new Lee Konitz recording. That has been the case since the mid-seventies when I had the pleasure of presenting him for a few nights at a small basement nightclub in Buffalo NY named the Tralfamadore Café. Of course, I already knew he was one of the great alto sax players, and as I spent a good deal of time with him that weekend, I found that he was quite an interesting person as well. This new album is not really a Lee Konitz album, but rather that of bassist Jeff Denson, with Lee as a special guest. Denson and Konitz are no strangers, as Jeff has been the bassist in Konitz' New Quartet since 2007.

Denson's trio, with pianist Dan Zelman and drummer Jon Arkin is certainly a well-oiled rhythm machine, and the music of the late, piano great Lennie Tristano constantly comes to mind throughout the recording.

Of course, that could have a lot to do with the facts that Konitz began his recording career with Tristano 6 decades ago, and there are several songs written by or associated with Tristano, including the opener "Baby," 317 East 32nd Street," Warne Marsh's "Background Music" and Konitz' "Subconscious-Lee" and "Kary's Trance." Then toss in the fact that pianist Zelman shows an obvious Tristano influence and we have one fine tribute to Lennie without being labeled as such. His spirit was surely with these guys in the Fantasy Studio on those two days in February 2015.

One different twist here is the tracks with vocals. Denson sings some of the songs with lyrics, such as "Blue Skies," "Body And Soul" and "Skylark," and Konitz *also* sings wordless vocals in several spots – something I have not heard before from him. We can't bring this to an end without mentioning that drummer Arkin fits the bill well with his crisp and precise playing throughout.

In short, this is a very fine release that sounds like Lee Konitz, at 87 and a seasoned recording veteran, was having as much fun making as the "young guys." Check out some tracks at Amazon (go to mp3 version to be able to do so). I think all Tristano, Konitz and Marsh fans, as well as many others, will like this one

Bill Wahl



PINETOP PERKINS & JIMMY ROGERS WITH LITTLE MIKE & THE TORNADOES

Genuine Blues Legends

ELROB RECORDS

Nothing fancy about the music on "Genuine Blues Legends," a release by Chicago blues legends Pinetop Perkins and Jimmy Rogers with Little Mike and the Tornadoes. Harmonica player and leader, (Little) Mike Markowitz and his band of guitarist Tony O. Mello, bassist Brad Vickers and Michael Anderson did yeoman service backing the likes of Perkins and Rogers on tours by down and up the East Coast in the late eighties through the mid-nineties. As the late Perkins' former manager Pat Morgan recalls, Perkins started playing regularly with Little Mike after he left the Legendary Blues Band, which in fact resulted in his first solo album "After Hours." Rogers and others including Hubert Sumlin were featured regularly with the Tornadoes who this writer saw numerous times at the legendary Bethesda, Maryland club, "Twist & Shout."

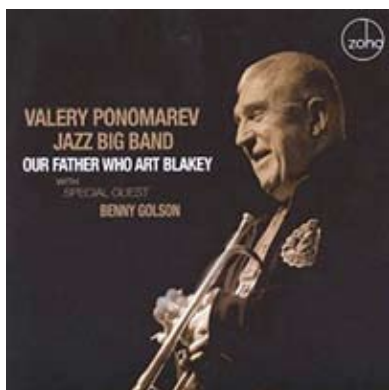
This is a solid typical evening of Pinetop and Rogers as they might be heard back on tour as this night in Maine is from 1988. Pinetop was never a very demonstrative singer, rather appealing with his easy going, comfortable delivery of some blues classics that would be part of his repertoire for over three decades, including Cleanhead Vinson's "Kidney Stew," St. Louis Jimmy's "Going Down Slow" (titled here "Had My Fun") the Larry Darnell hit "For You My Love," Ivory Joe Hunter's "I Almost Lost My Mind" (titled here "When I Lost My Baby"), and Clarence 'Pinetop' Smith's "Pinetop's Boogie Woogie," that became a staple of Perkins' repertoire and led to his stage name. There is also plenty of Pinetop's fine, reliable playing and these performances are solid, even if equally fine performances of these songs are found in his other recordings.

