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**jazz**  
**& blues** report



# DC JazzFest

# jazz & blues report

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"Buffalonious"

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



**Text & All Photos By Ron Weinstock**



Roy Hargrove leading the big band

## 15th DC Jazz Festival Has Perhaps Strongest Lineup Yet

Celebrating its 15th year in the District of Columbia, the Dc Jazz Festival will present hundreds of Jazz artists at venues throughout the District of Columbia including The Wharf in Southwest DC, the Kennedy Center, Hamilton Live, City Winery, the Phillips Collection, clubs, and theaters. The Festival runs from June 9 to June 16.

Among the signature events of the Festival will be "DC JazzFest at The Wharf" presented by Events DC (June 14-16) featuring four main stages. Artists appearing will include: Snarky Puppy, Lean on Me: Jose James Celebrates Bill Withers, Jon Batiste & Stay Human, Brass-A-Holics, Michael Franks, Joshua Redman Quartet with Aaron Goldberg, Reuben Rogers & Gregory Hutchinson, Joey Alexander Trio, Ralph Peterson & GenNext Big Band (honoring the Art Blakey Centennial), 2018 DCJazzPrix winning band Cornerstore, Tarus Mateen, and an International Jazz Stage featuring saxophonist Evan Harris (Australia), El Violin Latino (Luxembourg), Witness Matlou Trio (South Africa), with much more. The performances by Snarky Puppy and Jose James are a ticketed event at the Anthem on Friday, June 14 and the performances by Jon Batiste & Stay Human, and The Brassaholics is another ticketed event at The Anthem on Saturday, June 15. The other





Jon Batiste

performances on stages at The Wharf are free.

The Kennedy Center will be hosting several events at this year's Festival. The free Millennium Stage performances during the Festival June 9-16 will celebrate the centennial of Nat King Cole and feature singing piano players in the Cole tradition. On June 9 the Festival will present "Celebrating Randy Weston" at the Kennedy Center. It will feature pianists Marc Cary, and Rodney Kendrick joined by three members of Weston's acclaimed African Rhythms band: bassist Alex Blake, saxophonist TK Blue, and African percussionist Neil Clarke. Festival Musical Director Willard Jenkins stated "I had the distinct honor of co-writing Randy Weston's autobiography, African Rhythms, and can guarantee the



Kris Funn & Cornerstore

evening will be a joyous celebration of his rich, peerless artistry." On June 16, the Festival presents "Great Masters of Jazz, the final party of the 15th Anniversary DC JazzFest presented by Events DC. It will be a musical celebration of the life and work of the iconic legend Quincy Jones; the highly influential song stylist Nancy Wilson; the trailblazing trumpeter-bandleader Roy Hargrove, and DC's own peerless pianist-vocalist Shirley Horn, in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. Featured performers and presenters include the Roy Hargrove Big Band, Patti Austin, Justin Kauflin, Adam Clayton Powell III, Congressman John Lewis, Angela Stribling, Sharón Clark, and a raft of very special guests to be announced.

Among clubs presenting performances during the Festival, The Hamilton Live kicks off the first weekend with the Anat Cohen Quartet (Friday, June 7); and the celebrated Ethiopian pianist-accordionist-bandleader Hailu Mergia (Sunday, June 9), serving up African Jazz meets Afro-Pop. City Winery kicks off their DC JazzFest dates with the compelling crossover sounds of SPAGA (Wednesday, June 12), the latest project from the fertile mind of pianist Aron Wagner. Trinidadian trumpeter, Etienne Charles Creole Soul brings his striking, island-proud, big fun-inspiring sounds on Thursday, June 13.

These venues are part of the annual "Jazz in the 'Hoods Presented by Events DC" (June 6-16) where jazz takes over the district in 20+ neighborhoods with presentations curated by Jazz in The Hoods partners. Artists and schedule will be on the Festival website. DC JazzFest presents renowned artists in settings throughout the capital city. The artsy H Street NE community hosts performances in the Atlas Performing Arts Center and Gallery O/H with Mr. Henry's nearby on Capitol Hill offering jazz and good neighborhood conversation. In Southeast's historic and artsy Anacostia, performances are offered through the East River JAZZFest including Anacostia's Busboys and Poets and Anacostia Playhouse; and Ivy City, a tiny Northeast enclave experiencing a renaissance, includes City Winery and Ivy City Smokehouse on the schedule. Lively, diverse and laid-back, Northwest DC is home to the Takoma, Dupont Circle, Downtown, Foggy Bottom, Georgetown, Logan Circle, Van Ness, and U Street neighborhoods with a plethora of diverse venues including The Hamilton Live, Ben's Next Door, Ashbury United Methodist Church, Kreeger Museum, Brixton, Eaton Workshop, Sotto, Twins Jazz, UDC, Acadia Foods and Wine, Franklin Park, and Rhizome.

A prelude to the Festival, "Jazz 'n Families Fun Days" (Prelude Weekend, June 1-2) is held in partnership with The Phillips Collection, this celebrates jazz and the visual arts with performances by more than a dozen regional artists and rising star ensembles.

The DC Jazz Festival presents world-renowned and emerging artists in celebration of jazz; unify diverse communities and enable connections between artists and audiences; advance jazz and music education with excit-

ing, adventurous and diverse musical experiences for all ages and backgrounds; shine the spotlight on DC-based jazz musicians; and highlight DC as a premier cultural destination. Its signature programs are the annual DC JazzFest, now in its 15th year with 150 performances in 40 venues including Jazz in the Hoods and DC JazzFest at The Wharf; the year-round DCJF Music Education Program in partnership with DC public and charter schools; the Charlies Fishman Artist Embassy Series; and DCJazzPrix, and an international band competition. The DC Jazz Festival won the 2018 DC Mayor's Arts Award for Excellence on Creative Industries. In 2015, The New York Times named DC JazzFest one of "50 Essential Summer Festivals."

For more information including more on performers and schedules, and visitors information visit [dcjazzfest.org](http://dcjazzfest.org). One can follow the Festival on social media. Keep up with the DCJF: Twitter: @dcjazzfest; Facebook: [facebook.com/dcjazzfest](https://facebook.com/dcjazzfest); Instagram: @dcjazzfest.

## 36th Free Chicago Blues Festival Takes Place June 7 to June 9

The 36th Chicago Blues Festival takes place Friday June 7 through Sunday June 9 in Chicago's Millennium Park, 201 E Randolph St. The world's largest Blues Festival will have a diverse lineup celebrating the blues' past, present and future. The Chicago Blues Festival shares the great Chicago-born music tradition with the world while shining a spotlight on the genre's contributions to soul, R&B, gospel, rock, hip-hop and more.



Ruthie Foster

Music begins each day at 11am at the Budweiser Crossroads Stage, the Visit Mississippi Juke Joint, the Front Porch and the Park Grill - Chicago Stage. The Jay Pritzker Pavilion will feature headliners from 5 to 9pm. Headline performers include Bobby Rush, Bettye LaVette, Ruthie Foster, the Jimmy Johnson Blues Band, Don Bryant and Latimore, a special tribute set for the late Mike Ledbetter by The CONNECTION with Mike Welch and Friends, and Charlie Musselwhite with special guest Billy



Billy Boy Arnold

Boy Arnold and many more.

Other performers on the other stages include, but not limited to, Joanna Connor; Benny Turner and Real Blues; Thornetta Davis; Guy King with Chris Cain; Jimmy Burns, Karen Wolfe; Grady Champion; Bob Stroger; Kenny Smith & The House Bumpers; Mojo Morganfield & The Mannish Boyz; Breezy Radio; Vance 'Guitar' Kelly; Marquise Knox; Rico McFarland, Carl Weathersby and Kenneth "Hollywood" Scott; Billy Boy Arnold; Super Chicken; John Primer; O.B. Buchana; Mary Lane; Tribute to Otis Spann; Dom Flemons; Lurrie Bell; Harmonica Hinds; Omar Coleman; Melvin Taylor; The Kinsey Report; Roomful of Blues with guest vocalist Lynne Jordan; RL Boyce; Jarekus Singleton; Zac Harmon; Willie Buck; Erwin Helfer; Toronzo Cannon; Cash Box Kings; and the Mike Wheeler Band. Also Rosa's Lounge (3420 W. Armitage Ave.; [rosa-slounge.com](http://rosa-slounge.com)) will have a daily showcase (11AM to 9PM) of Chicago Blues Legends and emerging artists that have called Rosa's Lounge home over the last 35 years.

For more information, visit [www.chicagobluesfestival.us](http://www.chicagobluesfestival.us). Besides having the full Festival schedule, it has information on clubs and venues, other sites of interest to Blues Lovers.

**Ron Weinstock (Photos by Ron Weinstock)**





Stanley Clarke (© Raj Naik)

## Stanley Clarke Returns to the Detroit Jazz Festival

The Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation proudly presents Stanley Clarke, undoubtedly one of the most celebrated acoustic and electric bass players in the world, as its Artist-in-Residence for the 2019 Detroit Jazz Festival presented by Quicken Loans. Clarke's much anticipated return and performances will be a highlight at the festival, now celebrating its 40th year. This year the festival will take place August 30 to September 2. For information, visit [detroitjazzfest.org](http://detroitjazzfest.org)

As the 2019 Artist-in-Residence, Clarke will support educational clinics for students across the region throughout the year and lead multiple performances during Labor Day Weekend. Clarke will also be featured during an April 2 preview luncheon at the Detroit Athletic Club to unveil the Festival's 2019 full lineup; and perform at a fundraiser at the Dirty Dog Jazz Cafe that same night. Previously, his scheduled sets during the 2014 and 2017 festivals were cancelled due to inclement weather.

"Stanley Clarke is the perfect ambassador for our Festival during this banner year. His musical accomplishments, perennial career and commitment to the perseverance of jazz have unequivocally positioned him as a 'living legend,'"

said Chris Collins, president and artistic director of the Detroit Jazz Festival. "We're fortunate to bring him back as the 2019 Artist-in-Residence for what will be an exceptional 40th year jazz celebration."

Clarke is a 4-time GRAMMY® Award-winning, recording artist, performer, composer, conductor, arranger, producer and a composer for recordings and film. He truly has attained "living legend" status during his more than 40-year career as a bass virtuoso.

He is the first bassist in history to double on acoustic and electric bass with equal ferocity and the first jazz-fusion bassist ever to headline tours, selling out shows worldwide. A veteran of more than 40 albums, Clarke's creativity has been recognized and rewarded in every way imaginable. He was Rolling Stone's very first Jazzman of the Year and bassist winner of Playboy's Music Award for ten straight years. Clarke was honored with Bass Player Magazine's Lifetime Achievement Award and is a member of Guitar Player Magazine's "Gallery of Greats." In 2011, he was honored with the highly prestigious Miles Davis Award at the Montreal Jazz Festival for his entire body of work. In September 2016, Clarke became a part of the permanent collection displayed at the Smithsonian's new National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

Clarke believes in giving back to help young musicians hone their skills. He and his wife, Sofia, established The Stanley Clarke Foundation fourteen years ago as a charitable organization, which offers scholarships to talented young musicians each year.

"Our mission of jazz not only brings dynamic artists and performances to Detroit but also showcases the discipline and creativity of jazz artists in our community," continued Collins. "This mission and the support of our sponsors and supporters are what gives us the ability to deliver the world's largest and best free jazz festival in the world."

Some of the Festival's past Artists-in-Residences include Chick Corea, Wayne Shorter, Ron Carter and Pat Metheny.

About the Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation:

The Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization that presents jazz and educational workshops throughout the year.

The Foundation supports the Detroit Jazz Festival presented by Quicken Loans, which is the largest free jazz festival in the world and a major tourist attraction for the City of Detroit, with 26 percent of its audience coming from out of state. For more information, visit [detroitjazzfest.org](http://detroitjazzfest.org).

The Foundation receives grant funding from the Kresge Foundation, Erb Family Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the D'Addario Foundation. Hundreds of individuals also contribute to the Festival through membership and donations.

Major corporate partners include Quicken Loans, J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., DTE Foundation, Carhartt, Inc., Mack Avenue Music Group, Absopure, Dirty Dog Jazz Cafe and Comcast Cable.

## 2019 Inductees into the Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame

Jazz at Lincoln Center just announced its 4 inductees into the Ertegun Hall of Fame. They are Julian “Cannonball” Adderley, Dinah Washington, Frank Trumbauer, and Chick Webb. They were selected from a group selected by a nominating committee that included a diverse group of musicians. The criteria used included: 1) Achieved innovation in a style or a concept of playing; 2) Created an original concept with a body of music or body of arrangements; 3) Spoke/speaks across generations, unbound to his or her generation’s concept of style; 4) Originated a definitive style; 5) Popularized a style without compromising the aesthetic quality of the music; 6) Occupies a significant position within the jazz lineage; and 7) Influenced musicians across time.

From the Ertegun Hall of Fame website on this year’s nominees:

### **Julian “Cannonball” Adderley - (1928-1975)**

An alto saxophonist of incredible influence, Cannonball Adderley managed to help define multiple styles of playing, making indelible contributions to the worlds of Hard Bop, Modal Jazz, Soul Jazz, and Fusion. Sporting a full-bodied sound and Blues-drenched delivery, Cannonball’s sound graced some of music’s most iconic records, from ‘Kind of Blue’ to ‘The Black Messiah.’

### **Frank Trumbauer - (1901-1956)**

The musical line of Cool innovators like Chet Baker and Miles Davis traces back to the saxophone poet Lester Young, but indeed Lester’s own innovations owe a tremendous debt to the masterful Frank Trumbauer. The nonpareil master of the C Melody saxophone, Trumbauer, famously in collaboration with Bix Beiderbecke, mastered a singing lyrical line that set the gold standard for the Jazz ballad.

### **Dinah Washington - (1924-1963)**

A formidable vocal master who even enjoyed cross-over success on the charts, Dinah Washington effortlessly bridged the worlds of Jazz, Blues, R&B and even pop. Dinah’s distinctive vocal prowess and tone enabled her to take any song and make it uniquely her own, undertaking transformative interpretations of anything from Fats Waller to Hank Williams.

### **Chick Webb - (1905-1939)**

Few bands in the Swing Era swung as hard as the Chick Webb Orchestra. Overseeing one of Jazz’s most formidable ensembles, Webb drove the band along with some of the most swinging, innovative, and influential drum work of the era. Whether on instrumental numbers like Harlem Congo or on vocal works like A-Tisket A-Tasket (featuring the rising star of Ella Fitzgerald), Webb and his ensemble were one of the Swing Era’s most remarkable forces to be reckoned with, and a perpetual favorite of dancers everywhere.

A full list of the prior inductees can be found at the website: <https://academy.jazz.org/hall-of-fame/>.

## Ahmad Jamal, Wayne Shorter among those honored by Jazz Journalists Association

Compiled by Ron Weinstock

The 24th annual Jazz Journalists Association Jazz Awards have been announced. Professional Journalist Members of the JJA made open nominations in a first selection round; those who received the most nominations advanced to the final ballot. The winners are listed below:

### 2019 WINNERS IN JAZZ MUSIC AND RECORDING

Lifetime Achievement in Jazz

Ahmad Jamal

Jazz Musician of the Year

Wayne Shorter

Up and Coming Musician of the Year

Linda May Han Oh

Composer of the Year

Wayne Shorter

Arranger of the Year

Maria Schneider

Record of the Year

West Side Story Reimagined

Bobby Sanabria Multiverse Big Band (Jazzheads)

Historical Record of the Year

Both Directions at Once: The Lost Album

John Coltrane (Impulse!/Verve)

Record Label of the Year

ECM

Male Vocalist of the Year

Kurt Elling

Female Vocalist of the Year

Cécile McLorin Salvant

Large Ensemble of the Year

Orrin Evans and the Captain Black Big Band

Mid-sized Ensemble of the Year

Wayne Shorter Quartet

Trumpeter of the Year

Ingrid Jensen

Trombonist of the Year

Wycliffe Gordon

(continued on page 7)

Multi-Reeds Player of the Year  
Scott Robinson

Alto Saxophonist of the Year  
Miguel Zénon

Tenor Saxophonist of the Year  
Chris Potter

Baritone Saxophonist of the Year  
Gary Smulyan

Soprano Saxophonist of the Year  
Jane Ira Bloom

Flutist of the Year  
Nicole Mitchell

Clarinetist of the Year  
Anat Cohen

Guitarist of the Year  
Bill Frisell

Pianist of the Year  
Kenny Barron

Keyboards Player of the Year  
Dr. Lonnie Smith

Bassist of the Year  
Linda May Han Oh

Violinist-Violist-Cellist of the Year  
Tomeka Reid

Percussionist of the Year  
Pedrito Martinez

Mallet Instrumentalist of the Year  
Joe Locke

Traps Drummer of the Year  
Brian Blade

Player of the Year of Instruments Rare in Jazz  
Scott Robinson

2019 WINNERS IN JAZZ JOURNALISM  
Lifetime Achievement in Jazz Journalism  
John Szwed

Print-Periodical-Website of the Year  
DownBeat

Blog of the Year  
Do The Math- Ethan Iverson

Book of the Year  
Sophisticated Giant: The Life and Legacy of Dexter Gordon  
by Maxine Gordon (University of California Press)

The Helen Dance - Robert Palmer Award for Excellence in Writing in 2018  
Nate Chinen

The Marian McPartland-Willis Conover Award for Career Excellence in Broadcasting  
Tom Reney "Jazz a la Mode", WFCR, New England Public Radio

The Lona Foote-Bob Parent Award for Career Excellence in Photography  
Val Wilmer

Album Art of the Year  
Charles Henry Alston for Echoes of Harlem by Mat Jodrell (Nicholas Records)

Photo of the Year  
Adriana Mateo for Roy Hargrove at the Umbria Jazz Festival Teatro Morlacchi, Perugia, 7/15/2018

For more information visit <https://www.jjazawards.org/p/2019-winners.html>.

## 40th Montreal Jazz Festival

Late June and early June many of the major cities in Canada including Victoria, Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa hold major blues Festivals. The largest of these Festivals is the Montreal Jazz Festival (Festival International de Jazz de Montréal). This year the Festival, the largest Jazz Festival in the World) runs from June 26 to July 6. Like previous years the center of the Festival is in addition to continuing to occupy its central site in the Quartier des Spectacles with large-scale gatherings, indoor shows and family activities. This year the Festival will reach a local public thanks to the creation of new festival hubs including taking place this year in the Verdun borough.

The Festival includes headliners from Jazz, Blues, World and Pop Music including Melody Gardot, Stacey Kent, Buddy Guy and Colin James, Norah Jones, George Benson, Brad Mehldau, Chucho Valdés, John Pizzarelli, Ravi Coltrane, Joshua Redman, Anthony Sanchez, Bobo Stenson, Django Festival Allstars, Roberto Fonseca, Todd Gustavsen, Vijay Iyer & Craig Taborn, Kurt Elling & Danilo Pérez, Patricia Barber, Christian Scott, Christine Jensen, Cyrille Aimée, Melissa Aldana, Diane Reeves, Chick Corea, Holly Cole, and Lee Fields and the Expressions. As I write this, they have announced the outdoor stages shows, but there are a number of outdoor stages with many well known performers.

Of course, there is so much to see in Montreal during the day (most of the major Festival events are in the evening).

Cirque de Soleil is based in Montréal and during the time of the Festival, they are presenting a revival of "Alegría: In a New Light".

The Festival website is [www.montrealjazzfest.com](http://www.montrealjazzfest.com)  
*Ron Weinstock*

## Newport Jazz Festival Celebrates 65th Anniversary With Stellar Lineup

The oldest Jazz Festival, the Newport jazz Festival, celebrates its 65th Anniversary in Fort Adams Park in Newport, Rhode Island, August 2 through August 4.

Friday Night, June 2, there will be a concert at The International tennis Hall of Fame in the Newport Casino featuring Jon Batiste and Friends. At Fort Adams on Friday the lineup includes Herbie Hancock, Thundercat; Corrine Bailey Rae, The Bad Plus, Sun Ra Arkestra, Gary Bartz Another Earth 50th Anniversary with Ravi Coltrane and special guest Charles Tolliver, Spanish Harlem Orchestra, Women of the World, and the Billy Hart Quartet.

Saturday's lineup includes Kamasi Washington, Hancock/McBride/Colaiuta (Herbie Hancock, Christian McBride and Vinnie Colaiuta); Dianne Reeves, Dee Dee Bridgewater and the Memphis Soulphony, Ron Carter Trio, Makala McCraven; Ravi Coltrane; Ralph Peterson and the Messenger Legacy, Joel Ross' Good Vibes, and The Royal Bopsters featuring Sheila Jordan.

Sunday, June 4, the lineup includes Common, Terence Blanchard Featuring the E-Collective, Sons of Kemet, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Marcus Strickland Twi-Life, Christian Sands (3 Grand) Errol Graner Tribute, Dafnis Prieto Big Band, Aaron Diehl, Lauen Sevan/Helen Zsung duo, and Matana Roberts.

Of course there are many more performers on the lineup. The website is [www.newportjazz.org](http://www.newportjazz.org) -Ron Weinstock

## Seventh Annual Eastside Kings Festival

One of the most unique and important Blues Festivals is the Eastside Kings Festival celebration of the Texas' African-American blues musicians and community. The Seventh edition of this festival takes place September 14 and 15 in Austin Texas. Featured performers at this year's festival include Tutu Jones, Lucky Peterson, RL Griffin, Margaret Wright, Curley Cormier, Alvin Draper and Crystal Thomas. There will be a lot more as well.

The Festival has an opening party on September 13 at Antone's Night Club. On September 14 there will be workshops at Austin's Vintage Guitars with the Festival taking place on the 14th and 15th at 12th & Chicon in Austin. The 2018 Festival had over 30 Bands in 7 venues. Festival sponsors are Living Blues, the Eastside Kings Foundation, Austin Vintage Guitars and ABS Magazine. Eddie Stout, who has operated Dialtone Records, which focuses on many of these blues performers, is a major force behind this festival. For more information contact [Dial@dialtonerecords.com](mailto:Dial@dialtonerecords.com).

## Smithsonian-Folkways Helps New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival Celebrate 50th Festival

As you are reading this, the 50th New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival will have concluded. In celebration of this, Smithsonian Folkways is releasing "Jazz Fest," a five-disc box set of live recordings from the iconic fest, spanning 1974 through 2016, featuring some of the Festivals most iconic performers.

The set's 53 tracks span the various genres represented at Jazz Fest while putting the focus on local artists rather than big-name headliners. Disc One covers jazz; Discs Two and Three spotlight blues, R&B, and gospel; Disc Four features Cajun and zydeco artists; and Disc Five winds the set down with everything from funk to hip-hop.

In addition to Trombone Shorty, New Orleans greats represented on the set include Allen Toussaint (who appears several times, once in a duet with Bonnie Raitt), Irma Thomas, the Funky Meters, Earl King (heard in a 1974 recording), Donald Harrison, Terence Blanchard, Kermit Ruffins, Buckwheat Zydeco, the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Professor Longhair, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Beau-Soleil, Dr. John, the Neville Brothers, Henry Butler and Big Freedia (captured at the 2016 fest). The 5 discs will have over 300 minutes of music.