One wishes there was more of Jimmy Rogers' vocals than the three songs heard here. Rogers was one of the finest singers of Chicago blues with his relaxed, distinctive delivery lending appeal to a cover of "Big Boss Man" along with his own "The Last Time." Pinetop's playing is exceptional on this and Little Mike and the Tornadoes add firm, lively backing as Rogers adds his own distinctive guitar lines producing some gems of Chicago blues. With Rogers adding his guitar

into the backing mix, the rendition of “Pinetop’s Boogie Woogie” is as feverish and exhilarating a performance as Perkins ever produced of this number.

My only complaint about this release is the attribution of composer credit to Pinetop Perkins for “For You My Love” composed by Paul Gayten, and the aforementioned Ivory Joe Hunter and Pinetop Smith songs. Otherwise this is an entertaining reminder of the delightful, sometimes exciting, Chicago blues on tours like the one captured on this release. Perhaps not essential, but certainly a release the fans of the two should be interested in.

Ron Weinstock



VALERY PONOMAREV JAZZ BIG BAND

Our Father Who Art Blakey

ZOHO RECORDS

Shortly after his arrival in the US in 1973 after leaving the Soviet Union, trumpeter Valery Ponomarev met Art Blakey, who would become his mentor and “jazz father.” The years he spent as one of Blakey’s Jazz Messengers left a firm imprint on him and now, four decades later, with the Valery Ponomarev Jazz Big Band he has recorded a tribute to Blakey, “Our Father Who Art Blakey” (Zoho), transforming a number of songs associated with the legendary drummer and his most famous ensemble into big band charts which were recorded at Dizzy’s Coca Cola Club at Jazz at Lincoln Center and at the Zinc Bar.

The booklet accompanying this CD did not include the members of the big band who are: Saxophones – Todd Bashore, Chris Hemingway, Peter Brainin, Steve Carrington, Anthony Nelson; Trombones – Stafford Hunter, Alvin Walker, David Wight, Jack Jeffers; Trumpets – Rick Henly, Miki Hirose, Josh Evans, Waldron Ricks; Piano – Mamiko Watanabe; Bass – Ruslan Khain and Drums – Victor Jones. For the Zinc Bar, Andrew Gould replaced Brainin, Corey Wallace replaced White, Danny Hall replaced Walker and Ricks replaced Allen with Benny Golson appearing on the two numbers from this performance. Ponomarev, discussing transforming Blakey’s small group charts for a big band suggests that it was not the challenge it might seem. He observes that if one listens to Blakey’s music, it is already big band already and notes Blakey’s own background in big bands. Ponomarev also states in his arrangements

that he quotes some of the solos from the originals. Listening to this recording, one is impressed by how he has maintained so much of the feel of Blakey’s music. After a brief overture from the leader, the band launches into Bobby Timmons’ classic “Moanin’” which features strong solos from Ponomarev and Golson and some nice scoring. The rhythm section of Watanabe, Khain and Jones is superb in capturing the snap, crackle and pop of the original recording, and Watanabe’s own solo is punctuated by riffs of the brass and reeds and Khain solos as well. Freddie Hubbard’s “Crisis” features Josh Evans’ trumpet, which is thoughtful, imaginative and capable of considerable heat followed by a strong tenor solo from Carrington and fervent trombone from Hunter.

Ponomarev’s rationale for including Duke Jordan’s “Jordu” is based on Clifford Brown’s association with Blakey as well as Brown being his main trumpet hero. The band arrangement is based on Brown’s solo from the classic Clifford Brown & Max Roach recording, and provides the foundation for solos from Rogers on trumpet and Brainin on tenor sax for this fresh interpretation of a jazz classic. Victor Jones helps lay the Latin rhythmic foundation for another Duke Jordan composition, “No Hay Problema,” that Blakey performed for the film “Les Liaisons Dangereuses.” Evans and Carrington both are afforded considerable solo space by the 56-bar form of the composition, and Evans (who I have seen with the Evans-Lacy Legacy Band) impresses with his mix of mellowness and fire. The leader’s scoring of his horns is splendid.