The set also includes a 136-page book with a series of essays and recollections dealing with the history of the fest, plus detailed notes on each track. Jazz Fest producer George Wein — also the man behind the Newport Jazz and Folk Festivals — contributed a forward discussing the history of the Festival. Others contributing essays include Keith Spera, Karen Celestan, Robert Cataliotti, Jeff Place, Rachel Lyons, and Jon Pareles. The book also includes numerous photos spanning the festival's history,

Some of the selections include "Indian Red" by the Golden Eagles Mardi Gras Indians; "One Night Only (The March)" by Trombone Shorty; "Free to Be" by Donald Harrison; "Royal Garden Blues" by the Kermit Ruffins Big Band; "Louisiana 1927" by John Boutté; "Yes We Can Can" by Allen Toussaint; "Ruler of My Heart" by Irma Thomas; "Dizzy Miss Lizzy" by Snooks Eaglin; "Big Chief Got the Golden Crown" by The White Eagles; "Iko Iko/Brother John/Saints Go Marching In" by the Dixie Cuts; "Trick Bag"; Earl King; "Blackbird Special" by The Dirty Dozen Brass Band; "Secret Love" by Germaine Bazzle with the Red Tyler Quintet; "I Want to Be at That Meeting / Golden Gate Gospel Train" by The Zion Harmonizers; "Paper in My Shoe" by Boozoo Chavis; "Midland Two-Step" by The Savoy Family Cajun Band; "Yellow Moon" by the Neville Brothers; "What Is Success" by Allen Toussaint and Bonnie Raitt; "Take the A Train" by Clarence "Gatemouth Brown" and "Amazing Grace/ One Love" by The Neville Brothers.

A full list of the songs and performers along with musical samples can be found at the Smithsonian Folkways website: <https://folkways.si.edu/jazzfest>. -Ron Weinstock

# jazz & blues report



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

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

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



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

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

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can

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



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

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



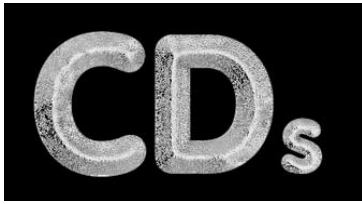
Art. Ask for More.

AMERICANSFORTHEARTS.ORG

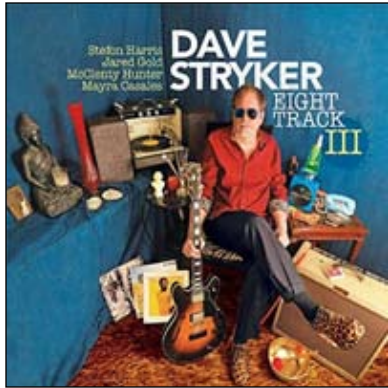


NAMM  
Foundation

Image donated by Corbin Sattmann. TM 2008 Estate of Mercer K. Ellington by CMC Worldwide



We only bring you  
the Cream of the Crop!



### DAVE STRYKER Eight Track III STRYKEZONE

This CD is the third edition of guitarist Dave Stryker's reimagining of classic pop tunes from the '70s with his working trio plus vibes. Vibraphonist Stefon Harris, who told Stryker he needed to complete the trilogy, joins Stryker, organist Jared Gold, and drummer McClenty Hunter on these nine tracks, five of which also have congas and percussion from Mayra Casales. Harris was on the first of these recordings with Steve Nelson being on the second.

Stryker suggests playing these classic melodies is a great way to connect with people and bring more folks into the music. This may be easy to listen to, but that stems as much from this familiarity.

Listening to the ensemble on the marvelous rendering of Steely Dan's "Pretzel Logic," or the Temptations' hit "Papa Was a Rolling Stone," one gets melodious performances with fresh, imaginative solos. The groove is swinging at a nice measured pace.

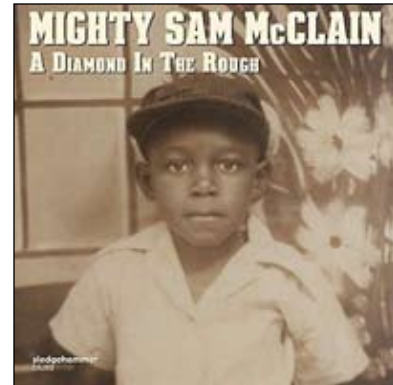
Stevie Wonder's "Too High" opens with Stryker's sparkling guitar with a deft touch and thoughtfully constructed solo, followed by Harris' effervescent vibes and then Gold's greasy B-3.

Then there is The Carpenter's ballad, "We've Only Just Begun," with deliberate, spare playing by Stryker and Harris adding to the preciousness of this ballad performance that is beautifully played at a slow tempo. In contrast, the group plays Burt Bacharach's "This Guy's In Love With You" at a brisker tempo, with Gold superb here.

Roy Ayres' "Everybody Loves The Sunshine" is a bright feature for Harris' vibes, while Stryker and company perform a strong, blues-infused rendition of Stevie Wonder's "Joy Inside My Tears," that builds with smoldering

intensity leading to its conclusion.

The music here is as entertaining, engaging and substantial as the two earlier volumes and serves as a solid conclusion to the "Eight Track" series if this is indeed the final set of the series. **Ron Weinstock**



### MIGHTY SAM MCCLAIN A Diamond in the Rough Sledgehammer Blues

I miss Mighty Sam McClain. One of the finest of the deep soul singers who recorded a bunch of classic 45s, his career blossomed after he started recording albums and crossing over to the blues audience.

"A Diamond in the Rough" contains his final recordings made shortly before his passing in 2015, which are stripped down recordings on which the only accompaniment is by Pat Herlehy's acoustic guitars with saxophones or flute added to some.

There is the celebratory feel of "My Everything" where his performance evokes Solomon Burke and is followed by a slow blues, "When the Hurt is Over," that he soulfully sings over Herlehy's simple backing while Herlehy adds some single note runs. "Grooving" is a mid-tempo song on which Herlehy adds tenor sax over his guitar backing as he pleads for his woman to hold him and groove him as he growls, shouts and scats the lyrics.

Charles Neville collaborated with McClain on "Love's Gonna Find," another soulful song with a gospel flavor, with McClain's fervent singing enlivened by some gut-bucket tenor sax.

"Love Me If You Want To" has another solid blues vocal on a theme related to the James Cotton classic "Love Me or Leave Me," where he tells his woman he's tired of waiting on her, so make up your mind. One has to be impressed by the vigor and the virtuosity of McClain's singing throughout, but kudos go out to Herlehy with his solo on "Question" being particularly impressive.

Herlehy is on flute on "Believe" where he sings we can make it if we try, and let's get together to set us free. Perhaps he was aware of his mortality when singing "Southern Land" and reflecting about "going back to where it all started from" and how he misses it.

"Holy Ghost Fever" is a stirring, gospel lyric set to a blues groove with recollections of Muddy Waters, and Howlin' Wolf and others. The acoustic nature of these per-



performances lend them an intimacy but also they sound as if not completely finished. A full horn section and a rhythm section would have provided a fuller backing to frame the vocals. For this reason, this atypical recording will most appeal to those already fans of Mighty Sam McClain. For those not familiar with his music, one might suggest “Sledgehammer Soul and Down Home Blues,” “Sweet Dreams,” or “Too Much Jesus (Not Enough Whiskey)” over this recording.

**Ron Weinstock**



## BRANDON GOLDBERG

### Let's Play

BRANDON GOLDBERG MUSIC

Joey Alexander isn't the only precocious young pianist to emerge in recent years. At only 12 years, Brandon Goldberg recorded this album, and he has been raising eyebrows with his considerable piano skills. His teachers include Shelly Berg, Avery Shape and Matt Wilson, and he has been mentored by Monty Alexander.

Alexander is quoted in this booklet including observing how he is “always knocking out the crowd.” I note that he received a DownBeat Student Music Jazz Instrumentalist Soloist Honors Winner in the May, 2019 issue. On his debut recording he is accompanied by Ben Wolfe on bass and Donald Edwards on drums with tenor saxophonist Marcus Strickland adding tenor sax to two of the nine selections.

He is a player who follows his own muse opening with Monk's “Well You Needn't,” where he perhaps plays less angularly and with more fluidity, hinting at the melody more than stating it but impresses with his imagination and logic. “Angel Eyes,” is a number that he talked about with Alexander (who had accompanied Frank Sinatra on it) and listened to him play changes, resulting in a more austere performance which had hints of Monk's “Round About Midnight” about it with Edwards deftly using brushes.

“You Mean Me” is a contrafact of Monk's “I Mean You” and has a funk groove and Strickland's rugged tenor sax with Goldberg's playing more angular here. Other originals include the dynamic “The Understream” with Edwards featured and his tribute to McCoy Tyner, “McCoy,” with an auspicious introduction by bassist Wolfe. The Beatles' “Blackbird” receives a lovely,

exquisite interpretation and like elsewhere his playing and musical sense make his age irrelevant. There is a delightful melodic quality to his performance of Herbie Hancock's “Dolphin Dance,” with Strickland superlative on this as well.

He interprets two Duke Ellington numbers on this. “Caravan” opens with Edwards' rumbling solo and then Goldberg impresses on piano and Fender Rhodes with the use of polyrhythms and a clever riff. A solo rendition of “In a Sentimental Mood” is inspired by Ellington's introductory riff on his recording with John Coltrane. It is fascinating to see how Brandon constructs and develops a solo that shows a musical maturity well beyond his youth.

With the superb backing he receives from Wolfe and Edwards, and Strickland's noteworthy contributions, Brandon Goldberg has not simply made a promising debut but has produced a superlative jazz piano recording.

**Ron Weinstock**



## ARLEN ROTH

### TeleMasters

AQUINNAH RECORDS

Arlen Roth has collected a bunch of fellow masters of the Fender Telecaster guitar for this new album. With a rhythm section of Tom Hambridge on drums, Tommy McDonald on bass, and usually Billy Panda on acoustic guitar (or Bryan Sutton), he has joined with Steve Wariner, Cindy Cashdollar (steel guitar), Jack Pearson, Steve Cropper, Brad Paisley, Will Ray, Albert Lee, Vince Gill, Brett Mason, Joe Bonamassa, Johnny Hiland, Bill Kirchen, Jerry Donahue, and Redd Volkaert. Most of these guests come from the country music world with Cropper and Bonamassa being exceptions.

Mostly instrumental, there are vocals from Steve Cropper, Sweet Mikey C. and Arlen's daughter, Lexie Roth. There are some terrific country romps including the opening “Remington Ride” with Wariner and the lively adaptation of Paul Simon's “Mrs. Robinson” with Albert Lee. Similar selections include perhaps the over-the-top interpretation of “Ghost Riders in the Sky” with Cindy Cashdollar's steel guitar adding atmosphere and the cover of Chuck Berry's “Promised Land” with Jerry Donahue and a vocal from Sweet Mikey C.

There are many other pleasures including Roth's marvelous duet with Bill Kirchen, “Tuff Tele,” along with Jack



Pearson's blues-rock rendition of "Key To the Highway." Pearson is a pretty fair singer as shown on his own "I Can Fix It." Steve Cropper and Hambridge wrote, "White Lightning" with a fair, at best, Cropper vocal but with plenty of solid guitar. "Satisfied Mind" is a lovely guitar duet by Roth with Vince Gill while Roth's rendition of "Tennessee Waltz" has a precious vocal from his daughter Lexie. There is a highly charged revival of Link Wray's "Rumble" by Arlen and Will Ray while the trio of Bonamassa, Roth, and Pearson get down for "Joe's Blues," a number in the spirit of Albert Collins. Roth's "Funky Mama" with Jack Hiland is dedicated to Danny Gatton and provides the appropriate guitar fireworks here.