Ponomarev’s original “Gina’s Cooking” post-dates his time with Blakey and the composition has a Mingus-like flavor with tempo changes. It showcases Anthony Nelson’s take no prisoner’s baritone and alto sax from Bashore before Jones takes a short solo as well as pushes the performance on. The album concludes with Golson’s classic “Blues March,” which Golson recalled writing after Blakey mentioned he had never played a march. Jones sets the tone and groove before Ponomarev and Golson, the two Blakey alumni, each solo at length. Trombonist Wallace, alto saxophonist Bashore and pianist Watanabe also stretch out on the recording’s longest performance.

“Our Father Who Art Blakey” is a real gem of a big band recording with classic compositions, superb arrangements and terrific ensemble playing in support of the marvelous solos that were enthusiastically received.

Ron Weinstock

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BEY PAULE BAND

Not Goin' Away
BLUE DOT RECORDS

The Bey Paule Band, a terrific soul-blues band featuring the vocals of Frank Bey and the guitar of Anthony Paule, return with “Not Goin’ Away” (Blue Dot Records). The disc is a follow-up to the terrific “Soul of the Blues” and, like its predecessor, mixes some choice originals with a few strong covers of lesser-known material. In addition to Bey and Paule, the Band includes Tony Lufrano on keyboards, Paul Olguin on bass, Paul Revelli on drums, Mike Rinta on drums, Tom Poole on trumpet and Nancy Wright on saxophone with guest appearances from Christoffer ‘Kid’ Andersen on guitar (and he co-produced, recorded and mixed this) and Jack Sanford on baritone sax with back-up singers added to half of the selections here.

Bey stands out as a singer (in my review of “Soul of the Blues” I compared him to Solomon Burke and Mighty Sam McClain) and he puts his stamp on everything here (except the instrumental “Noel’s Haze”) starting with the autobiographical opening “Black Bottom” where he sings about growing up in the Georgia sticks and now fronting an eight-piece band. Its slightly swampy feel is followed by the deep funk of “Kiss Me Like You Mean It,” with some nifty guitar runs from Paule and greasy organ from Lufrano with punchy horns. Mike Rinta and Paule are responsible for the popping horn arrangements throughout. More punchy horns are heard on the driving blues from Bey, Paule and Christine Vitale, “Right In Front Of You,” about the guy who understands the woman’s problems but can’t win her heart, with strong playing from Lufrano on piano and Paule on guitar.

It’s a strong and varied program that is consistently well sung and performed with several selections standing out. Vitale and Paule contribute “Next To My Heart” that comes off like vintage seventies deep southern soul recorded at Muscle Shoals with an outstanding Bey vocal. “Nobody’s Angel,” another Vitale original, evokes some of Clarence Carter’s recordings, with its storytelling and message that is wonderfully delivered by Bey and the band. The title track is a terrific rocker with a wonderful groove and Rinta delivering a superb trombone solo wonderfully framed by the other horns

and the chicken fried organ. “Don’t Ask Me How I Feel” is a blues performance that to these ears comes off as a cross of Al Kooper mixed with Donny Hathaway with perhaps the best horn arrangement here.

With “Not Goin’ Away,” the Bey Paule Band again have provided listeners with a superb soul and blues recording. Certainly anyone who enjoyed “Soul of the Blues” will enjoy this, while fans of soul and blues who may not have heard them previously will find much to savor on this stunning recording. *Ron Weinstock*



JACO PASTORIUS

Robert Trujillo Presents

Jaco
MVD VISUAL 2DVD SET

Metallica bassist Robert Trujillo produced this double disc DVD set which takes a look into the life and music career of the great electric bassist Jaco Pastorius, who died ten days after being severely beaten outside a south Florida nightclub in 1987. While there are a number of DVDs out there with performances, or clips of such – this is the first that I am aware of that is presented in a documentary format. Trujillo did a wonderful job in assembling interview clips with a long list of people who either played with him, knew him or were heavily influenced by him, or in some cases all three. In the beginning, several bass players say a few words about Jaco and one of them says “We all say it...He is our Hendrix.”