With 16 tracks and an hour and a quarter of hot guitar, Arlen Roth has put together a memorable release for country music and roots music guitar lovers.

**Ron Weinstock**



## DOUG MACDONALD QUARTET

**Organisms**  
**SELF-PRODUCED**

"Organisms" is the thirteenth album (and 3rd organ project) by guitarist MacDonald who leads an organ quartet including organist Carey Frank, tenor saxophonist Bob Sheppard, and drummer Ben Scholz. MacDonald is a Philadelphia native who was inspired by such guitarists as Joe Pass, Johnny Smith, Howard Roberts, and Wes Montgomery while forging a personal style. He first played jazz in Hawaii working at a hotel followed by a period in Las Vegas where he played in lounges and showrooms with such greats as Joe Williams, trombonist Carl Fontana, and tenor-saxophonist Jack Montrose. MacDonald has become a fixture in Los Angeles playing with the big bands of Bill Holman, Ray Anthony, and John Clayton as well as such performers as Ray Charles, Sarah Vaughan, Stan Getz, pianist Hank Jones, and bassist Ray Brown. He also leads his own combos and his 13-piece ensemble The Jazz Coalition.

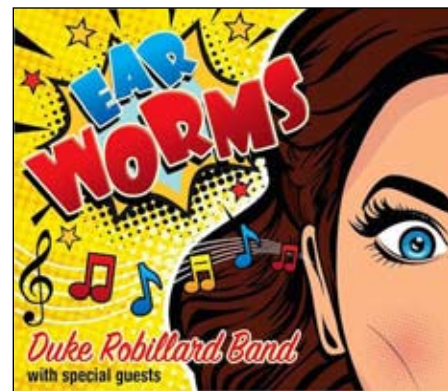
He impresses with his clean, fleet and imaginative attack and thoughtfully constructed solos. While much of this recording is straight-ahead organ quartet performances such as the opening rendition of "It's You or No One" where he opens unaccompanied and then dazzles with his driving solo solidly backed by Frank and Scholz before Sheppard impresses with the warmth and controlled heat

of his tenor sax here and Frank takes off on the Hammond B-3. MacDonald's original "Jazz for All Occasions" opens with some fine tenor sax from Sheppard with MacDonald chording under him, followed by "L&T" starting in an atmospheric vein before becoming a heated swinger with more strong guitar.

Also, especially worthy of note is the imaginative interpretation of Sweets Edison's, "Centerpiece" with some sinewy, bluesy tenor sax with Frank supplying some cooking grease, while the lovely ballad performance, "Too Late Now," opens with some exquisite unaccompanied guitar before Sheppard plays with considerable warmth in his lyrical solo. A medley of "Nina Never Knew" with "Indian Summer" is the first of three solo guitar performances where MacDonald fully exhibits his clean, fleet attack and marvelous tone on a precious performance. "Poor Butterfly" is a solid, swinging solo performance, while MacDonald's original "Hortense," has a sparkly tone to it.

"Organisms" is a recording with considerable charm. The Doug MacDonald Quartet has a clean ensemble sound as well as with controlled heat, providing a firm foundation for the imaginative, well-shaped solos heard on this very engaging recording.

**Ron Weinstock**



## THE DUKE ROBILLARD BAND

**Ear Worms**  
**STONY PLAIN**

About his latest recording, "Ear Worms," Duke Robillard states "Ear Worms was conceived as an album of songs that I heard and was attracted to growing up. They are not of one particular genre or style, but rather songs I heard in my pre-teens to my later teens." The term 'ear worms' itself refers to "a song you can't get out of your head because you love it so much, or it can also be a mundane piece of drivel that haunts you like a bad dream." Besides find some choice gems, he also has contributed some originals.

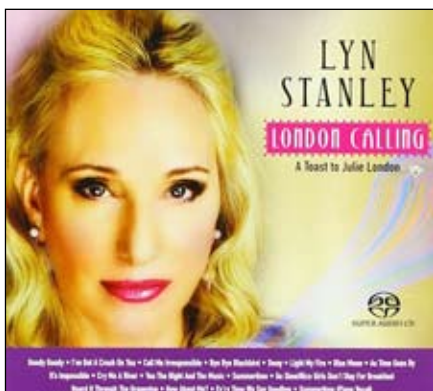
Backing Duke and his guitar is his long-term band of Bruce Bears on keyboards, Brad Hellen on bass and Mark Teixeira on drums. Robillard, Bears, and Teixeira each sing one vocal apiece, with guests Dave Howard, Julie Grant, Sunny Crownover, Chris Cole, Mark Cutler, and Klem Klimek, handling the remaining vocals. Duke himself observes he only sings one tune here as his voice has been giving him trouble. A variety of players add their

instrumental talents to various tracks. This is a fun, wonderfully played recording with the liner booklets including Duke's comments on each song.

"Don't Bother Trying To Steal Her Love" opens this recording with Dave Holland ably handling the vocal. On this Duke channels Ike Turner a little in his rock and roll solo, Duke's only vocal is on the Gerry Goffin and Carole King penned "On This Side Of Goodbye," which he derives from an Eric Burdon recording and it is Baxter Hall doing the guitar rave-up. "Living With The Animals" was the title of an album by Mother Earth with Duke sounding like B.B. King in back a little Chris Cote vocal. Duke's instrumental take on "Careless Love," that he opens focusing on the low strings with reverb and tremolo in Duane Eddy's style before moving to his own style with Bears taking a taut solo and the band striking a nice shuffle groove for all the swing dancers. Other instrumentals include his relaxed, trebly rendition of Arthur Alexander's "Soldier of Love," and the burn the town down cover of Link Wray's "Rawhide."

Arthur Alexander's "Everyday I Have To Cry Some" may be most familiar from Dusty Springfield's recording, but was also recorded by another British singer Julie Grant, who Duke met as a booking agent for Connecticut casinos and then discovered her history. She reprises her recording with Sunny Crownover adding her vocal here with terrific backing. Crownover does a marvelous job reworking Brenda Lee's hit, "Sweet Nothin's," while Klem Klimek sounds like Levon Helm on Chuck Berry's "Dear Dad," on which one can almost imagine Duke doing a duck walk. Bruce Bears sings a nice rendition of Lee Dorsey's "Yes We Can" while Teixeira does the same on The Neville's "Yellow Moon," which are marvelously played covers of these New Orleans classics.

A lovely, jazzy instrumental treatment of "You Belong to Me," brings this thoroughly engaging release to a close. I am sure I am not the only one who will have some 'ear worms' from the performances here. **Ron Weinstock**



## LYN STANLEY

### London Calling: A Toast To Julie London

A.T. MUSIC LLC

Song stylist Lyn Stanley follows up her two volumes of "Moonlight Sessions," with this tribute to the sultry songstress, Julie London. Most of the songs of this tribute were recorded by the great singer and actress, although Stanley includes a couple that she feels would have been perfect

for London, "It's Impossible," and "I Heard It Through the Grapevine." On this she has brought in a stellar group of musicians including guitarist John Chiodini; pianists Mike Garson and Christian Jacob; bassists Chuck Berghofer and Michael Valerio; percussionists Luis Conte, Brad Dutz, and Aaron Serfaty, and drummer Paul Kreibich for interpretations of songs that are mostly from the Great American Songbook. I was not aware that Berghofer, who played the bass line for Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Are Made For Walking," was London's bassist for a period or guitarist Chiodini was Peggy Lee's guitarist for seven years.

Like London, Stanley does not employ a broad vocal range, and her attack is usually understated and melodic. She is backed by a terrific ensemble starting with "Goody Goody," launched by Valerio's Arco bass opening and a chorus shared guitarist between Chiodini (who is superb throughout with his taste and imagination). Chiodini and percussionist Dutz provide a percolating groove to "Call Me Irresponsible," with Garson's sympathetic comping. The rendition of "Bye Bye Blackbird" is an intimate duet between Stanley and bassist Berghofer. "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" is one of the two performances that imagine songs in a manner London might have performed than with an atmospheric backing that allows Stanley to place the focus on the lyrics,

Of course, any salute to Julie London would be incomplete without a rendition of "Cry Me a River," and Stanley's wonderful, plaintive vocal is wonderfully supported by just Chiodini's exquisite guitar (including a marvelous solo) and Berghofer's bass. In a similar vein is her rendition of the classic Cole Porter ballad, "Ev'ry Time We Say Good-bye," with Chiodini and Berghofer equally superb. There are also two appealing, heartfelt renditions of Gershwin's classic "Summertime" with an understated quintet on one and just pianist Garson on the other.

Then there is a sublime interpretation of "It's Impossible," (another song London never recorded) with Chiodini's sublime on his Spanish guitar. Chiodini's superb flamenco-tinged guitar and the band's accompaniment provided on "Light My Fire" makes a version more akin to Jose Feliciano than the Doors, and Lyn's understated sensuality contrasts with the more explicit feel of Jim Morrison on the original.

This is only a sampling of the marvelous music herd on this. There is also a booklet with Scott Yanow's observations on Lyn and each of the 17 performances (which include Lyn's comments).

The sound is wonderful, and the productions, with diverse musical settings, and performances imbued with Lyn Stanley's musical personality result in this superb tribute. This is also available in Limited Edition 33RPM 180g two-disc vinyl and Super-audio CDs. **Ron Weinstock**

**jazz-blues.com**



## BENNY TURNER & CASH MCCALL

### Going Back Home NOLA BLUE RECORDS

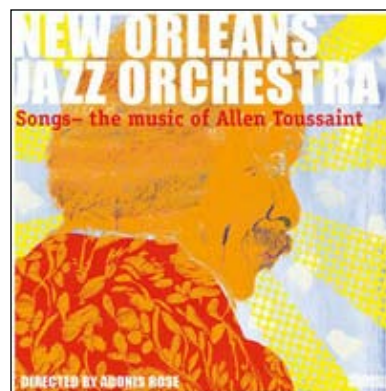
After the death of Clay 'Clady C' Graham of the gospel group The Pilgrim Jubilees, Benny Turner texted Sallie Bengtson, Nola Blue Records president, to find Cash McCall. McCall was found in Memphis but not doing well and needing support. The contact led to the two veterans of Chicago's blues scene of doing the recording session producing "Going Back Home." Turner and his bass and vocals, along with McCall on rhythm guitar and vocals, are joined by a variety of studio players including Raishene Webb, and Joe Krown on keyboards, Butch Mudbone on guitar, Billy Branch and Johnny Sansome on harmonica, and Rodd Bland on drums.

These are solidly performed songs (9 covers and one original) as one might expect from the personnel and Benny Turner's production skills. The vocals are pleasant, if not compelling, with McCall overshadowed by his performances from decades past when he had some hit recordings, did session work as a guitarist for Chess and other labels and spent a year and a half touring with Minnie Riperton. His blues recordings in the intervening years also had a vocal range reflecting his gospel roots.

One should not get an idea that these are poor performances. Turner does a solid job in reviving Harold Burrage's "Got to Find a Way" on which McCall played on as well as a wry treatment of Willie Mabon's hit "Poison Ivy," a driving rendition of Elmore James' "Shake Your Money Maker," as well as a rollicking interpretation of G.L. Crockett's "There's a Man Down There."

McCall had a close connection with Willie Dixon, but adds little to the cover of "Spoonful." Much better is his humorous, talking blues original, "Money." Billy Branch's harmonica and Mudbone's slide guitar contributes to an enjoyable "It Hurts Me Too," with Turner on backing vocal. This Tampa Red song is wrongly credited to Elmore James. There is an entertaining, bawdy "The Dirty Dozens" taken from his days playing with pianist Little Johnnie Jones.