I took notes while watching this figuring I’d write the review based on them. When all was said and done, I noticed that I had written 16 pages on a 6x9 college ruled pad. Well, to write all that would be ridiculous as I’d be practically writing what you can watch, so instead of spilling the beans on all the interesting tidbits here, I’ll just capsuleize for you. But, one of those is that “there would be guys who would break the bones in their thumb so they could bend it back like Jaco.” And, I’ll reveal a few more later.

The first DVD, titled “The Film,” is loaded with these interview clips where we find out so many interesting facts about Jaco, along with photos and home

movies of Jaco as a kid played simultaneously with performance audio bites. The interview segments are with so many people, I can't list them all here. Many of them are with musicians who worked with him – such as Peter Erskine and Wayne Shorter from Weather Report, and Joni Mitchell, as Jaco played in her band that included Pat Metheney. Jaco's younger brother Gregory also had a lot to say. I learned a lot of things about Pastorius, such as that he had 2 wives, and 2 kids with each one, that his father was a jazz singer, that most of his childhood friends were Cuban, and when he was around 7 he got some bongos and played them along with Cuban radio at night. Peter Erskine notes that many of the patterns that Jaco played on the bass were really conga patterns. Also on Disc 1 there are several performance clips with Weather Report, Joni Mitchell, Jaco playing solo and a clip of Miles Davis playing "Mr. Pastorius."

The second DVD, titled "Outtakes, Anecdotes & Stories," is really mostly more interview clips opening with Joni Mitchell telling more interesting Jaco stories – about ten minutes of them, followed by many others, including Carlos Santana, who tells about the incident earlier in the same night that Jaco was beaten into a coma when he went onstage during a Santana performance and tried to grab the bass away from Alphonso Johnson so he could play it. Carlos had to stop playing to settle Jaco and the bouncers down. Some of the others we hear stories from on Disc 2 include all those mentioned above for Disc 1, plus

Bobby Economu, Al Dimeola, Chuck Doom, Bootsy Collins, Herbie Hancock, Flea, Victor Wooten, Lenny White, Mark Egan, Mike Stern, Randy Brecker, Richard Bona, Sting, Victor Bailey, Joe Diorio, Ira Sullivan, Bobby Colomby, Bob Moses, Anthony Jackson and Alphonso Johnson. And that is just about half of them. Bobby Colomby, drummer and leader of Blood, Sweat & Tears, tells about when Jaco agreed to play some shows with BS&T and he gave him some tapes and kept asking him if he listened to them yet, and Jaco said no, but we are cool. He told Colomby he listened to them just before the show and Colomby, who was nervous as hell about what was going to happen, was amazed during the first concert that not only was Jaco playing the songs perfectly, he was playing them like he wrote them. It was Colomby who got Jaco signed to Columbia Records' Epic label.

Among the performance clips on these DVDs are two of Jaco playing "America The Beautiful" solo bass – one in New York City and the other in Tokyo. There is so much information here about Jaco that you'd probably need to watch it several times to absorb it all. Unfortunately, it is not all good. It was good during the first part of his career, but his mental state began to deteriorate during the mid 80s. He also felt he was mistreated by record companies. In his later days he spent many nights sleeping in a park. Someone reported that they saw him sitting on a sidewalk playing "Louie, Louie" for change.

There is no need for me to go on, as I'd just be



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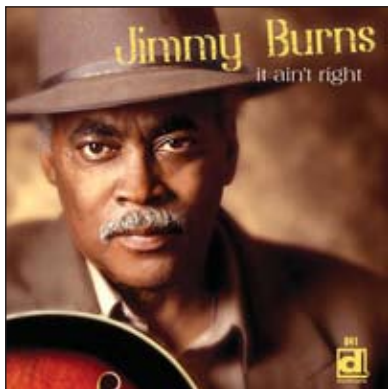
Photo © Robyn Churchill



revealing more of the tidbits you can hear for yourself from the people who knew him. It was incredibly interesting for me as I booked a nightclub concert with him in the mid 80s, so I obviously met him and saw some of his somewhat crazy behavior, although I'd have to say he was not really that wild...but perhaps he was having a mellow night. It's always nice to review someone who I have presented in a club concert - it brings back the memories. There are two in this issue - Jaco & Lee Konitz.

If you are a fan of Jaco Pastorius, you need to pick this up. Those who have heard the rumors and the stories about him might just want to see this as well to hear the truth. If you are one of the bass players who love this guy...well you probably already own it. I know watch this many more times And, to Robert Trujillo - very nice work!

Bill Wahl



JIMMY BURNS
It Ain't Right
DELMARK RECORDS

The new Jimmy Burns recording, "It Ain't Right" (Delmark Records), is his fifth album for the label dating back to 1997. He has not exactly been over-recorded, so a new release by him should be welcome. The younger brother of Detroit blues legend, Eddie Burns, Jimmy has an extensive vocal group and soul background, although he also has deep Mississippi rooted blues roots as was displayed on his album "Leave Here Walking." Jimmy is backed on this new album by his working band Anthony Palmer, guitar; Greg McDaniel, bass; Bryant "T" Parker, drums; with support from Sumito "Ariyo" Ariyoshi, piano; Roosevelt Purifoy, organ; and a full horn section. With the exception of two originals from Billy Flynn, the album is comprised mostly of covers including a couple of Percy Mayfield songs and one by his late brother, Eddie. Dick Shurman produced this recording in February of 2015.

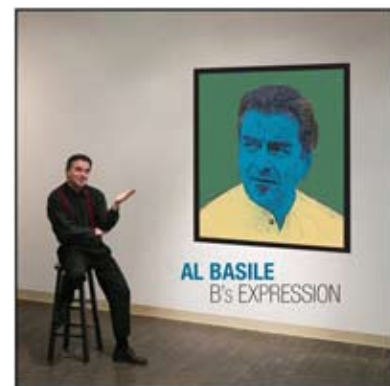
The opening track by Flynn, "Big Money Problem" is a track that evokes some of the best Mississippi rooted performances from Burns' prior recordings and is followed by Flynn's lovely R&B ballad "Will I Ever Find Somebody?" showing off his soulful singing with a notable piano solo and effective horns. The backing to "Snaggletooth Mule," a nice hoodoo blues, may sound familiar to Johnny Copeland fans. On a

rendition of Percy Mayfield's "Long As You're Mine," the horn riffs lend an unwelcome frenzied sense to the performance. The treatment of Mayfield's "My Heart Is Hangin' Heavy" is more straightforward and, to these ears, more satisfactory. There is a solid rendition of The 5 Royales "Crazy, Crazy, Crazy," a performance that harkens back to his vocal group days.

Eddie Burns' "Hard Hearted Woman" is a crisp, easy rocking shuffle, and Jimmy plays nice down-home harmonica on a fresh reworking of Jimmy Reed's "A String To Your Heart," with a nice loping groove. Also heard is surprising, enjoyable cover of Goree Carter's "Rock Awhile," if a bit laid back compared to Carter's jump blues original. A cover of "Stand By Me" has a nice vocal and some nifty guitar, but otherwise did not leave much of an impression. "Surrounded" is a nicely paced shuffle with a terrific baritone sax solo from Aaron Getsug and nice guitar break. Burns places his own stamp on Little Walter's "It Ain't Right," with rollicking piano and a clever guitar line in the accompaniment, while a fresh funk arrangement enlivens his interpretation of the Junior Wells classic, "Messin' With the Kid."

The album closes with Burns leading a gospel quartet styled rendition of "Wade in the Water," with a nice lead vocal. Jimmy Burns "It Ain't Right," displays his considerable talents over a variety of blues, R&B and gospel. Perhaps it has a couple of musical miscues, but overall this is a welcome addition to his very distinctive body of recordings.

Ron Weinstock



AL BASILE
B's Expression
SWEETSPOT

Long time cornet/trumpet man Al Basile is back with his latest solo effort after leaving Roomful Of Blues. I'm taking a stab that this is probably Basile's twelfth one, but that is just a guesstimate.