Billy Branch handles the vocal (and harmonica) on a Sonny Boy Williamson cover, "Bring It On Home," that takes this recording home with Turner and McCall in supporting roles. This track closes an enjoyable, although not compelling, Chicago blues recording. **Ron Weinstock**



## NEW ORLEANS JAZZ ORCHESTRA

### Songs - The Music of Allen Toussaint STORYVILLE

In recent years, stories about the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra centered on a scandal involving the conduct of its prior director. Now under the artistic direction of drummer Adonis Rose, this important musical institution returns from a three-year recording hiatus with this big band re-imagining of the music of the late New Orleans legendary pianist-songwriter-performer-producer Allen Toussaint. While some Toussaint songs have been subject to big band treatment (Joe Williams singing "Get Out of My Life Woman" with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra half-century ago), this is I believe the first such big band album dedicated to his music.

I am not familiar with many of the musicians here, but besides Rose, pianist Victor Atkins, tenor saxophonist Edward Petersen and trumpeter Ashlin Parker are names I know as well as vocalists Phillip Manuel and Gerald French. Dee Dee Bridgewater is a guest vocalist, and other guests appearing on this include Roderick Paulin on alto saxophone and Jamil Sharif on trumpet. Atkins provides detailed information on each selection and identifies those making specific contributions that will highlight musical voices to keep an eye on.

The big band arrangements here expand on the originals while retaining the spirit of Toussaint's music. Trombonist and vocalist Michael Watson delivers "Southern Nights" that opens as a Brass Band number before segueing into the more familiar melody. Mike Esnault provided the arrangement, and it does sound like an uncredited tuba driving the bass line. Dee Dee Bridgewater, who suggested this project, sings wonderfully on Victor Atkins stately arrangement of Irma Thomas' hit "It's Raining," with a powerful, imaginative tenor saxophone solo from Ed Petersen.

Ed Petersen provided the arrangement for the Lee Dorsey hit, "Working in the Coal Mine," building on the simple groove and chord structure with a group vocal segment and an outstanding alto saxophone solo from Jeronne Ansari. Another Irma Thomas hit, "Ruler of My Heart" places the spotlight on the band's wonderful lady vocalist Nayo Jones who injects her personality in the performance which goes from a ballad to a Latin-tinged second line groove that takes the song out in Mitch Butler's



arrangement.

Ashlin Parker's trumpet is spotlighted on "Java" that is based on Al Hirt's Grammy Award-winning recording with an ensemble trumpet solo based Hirt's playing on an Ed Sullivan show appearance. It is followed by "Gert Town," a non-Toussaint piece that is a percussion heavy, Mardi Gras Indian styled number sung and written by Gerald French. The gospel-tinged "With You In Mind" is performed as a marvelous duet between Phillip Manuel and Dee Dee Bridgewater with a punchy Emily Fredrickson arrangement with a marvelous alto saxophone solo. Another band original, "Zimple Street," was composed by Leon 'Kid Chocolate' Brown and arranged by Ed Petersen, and is a hard-swinging, blues with marvelous piano from Atkins, a hot trumpet solo and a spirited vocal from Brown.

"Tequila" might seem an odd choice to close this recording, but Toussaint did record it on a 1969 album. Here, against the familiar groove, tenor saxophonist Ricardo Pascal robustly solos followed by some robust tailgating trombone by Michael Watson with Victor Atkins laying down some Afro-Cuban rooted piano over the strong percussion. It closes a marvelously entertaining big band album that lets us know the only news that the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra is now making is its terrific music.

**Ron Weinstock**



## **BIG AL AND THE HEAVYWEIGHTS**

**World Full of Trouble  
ELLERSOUL RECORDS**

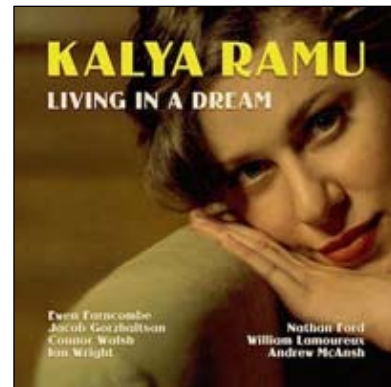
This 12 cut set features "Big Al" Lauro on drums and a rotating cast of other musicians including, Bob Margolin, Lance Younger and Jon Lisi on guitars, Jason Ricci and Destin Thibodeaux on harmonica, Wayne Lohr and Lance Younger on vocals, Dean Galatas and Destin Thibodeaux on bass, Dwight Breland on steel guitar, Glenn "Kool" Sears on percussion, Greg "Shatzky" Shatz on piano accordion, Lance Ellis on horns and Cathy Pace and Donna Slater on background vocals. Hailing from New Orleans the band mixes and matches blues, rock, country and zydeco.

All of the tunes are originals and mostly walk down the well-worn path of the perfect love, "Love So Fine," "Crazy About Your Baby," and "Millionaire Baby," trouble attracting love, "Fool For You," love in trouble, "Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right" and the pain of losing love, "Testify" and "Spanish Moss." There are side trips though: The

rocking title track, which is one of the strongest numbers on the disc, wonders at the state of things while on "Bayou Life" the band jumps into a light zydeco groove as it extols the virtues of, well, a bayou life! "Big Old Rusty Car" is a song about just that and is redeemed from its pedestrian lyrics by a funky groove and a wailing horn chart.

"Mother Trucker" is a countrified rocker that features some hot picking and is reminiscent of any number of Commander Cody releases. Former band member Jason Ricci's harmonica playing is a highlight on the disc with strong contributions on "Crazy About You Baby" and "Millionaire Baby."

**Mark Smith**



## **KALYA RAMU Living In A Dream SELF-PRODUCED**

"Living In A Dream" is the debut jazz recording by the Toronto based vocalist Kalya Ramu. Ramu is very active in the Toronto music scene, leading, writing for and performing with multiple groups, including her blues-rock band Angora, The Bettys, her own band Kal's Hot Four. On this recording she is backed by a quartet of Jacob Gorzhaltsan - Tenor Saxophone & Clarinet; Ewen Farncombe - Piano; Connor Walsh - Upright Bass; and Ian Wright - Drums. There are special guests including William Lamoureux - Strings; Andrew McAnsh - Trumpet; Nathan Ford - Vocals; and Nathan Martin & Jackson Welchner - Background Vocals. Ramu wrote 4 of the 11 songs, the others being some classics. She cites Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan as significant influences, but she has developed into a marvelous singer with a lovely voice, clear diction and nuanced phrasing who will sometimes add an appealing scatting.

Her quartet is superb as the back her on her original "Little One," which introduces her delightful vocals. Gorzhaltsan adds some cottony clarinet behind her soothing vocal with a tasteful backing vocal present. On tenor sax, Gorzhaltsan kicks off a brisk "Just You Just Me," with her melodious voice and scatting along with a vigorous tenor sax solo while the band swings like tomorrow will never come. On another original, "Find In Me," strings enhance the longing expressed in her vocal. She displays a perkier side on "Four or Five Times" with Farncombe's delightful, stride-inflected piano and another energetic Gorzhaltsan tenor sax solo. There is also a jaunty revival of "Am I Blue,"

with Andrew McAnsh's growling muted trumpet in the mix along with Gorzhaltzan's clarinet, and a sublime vocal duet with Nathan Ford on "Tea For Two." There is also a marvelous interpretation of "What's New," with Gorzhaltzan's cottony backing evoking Ben Webster and other tenor sax players, the spirited rendition of "It's a Good Day," and a wistful treatment of "You Go To My Head."

Throughout this recording, Ramu's pitch, phrasing, intonation and lyrical interpretation along with the beautiful backing result in this excellent vocal jazz recording. It is no dream that she is so good. **Ron Weinstock**



## JOHN CLIFTON

**In the Middle of Nowhere**  
RIP CAT RECORDS

I was very impressed by John Clifton's last recording, "Night Life." The California singer-harmonica player (and occasional guitarist) returns with this new album which has him backed by his working band of Scott Abeyta on guitar, Bartek Szopinski on piano and organ, Jack Finney on bass, Edward Fritz on drums and percussion, and John Shafer on tambourine and cowbell. With five originals and six unusual covers, Clifton brings his version of West Coast swing (a mix of Chicago blues and West Coast jump) with classic R&B and rock and roll touches to the fore.

Reviewing "Night Life," I observed his straight-forward singing was "suggestive of Phil Alvin of The Blasters." This is evident immediately with the driving cover of Lightnin' Slim's "I'm Leaving You Baby." I originally thought he had redone the similarly titled Howlin' Wolf song by the performance but John has informed me that it was taken from an Excello 45. In any event, it is a rousing performance that displays his impressive full-throated harmonica playing. The title track has a riff reminiscent of James Cotton's "Lovin' Cup," and besides Clifton's fine harmonica solo, Abeyta's skilled and thoughtful guitar is also spotlighted. Jimmy Rogers' "If It Ain't Me," is transformed from a slow blues to a benzedrine speeded up shuffle that features dazzling guitar, harmonica, and piano, although I believe the tempo diminishes the impact of the lyric. The instrumental "Cool Spot in Hell" is a wonderfully played instrumental with a jazzy flavor and unusual twists.

Clifton's affection for Howlin' Wolf is evident on a buoyant cover of Wolf's rendition of "Poor Boy," which is followed by an unusual adaptation of Charley Jordan's

"Keep It Clean." This was an acoustic guitar showcase (the late Larry Johnson also did a wonderful version), and Clifton transforms it into a band rendition with a nice guitar solo over Szopinski's organ. "Junkie Woman Blues" is a change of pace. It is an amusing acoustic performance with Clifton playing dobro over Szopinski's honky tonk piano. He sings about his woman who stays high all the time and "who will love you like the devil when she needs her things,... she don't need no money and got a great big band of tricks."

"Four Years Ago" has the feel of a Yardbirds--styled rave-up of a Billy Boy Arnold song, while on "Ain't Spending No More Money," Clifton sounds as if he is channeling Rice 'Sonny Boy Williamson' Miller. It is a lively shuffle that may evoke "Nine Below Zero," with Abeyta again displaying his tastefulness and imagination mixing chords and single note runs. Then there is a superbly sung rendition of Junior Wells' "So Tired I Could Cry," with more Sonny Boy II styled harmonica and fine guitar from Abeyta. A spirited, rockabilly-flavored cover of Merle Haggard's "Honky Tonk Night Time Man," closes an impressive, marvelously sung and played recording. **Ron Weinstock**



## PETER LIN

**New Age Old Ways**  
SELF-PRODUCED

I was impressed with Peter Lin's previous album "With Respect," and his new album is is another recording that left a strong impression on me. This is with what he calls his TNT Quartet, TNT referring to 'Trombone N' Tenor.' Lin, who has studied with Slide Hampton, Curtis Fuller, Conrad Herwig, and Steve Turre, is joined by a band of which the most familiar is tenor saxophonist JD Allen, one of the most prominent new tenor sax voices. New Jersey natives bassist Ian Kenselaar and drummer Nic Cacioppo are new to me. The piano-less quartet format as well as the album title (suggestive of Old and New Dreams, the Ornette Coleman alumni band), suggests that his band is heavily influenced by Coleman. Lin states this and also notes the influence of a mid-range timbre of a trombone and tenor frontline (such as Al Grey and Jimmy Forrest). I also note a definite influence of the blues as an anchor to much of this.

The performances certainly have the feel of the Atlantic era Ornette Coleman with the bluesy, swing opening with "A Path To Understanding," with Cacioppo especially

impressive in supporting the leaders. Lin has a strong expressive range with his steel wool tone while Allen is robust and turbulent. "Celestial Being" is inspired by Lin's love of manga and anime and after the two horns state the theme, Kenselaar takes a swirling solo over which Lin enters in a rambunctious fashion.

On the track, "New Age, Old Ways," Lin refers to the musician's struggle to play an older style of music in a relevant way. It is marvelous to see how they develop this performance over a bluesy motif. The title "Red Label" was inspired by Lin drinking some Johnny Walker at a wedding gig that allowed him to relax. It is an excellent blues, with Kenselaar's opening slow drag bass leading to Lin's rumbling tailgate blues solo and Allen's gutbucket tenor. Lin calls "TNT Theme" an "effort to recreate the excitement of the 'two tenor blowing sessions' similar to Sonny Stitt & Gene Ammons." It is a heated blues with an intriguing rhythmic flavor and some inspired fervent playing from Lin and Allen over the percolating groove.

The remainder of this recording is of similar high quality. Peter Lin and his TNT Quartet impresses with the absorbing music on a fabulous recording. Incidentally, there is apparently a manga by Lin available online.

*Ron Weinstock*



## MANX MARRINER MAINLINE

**Hell Bound for Heaven**  
STONY PLAIN RECORDS

The Manx Marriner Mainline is a project of Harry Manx and Steve Marriner, two of Canada's most award-winning blues and roots music artists. The two multi-instrumentalists (Manx on slide guitar, banjo and his trademark Mohan Veena and Marriner on electric, slide, baritone and 12-string guitars, harmonica, bass, Hammond organ and drums) Both sing and contributed songs to the disc that also includes several venerable blues and gospel songs including a Charlie Patton blues, and gospel numbers from The Staples and Reverend Gary Davis. Clayton Doley adds Hammond organ, and Moe Duella is on drums on some of this recording.

There is a nice mix of material that is well sung and played starting with the opening Manx blues "Nothing," with nice guitar and harmonica from Marriner, along with a nice shuffle groove and Manx's appealing, slightly gravelly singing. In contrast, Manx's "Everybody's Knows" is a nice country-tinged number with Marriner adding atmospheric

guitar. Marriner's "My Lord" is a solid gospel blues with some nice acoustic 12-string guitar and harmonica. Manx plays a banjo lead and delivers a wistful vocal to a lovely ballad "My Only One," with Doley adding Hammond organ. Manx sings an engaging, straightforward, small ensemble reworking of Charlie Patton's "Rattlesnake Blues." This is one of three covers as Marriner does a nice rendition of the Staple Singers "Wish I Had Answered," with an accompaniment that evokes Howlin' Wolf and Ray Charles and Rev. Gary Davis' "Death Have No Mercy," where Manx adds slide guitar to Marriner's 12-string guitar

The last song is an enticing ballad performance, "Rise and Fall In Love," sung by Manx with Marriner's adept electric guitar accompaniment and Jim Bowskill adding viola and violin at the end. It closes this delightful collaboration by Manx and Marriner that brings us fresh renditions of older songs mixed with intriguing, idiomatic originals that are wonderfully played and well sung.

*Ron Weinstock*



## BOB CORRITORE & FRIENDS

**Do the Hip-Shake Baby!**  
VIZZTONE/SWMAF RECORDS

"Do the Hip-Shake Baby!" is Bob Corritore's latest blues party recording with a variety of artists including vocalists Mighty Joe Mislal, Alabama Mike, Oscar Wilson, Henry Gray, John Primer, Bill 'Howl-N-Madd' Perry, and Jimi 'Primetime' Smith. Backing musicians include Corritore on harmonica throughout, Gray on piano, Primer on guitar, Andy T and Anson Funderburgh on guitar, LA Jones, on guitar, Fred Kaplan on keyboards, and Kedar Roy on bass. There are many others and the poor layout makes getting some details like songwriting credits hard to read.

Those familiar with the previous recordings Corritore has produced will not be surprised by the solid revivalist Chicago and swamp blues performances heard here. It opens up with a solid rendition by Mighty Joe Mislal of Slim Harpo's "Shake Your Hips" that allows Corritore to display his harp skills over a swampy, trebly foundation. Mislal, who is also backed by the Fremonts, also ably sings another slim Harpo song, "I'm Gonna Keep What I've Got." Alabama Mike, with LA Jones guitar and Corritore on unamplified harp, rock Jimmy McCracklin's jump blues, "Gonna Tell Your Mama." His performances include two Sam Cooke styled performances, "Worried Blues" and



Junior Parker's "Stand By Me," both ably backed by the Andy T Band. Henry Gray sounds pretty vigorous for a pleasant revival of "The Twist."

Oscar Wilson does a nice Jimmy Reed cover, "Bitter Seed," with Corritore emulating Reed's harp style and Fred Kaplan lays down some nice piano in the backing. Jimi 'Primetime' Smith also does a solid Jimmy Reed shuffle, "I Got The World In A Jug," with Corritore on amplified harp, Fred Kaplan on piano, Bob Stroger on bass and Brian Fahey on drums.

Bill 'Howl-N-Madd' Perry wrote and delivers a solid down-home vocal on "You Better Slow Down," that sounds like an unissued Excello recording as Corritore wails in his backing, while John Primer does a homage to his former boss Muddy Waters on "Love Deep As The Ocean," with Bob Welsh channeling Otis Spann. With Junior Watson swinging on guitar, Sugaray Rayford energetically (perhaps a bit over the top) revives Bobby Saxton's "Trying to Make a Living" with a fresh arrangement. His other performance is a Howlin' Wolf styled original, "Keep The Lord On With You!" with Kid Ramos on guitar that is the closing track.

With a variety of performers and consistently solid, idiomatic blues performances, Bob Corritore has delivered another winning collection of traditionally oriented blues.

**Ron Weinstock**



## MARY LANE

### Travelin' Woman

#### WOMEN OF THE BLUES RECORDS

At the age of 83 when most people are content to bask in the accomplishments of their past, blues singer Mary Lane has waxed 10 new songs on a brand new label. Backed by a solid crew of first call musicians such as Billy Branch, Corky Siegel, Eddie Shaw, Colin Linden Gene (Daddy G) Barge and Dave Specter, Lane lays down old school blues straight from the West Side of Chicago where she honed her craft with the likes of Elmore James, Magic Sam, Junior Wells and Howlin' Wolf. Lane called on her long-life to craft lyrics on the spot as she heard the music unfold. Most of the cuts focus on romance or the lack of it.

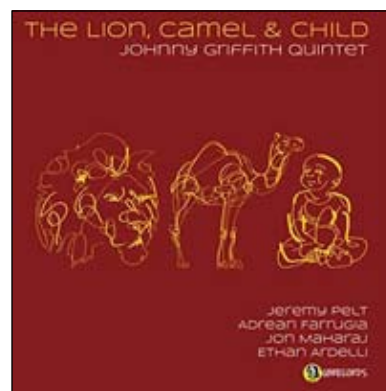
On "Some People Say I'm Crazy" she calls her man back home even though the wisdom of that isn't apparent to everyone else. On "Raining In My Heart" she finds

herself befuddled at the mate who loved her in the morning but never said goodbye, a sentiment repeated on "Ain't Gonna Cry No More" but with a resolve to get over him. On "Ain't Nobody Else" she tries to stop the loving and leaving process by promising happiness even though her scoundrel treats her badly. "Leave That Wine Alone" finds her laying down the law and requiring a choice between her and booze with the wrong choice resulting in her throwing him out as opposed to him choosing to leave.

On the slow, soulful "Let Me Into Your Heart" she channels Etta James and implores the target of her affections to return the favor. While love and loss is her go-to topic Lane also gives a bit of a history lesson. The hot-wired title cut is an auto-biographical tale about her journey into the blues and "Blues Give Me a Feeling" recounts how the blues carried her over the years and are the cornerstone of what gets her through the day. That sentiment is reversed on the shuffle "Bad Luck and Trouble" where she can't help but notice that the two run hand in hand.

The real change up is "Make Up Your Mind" where Lane abandons the comfort of a big band back up and lays down her vocals over Colin Linden's haunting acoustic slide dobro. This track reveals just how strong and nuanced her vocals remain despite her years shouting over the blast of electric Chicago blues. Not that there's anything wrong with electric Chicago blues as revealed by the solid work of the crew collected for this release. A top notch disc from beginning to end.

**Mark Smith**



## JOHNNY GRIFFITH QUINTET

### The Lion, Camel & Child

#### G-B RECORDS

Toronto saxophonist Griffith leads his Quintet of fellow Toronto jazz All-Stars, Adrean Farrugia - Piano, Jon Maharaj - Bass and Ethan Ardelli - Drums, along with the great Jeremy Pelt on trumpet. This is Griffith's second recording, and he drew inspiration from the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche - specifically the book Three Metamorphoses. As Griffith explains, "Metamorphoses is concerned with what propels each new phase of human growth, so it seemed fitting to frame this as a suite - each track individual unto itself, yet when listened to as a whole representing the arc of the personal struggle to know more and be more."

Opening this recording is the four-part title suite that illustrates the phases of Nietzsche and the qualities de-

fining: “The Lion,” virtuous and rebellious; “The Camel,” courageous and dutiful; and “The Child,” playful and free of spirit. “The Lion” opens at a brisk tempo with the leader displaying a full robust tone and a fertile musical imagination with Pelt in a melodic vein and centered in the middle range with occasional upper range bursts. One also is impressed by this first-class rhythm section, that transitions into the relaxed walking pace of “The Camel” that features Farrugia’s stately piano solo as Maharaj and Ardelli provide a hint of the Mid-East caravan procession enhanced by the joint horns. A solo “Cadenza” by Griffith transitions into “The Child” a vigorous performance opening with heated tenor sax, followed by fiery trumpet and strong two-handed piano and a dynamic drum solo.

Not just the writing, but the entire ensemble displays its considerable virtues throughout this CD. “Narcomedusa” is another notable performance with Pelt exceptional here on a composition that might evoke comparison to classic sixties Blue Note recordings. Then there is the animated hard bop of “Strawberry Qwik,” and a lovely ballad “Amarone,” with Pelt’s pretty muted trumpet along with Griffith’s own marvelous ballad playing. Other notable performances include the fiery “For a Derailed Painter” with explosive solos from the horns and pianist Farrugia. Bassist Maharaj solos at the beginning of “Deliciously Ambiguous,” a relaxed groover with more engaging solos by Griffith, Pelt, and Farrugia.

Johnny Griffith impresses as a composer, saxophonist, and leader. He has a fabulous band here with Pelt and a wonderful rhythm section that plays superlatively throughout this outstanding recording. **Ron Weinstock**



## MIGHTY MIKE SCHERMER

### Bad Tattoo

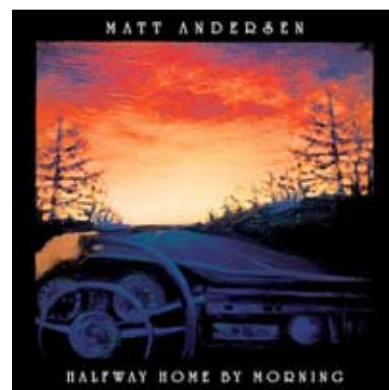
FIREDOG RECORDS/VIZZTONE LABEL GROUP

This is Mighty Mike’s latest release featuring a dozen songs finding the singer-guitarist-songwriter at the Greaseland Studios with guest stars including Chris Cain, Rick Estrin, Aki Kumar, Jim Pugh, Nancy Wright, Billy Price, and others. He has been a guitarist with Marcia Ball since 2009 and before that worked with Elvin Bishop, Maria Muldaur, Angela Strehli, Bonnie Raitt, Howard Tate, Charlie Musselwhite, and Sista Monica amongst others. The core band on this CD is Schermer, guitar and vocals; Steve Ehrmann, bass; Paul Revelli, drums; and Austin Delone,

organ. Two selections have a horn section of Eric Bernhardt, baritone and tenor saxophones and Nancy Wright, tenor saxophone. Jim Pugh sits in on organ on three tracks while one song, “Ain’t That The Way Love Goes?” includes a different band with Jim Pugh, Chris Cain on electric piano, and a rhythm section of Kid Andersen, bass and Alex Pettersen, drums. Cain also contributes guitar on one selection while Billy Price contributes a backing vocal. Schermer wrote or co-wrote all of the selections.