"B's Expression" leans in a religious direction in a couple spots with "Even Jesus Fell" and "Have I Given My Best?" being the two obvious examples. Needless to say, the disc is filled with a lot of Basile's cornet work, in tandem with Duke Robillard's guitar, especially since the latter also produces the project.

With Basile being a writer of poetry, the lyrics flow

with the tunes, creating a strong symmetry. Bruce Bears B-3 contributes to "It Wasn't The Good" and Brad Hallen's acoustic bass gives "You Know - You Don't Know" a floor that could be at a beatnik poetry reading. Best of the litter might be the theme song of my ex-girl friend "Don't You Ever Get Tired Of Being Right?"

Once again, another good effort by Basile, a mixture of jazz, blues and R&B, all swirling around some smarter than average lyrics. If Al Basile has an expression here, it should be all smiles.

Peanuts



BILL FRISELL
When You Wish Upon A Star
OKEH/SONY

The primary function of film and TV music is to establish atmosphere and here guitarist Frisell and

group do just that, but theirs is a highly personalized affair, maintaining a distinctive and downright moody air throughout their exploration of varied and well known themes from "Psycho" to "Bonanza".

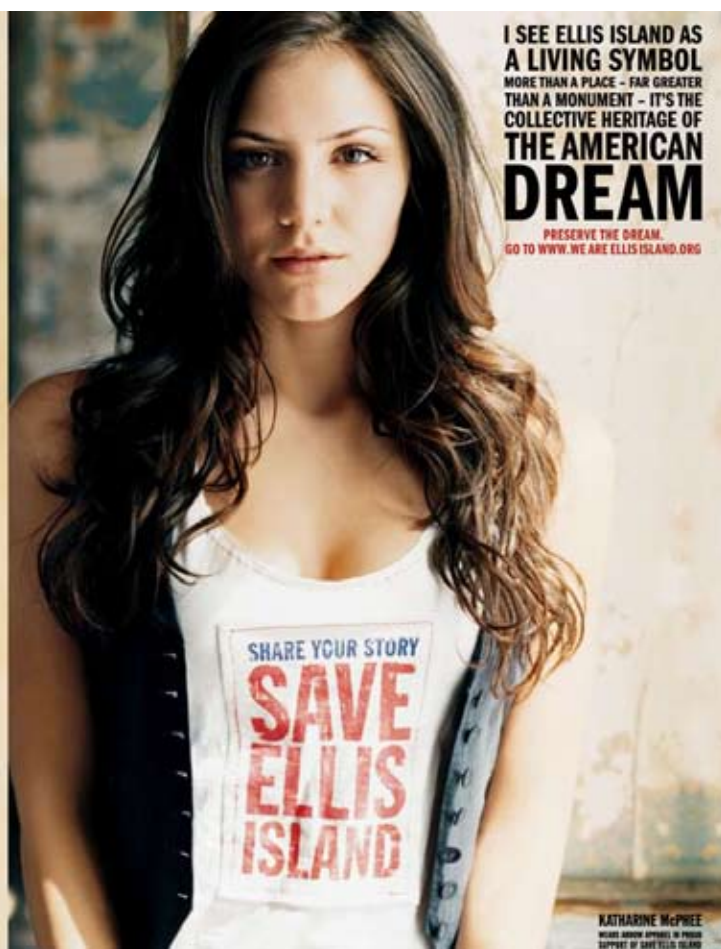
The principal voices are those of Frisell and violist Eyvind Kang who most often entwine their individual paths around the other's, creating a fluid constant that permeates the set. Drummer Rudy Royston is an animated presence, providing a most suitable commentary on Frisell's and Vang's blended front.

A sprinkling of mini-suites make for engaging statements within the set, themes from "The Godfather" providing some of the most energetic interplay and "Once Upon A Time In The West" utilizes the lyric-less vocal style popularized by that film's celebrated composer, Ennio Morricone, to subtle effect.

Speaking of vocals, Petra Haden provides refreshingly unaffected work on tracks including "You Only Live Twice", "The Shadow of Your Smile" and a trio workup of "Moon River" with Frisell on acoustic and bassist Thomas Morgan. A fresh and captivating piece of work.

Duane Verh

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