This is a solidly recorded and played CD. Schermer is more striking as a guitarist than a singer but his somewhat light, plain singing I find quite listenable and honestly delivered. His songs are solid idiomatic ones starting with the opening “She Won’t Be Coming Back,” with a groove, melody, and horns evocative of Little Walters “Up the Line.” Then there is the amusing “Lover’s Hall of Fame” about a relationship gone sour as he tells his ex that she’s not on the ballot for the Lover’s Hall of Fame. The Farfisa organ on “How Much Longer” gives it a feel of a beach club dance song in the sixties, while the title track is a relaxed jump blues as he sings about a tattoo about some other dude that she tries to hide. Besides his appealing singing, there is some sharp guitar akin to sixties Johnny ‘Guitar’ Watson as well as nice supportive horns including a booting tenor sax solo. There is a nice soulful “Ain’t That the Way Love Goes,” with a backing vocal chorus, and “Baby Down the Well,” has pounding piano, Rick Estrin’s harmonica and a jackhammer groove.

“Hey Francine,” a country-rockabilly tinged song is perhaps the weakest vocal here, but it is well played like the rest of this recording. Schermer has put together a really strong backing ensemble with solid contributions from his friends and well-crafted originals making for a very engaging recording. **Ron Weinstock**



## MATT ANDERSEN

### Halfway Home By Morning

TRUE NORTH RECORDS

Anderson is a veteran Canadian soul-blues singer and songwriter whose laurels include two European Blues Awards, seven Maple Blues Awards, plus an International Blues Challenge. Recorded in Nashville, Andersen’s vocals and guitar are supported by Steve Dawson (guitar, organ, pedal steel, mandolin), Jay Bellerose (drums and percussion), Chris Gestrin (keyboards), Amy Helm

(vocal), The McCrary Sisters (Ann, Regina, and Alfreda) (backing vocals), Jim Hoke (saxophones), Charles Rose (trombone), and Steve Hermann (trumpet). Andersen had a hand in all the songs here collaborating with others on most of this.

Andersen is a really excellent, soulful singer that certainly is on a level with Tad Robinson, John Nemeth, and Curtis Salgado. The solid material, as well as the backing musicians, evoke classic Stax and Hi Records opening with the insistent groove of "What Would Your Mama Say" with its steamy lyrics and singing. Then there is a marvelously sung duet with Amy Helm, "Something to Lose," with some nice trebly guitar. On "The Bed I Made" he sings about not wanting to hurt on anyone or hard to get to know, and sorry he made her love him, with an acoustic guitar solo and a superb vocal with the McCrary Sisters adding vocal support.

"Gasoline" is a driving, funky number with a memorable line about fighting fire with gasoline as he sings how long can we carry on and telling us there is nothing wrong with punchy horns and Dawson's whining pedal steel guitar. If not in a straight soul-blues vein, "Over Me" is another gem of an original with the feel of a song by The Band and a solid guitar break. The rest of the recording is equally striking with Andersen's consistently striking singing, the terrific idiomatic Memphis-sounding backing, and very memorable originals. As a result, "Halfway Home By Morning" is a gem.

*Ron Weinstock*



## AL MUIRHEAD'S CANADIAN QUINTET

### Undertones

CHRONOGRAPH RECORDS

Western Canadian Jazz Icon, Al Muirhead, came to wider prominence in North America with the release of his JUNO-nominated debut album 'It's About Time'. At the age of 82 years old, he is making up for lost time with his fourth release in just three years. This recording features Al on the rare bass trumpet with his new Canadian Quintet, all Canadian jazz heavyweights: Kelly Jefferson (sax), Reg Schwager (guitar), Neil Swainson (bass) and Ted Warren (drums).

Muirhead, as trumpeter, composer, arranger, sideman and recording artist has been making listeners take notice for longer than jazz fans might realize. Born in Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1935, he was playing in the

Regina Symphony and dance bands by age 12. Muirhead started listening to and being influenced by the likes of Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, and Louis Armstrong. While Muirhead's playing is infused with the indelible influence of the jazz giants, he brought his own flowing, melodic sound to a career in which he has worked with legends such as Diana Krall, Paul Anka, Rosemary Clooney, Frank Mills and Dizzy Gillespie.

The bass trumpet looks like an oversized version of that brass instrument with a sound like a valve trombone. There are ten songs, eight of them are standards and two originals with the overall tenor of the music being swing to bebop. It is a swinging ensemble and Jefferson is a fine solo foil for Muirhead's melodic trombone sorties with a clean tone and a driving style while guitarist Schwager has more than several occasions to display a fluid attack and thoughtful solos. His comping and the support of Swainson and Warren help generate the nicely paced swinging performances.

The album opens with this easy bluesy stride of "A Tune For Cal," written for the memory his older brother. Muirhead has an ear for classics of the big band including "Rose Room" that opens with his attractive playing followed choice solos from Jefferson and Schwager with the bass and drums providing a sure foundation as well as a solid bass solo. I'm most familiar with "Deed I Do," from the Count Basie recording featuring Jimmy Rushing in which Muirhead delights with his slightly gruff lyricism. The relaxed swing of the rendition of "You're My Everything" is followed by Muirhead's "Take It To Bank Tom," dedicated to Canadian musician Tommy Banks, and also has a bluesy feel in the leader's relaxed solo. It is followed by a marvelous interpretation of the Mancini and Mercer classic waltz, "Charade," with Jefferson's driving, searching solo contrasting with the leader's raspy, yet lyrical, playing.

After a lovely "I Don't Stand a Chance With You," with a splendid solo from Muirhead, the album closes with a spirited rendition of "Four Brothers," a number chosen to honor his sister Elaine, with solo spots to the entire band. Muirhead and his quintet are an impressive, swinging ensemble that have produced a wonderful relaxed swinging release.

*Ron Weinstock*

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## TIM GARTLAND

### *Satisfied*

TASTE GOOD MUSIC.

This is the 4th album by the Nashville based singer-harmonica player-songwriter. I found his prior album "If You Want A Good Woman," to be a "rollicking set of blues and rockers." Like that recording, this was recorded by Kevin McKendree (and his son Yates) at McKendree's The Rock House studio.

While Tom West plays keyboards on most of this, McKendree also adds keyboards to several selections. Robert Frahm handles most of the guitar here with Tom Britt playing slide on a couple of selections. Steve Mackey on bass and Tom Bruno round out this fine studio band with Wendy Moten on backup vocals.

"Drinking For Two" is the first song with a driving, second-line groove and Gartland's world-weary vocals and full-bodied harmonica, McKendree's piano and Britt's slide guitar. Gartland is a limited, straight-forward singer although with a modest vocal range.

His harmonica playing has a fat-tone and he plays with plenty of drive and swing. His backing is first-rate with a solid rhythm section. Robert Frahm, who I saw in the Washington DC area, displays his chops on his crisp solo on "Don't Make No Trouble." This song also displays his ability to craft songs with memorable hooks. There is also plenty of variety in the songs including the country-soul flavor of "Blues For Free," the rollicking of "Can't Paint a Prettier Picture," with its Chuck Berry feel, with Tom West channeling Johnnie Johnson and Frahm channeling Berry while trading fours with the leader's harmonica.

The title track is a lovely lament with a slight Tex-Mex accent and atmospheric chromatic harmonica. Frahm's tremolo-laced guitar and West's organ lend a swampy tone to "Walk On" with co-writer Ray Desilvis contributing an effective backing vocal. The variety here is also displayed by the reggae groove employed for "Why Does The Room Begin to Sway?" One might suggest the use of a reggae groove certainly would be welcome in blues performances and recordings, but it remains rare.

While Gartland may have limitations as a singer, he remains a capable vocalist. He writes intriguing songs, is a distinct harmonica player and is accompanied by a splendid studio band on this most enjoyable release.

**Ron Weinstock**



## ANDY STATMAN

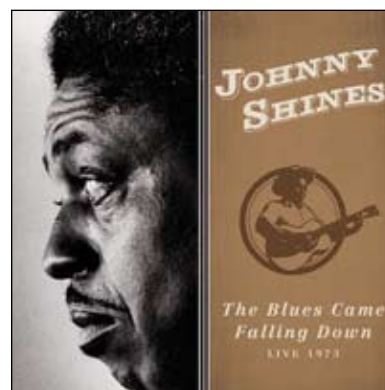
### *Monroe Bus*

SHEFA RECORDS

Fusion of a very distinctive sort is the result of mandolinist Andy Statman's tribute to legendary bluegrass master Bill Monroe. Weaving strong traditional grounding with a healthy strain of eclecticism, Statman and cohorts serve up a set tailor-made for listeners with an open ear and a taste for top-notch fretwork.

A pair of roots-bound opening tracks are followed up with the high-energy and decidedly angular-headed "Ice Cream on the Moon" which juxtaposes hard-fusion choruses with a hoe-down finish and showcases a blistering departure during the leader's solo stretch. A quirky, sassy rock track, "Ain't No Place For a A Girl Like You", follows with more fretboard fire from Mr. Statman. Jazz ballad conventions take center stage on the well-placed follow up track, "Reflections". "Old East River Road" and "Brooklyn Hop" are compositional treats and those who seek marvelous dexterity can find it on "Statman Romp".

Fiddler Michael Cleveland is well-suited for the spirit of this session and provides his own skillful choruses and the inclusion of organ provides unexpected seasoning to the sound. Nice stuff. **Duane Verh**



## JOHNNY SHINES

### *The Blues Came Falling Down - Live 1973*

OMNIVORE

This CD is the latest Omnivore release from the Nighthawk Records catalog. Produced by Leroy Pier-son & Cheryl Pawelski, this is a previously unissued live concert recording by the late Delta blues legend

PAGE TWENTY ONE

Johnny Shines. It comes from a 1973 concert at Washington University in St. Louis and finds Shines performing some staples of his repertoire and some that were not familiar to me. Pierson joins Shines on second guitar on three of the twenty songs.

Shines is best known for his association with Robert Johnson and in the opinion of many (including myself) was the most gifted interpreter of Johnson's music which he absorbed traveling with the Delta blues icon including visits to New York, Detroit, and Canada. Before meeting Johnson, Shines was heavily influenced by Howlin' Wolf, and he was known as Little Wolf and possessed at times a similarly powerful voice. Shines made some wonderful recordings in Chicago, some unissued at the time before recording for the small J.O.B. label which issued his memorable "Ramblin'," a reworking of Johnson's "Walking Blues," and an incredible duet with harmonica player Walter Horton, "Evening Sun."

After retiring from music, he was discovered to be a photographer in Chicago blues clubs and his career was resurrected as part of the sixties blues 'revival' recording for the classic Chicago, The Blues Today series and labels like Testament, Blue Horizon, Rounder, and Biograph. Included have been several solo albums including live performances which I have not listened to in years so I will not make comparisons, but just deal with this on its own merits.

I had the pleasure to see Shines perform several times before he had a stroke and Shines' performances of Delta Blues was brilliant. His was an agile guitarist and a singer who still sends chills in this listener. Mixed in with stunning interpretations of Johnson's "Kind Hearted Woman Blues" and "I'm a Steady Rollin' Man," is his compelling "Have You Ever Loved a Woman," an acoustic take of an Otis Rush urban blues that appeared on his Advent album (later issued on Hightone)) that is performed with a country blues acoustic backing. There are stirring gospel performances of "Stand By Me," and Blind Willie Johnson's "It's Nobody's Fault By Mine," as well as a slowed down rendition of "How You want Your Rollin' Done." He adds some comments on the songs and the blues, and there is a superb solo rendition of "Ramblin'" to go with a rollicking "Sweet Home Chicago" (with Pierson on second guitar) and "They're Red Hot (Hot Tamales)," from Robert Johnson's repertoire.

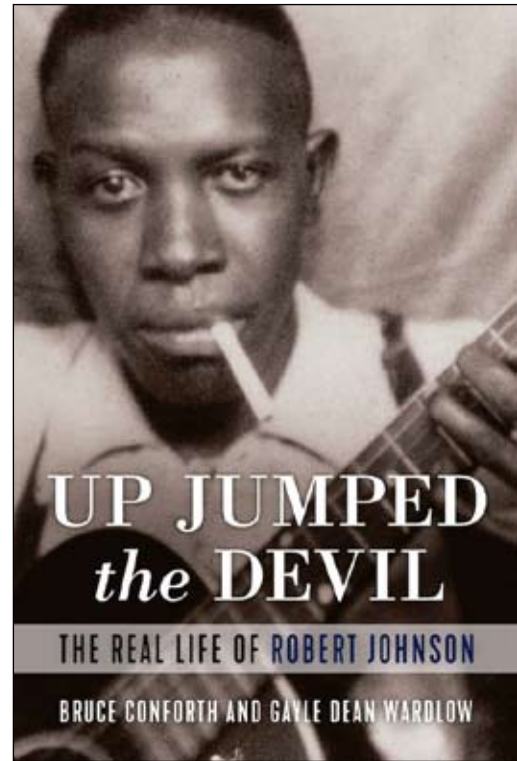
The sound is quite good, and there is about 80 minutes of superb Delta blues by one of the greatest Delta blues performers. Pierson adds a concise overview of Shines' life for this terrific 'deep blues' release.

**Ron Weinstock**

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## books



### UP JUMPED THE DEVIL: THE REAL LIFE OF ROBERT JOHNSON

by Bruce Conforth and Gayle Dean Wardlow  
2019: CHICAGO REVIEW PRESS

**336 Pages, 6X9 pages.**

This long-awaited biography of the legendary Mississippi bluesman is the product of decades of research. Gayle Dean Wardlow has been interviewing people who knew Robert Johnson since the early 1960s. He was the person who discovered Johnson's death certificate in 1967. Bruce Conforth began his study of Johnson's life and music in 1970 and made it his personal mission to try to fill in the gaps in what was still unknown about him.

While reading a pdf review proof of this book I perused the sources at the end and there are countless interviews with those who knew Johnson by the authors and other sources as well as the interviews Worth Long and other folklorists conducted of Robert Lockwood, Jr., Johnny Shines, David 'Honeyboy' Edwards, and Henry Townsend at the 1991 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. To my knowledge, they are among the first to make use of this material. It indicates that the research for this book is quite substantial.

Robert Johnson is one of the seminal persons in the pre-World War II blues. "Robert Johnson was using his guitar abilities to forge the transition from the older blues of Charley Patton, Henry "Ragtime Texas"

Thomas, Lead Belly, or even Son House, to the more modern approach and sounds of Muddy Waters and the postwar blues players. He played blues, pop tunes, jazz, and ragtime; started to popularize the use of guitar riffs as signature elements of a song; and was one of the first to use a boogie beat for his rhythm accompaniment, copying the driving, rhythmic bass that barrelhouse pianists played with their left hand. His playing helped move blues guitar fretting out of the first position and into the use of the entirety of the fretboard, opening musical possibilities that had previously been reserved for jazz guitarists."

To paraphrase the Chicago Review website, for this definitive biography the two authors relied on every possible interview, resource and document, most of it material that no one has ever seen before. As they state: "No book before this one has included all of the reminiscences of Johnson by the people who knew him personally. After more than fifty years of researching Robert's life and performing his music, we decided to correct that omission and bring together those resources in our comprehensive biography. We meticulously researched every article, book, video, or film by any author or producer, from academic scholar to lay blues fan; we transcribed every quote by anyone who ever knew Robert; and we grounded this all with quotations from our own research and every other resource we could find. Every census record, city directory, marriage license, funeral notice, and newspaper article was studied and referenced."

The book opens with a chapter on how the legend surrounding Johnson, one of the Delta blues seminal artists developed, including a very cursory overview of the literature and early research on him. When Gayle Dean Wardlow located the Robert Johnson death certificate, it provided leads that allowed the tracing of his ancestors and those who knew him and the reconstruction of his life was made possible. But also parallel research from Mack McCormick and Steven LaVere also located Johnson family members and significant individuals such as Ike Zimmerman who played a significant role in Johnson's musical development. The role of reissues of Johnson's recordings in telling Johnson's story also is noted along with the liner notes and booklets accompanying the reissues, and books, articles and documentary videos.

Then they introduce us to Robert and his music. "The summer of 1936 Robert Johnson stood in front of Walker's General Store and Gas Station adjoining the Martinsville train depot. He put down his bag made of blue-and-white bed ticking packed full of clothes, at least one notebook, and other belongings, and began playing his guitar. He was there to advertise his night-time performance at O'Malley's—a bootleg house not far from the old Damascus Church just north of neighboring Hazlehurst's City limits, up the railroad tracks on the east side of old Highway 51. Hazlehurst was a town of about three thousand souls sitting thirty-five miles south of Jackson, Mississippi. Robert had been

born in Hazlehurst twenty-five years earlier, and now he was there to play his blues at one of the many juke joints he frequented throughout the area. A slight five foot eight, 140 pounds, Robert was well known for more than just his music."

Then they provide the details of his life, first tracing his ancestors and the aspects of their lives. They also located the house Johnson was born in Hazlehurst, Mississippi, his birth and family hardships that led his mother to move with Charles Dodd, known as Spencer in Memphis. Charles Dodd fled to Memphis to avoid being lynched and provided Robert with as stable a home life as any he had in his young years. Later, Julia Majors with her existing children move in with Noah Johnson, Robert's actual father. They provide details of Robert's life in Memphis, including attending school and some of the experiences he could have expected growing up not far from Beale Street. He would likely have seen such Beale Street performers such as Frank Stokes, Will Shade, Furry Lewis, and others, perhaps attending and becoming part of the 'Spencer' family.

In the interval, his mother remarried to a sharecropper and came to Memphis to take Robert back to the Delta and uprooted him and moved him in with and moved him in with Will "Dusty" Willis, a sharecropper his mother had married in 1916. As the authors state "An intelligent, citified nine-year-old had been



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uprooted and placed in an alien environment: the Arkansas-Mississippi Delta.” Furthermore, while exposed to the haunting blues of the Delta region, Robert hated farming, and his reluctance to go into the fields led to caning by his step-father and other punishments. There is much more here about his life and how he would leave for periods to visit the Spencers who he considered his only real family. He was finally told that his real father was a Noah Johnson and after finding out started calling himself Robert Johnson. Also by the time he was 15 Robert had started playing music. He was pretty good on the harmonica and jew’s harp. He could also play some guitar and piano which he learned from his stepbrother in Memphis.

The authors detail experiments with a home-made guitar and the conflicts with his step-father and then how he met Willie Brown who further helped him with his guitar skills so he started playing parties and busking, at times traveling with Willie Moore. Moore was a musician turned “juke house gambler” that had toured with Handy’s Orchestra from Memphis. He teamed with Robert in the late 1920s playing a “complimenting guitar.” Moore recalled some of the songs Johnson played including “Captain George,” “Make Me a Pallet,” and “President McKinley” (using on slide on this), “You Can Mistreat Me Here but You Can’t When I Go Home” (perhaps an early version that later became “Dust My Broom”), “East St. Louis Blues,” and a bottleneck version of “Casey Jones.”

The authors detail teenage Robert’s marriage to a 14-year old Virginia Travis, and her death during a difficult childbirth while he was away juking and playing music. The combined circumstances of her death and her family blaming him for her death because he played the devil’s music. The authors state “Robert’s friends said he began to believe that he was to blame for her death, and he turned his back on the church and God. He began to blaspheme so badly when he was drinking... .”

He also was becoming skilled enough as a professional musician in the Delta region. But he still was playing in an older folk style whereas the rough, in-your-face, original bottleneck dance tunes that folks like Charlie Patton and Son House played was what folks increasingly wanted and when House and Willie Brown was in Robinsonville, Robert went to see them. House, years later would recall claiming Robert was a little boy who couldn’t play guitar except making noise. And while House did give some tips, he was a 19-year old player who had been in jukes for two years.

After this incident, Johnson took up with Ike Zimmerman, who worked on a road crew as well as played the jukes. Zimmerman was quite an accomplished player and a showman. “Zimmerman alternated between fingerpicking and playing bottleneck slide—his slide was home-made from a bone. He was also a skilled harp player like the young Robert Johnson. And Ike understood how to work an audience.” Robert

even lived with Zimmerman for a period in addition to being mentored by him. At a certain point Robert had progressed enough that Ike began taking him on his regular playing route, locations where people had money to spend: lumber camps with sawmills (probably the Piney Woods section of Copiah County), fish fries(sic), and jukes.” (My review pdf may not have all final edits, so I have indicated that by the sic).

Other dalliances with women are noted as was his increased notoriety as a musician. They recount that when Johnson came upon Son House and Willie Brown playing at a juke, he started playing. House was there with his mouth wide open seeing how good Robert was. House’s comments have led some blues writers to attribute Robert’s musical skills as due to supernatural forces, but the authors note House never made such an assertion. The authors provide an overview of the folkloric origins of the selling of one’s soul at the crossroads myth and dealing with statements made decades after Robert’s death about this myth.

They trace Robert’s subsequent career as he worked around the Delta busking at stores and playing jukes and house parties. They detail the dalliance with Robert Lockwood, Jr.’s mother, and Johnson taking Robert Jr. under his wing and mentoring the young man. Johnson’s fame would grow including his two recording sessions which include details including auditioning for H.C. Spier.

In this time frame, the first of the two known photos of Robert was memorialized at the Hooks studio in Memphis. San Antonio was particularly active the week of his first session celebrating the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday and the end of the Texas Centennial Year celebration. While playing in the streets, he was arrested and his guitar broken beyond repair. He called Don Law (who was supervising the recordings) from jail, who got him out of jail and obtained a borrowed guitar for recording. The authors, citing Law, refute the notion that Johnson recorded facing the wall. Law stated that Johnson only turned his back several days later when asked to play for some Mexican musicians.

In addition to detailing the recording sessions, there is considerable discussion of the music of actual recordings Johnson produced in San Antonio, and then a year later in Dallas, and his musical innovations as a delta blues artist. In contrast to most country blues artists whose performances of a song could vary greatly, and whose recorded takes varied similarly, Johnson’s second or alternate takes are almost identical to the first one. They quote Henry Townsend, “They (older musicians) would play it this way this time, and the next time it was altogether different—the same tune but it was altogether different. But Robert, he was not like that. Each time, whatever he played, was uniform, and this could make you notice.” The authors observe that Robert would adapt parts of older songs, “But Robert’s genius was beyond just knowing good songs

to copy: he rewrote them, changed the tempo, synced his guitar more closely with his vocal than those who preceeded (sic) him, added a guitar riff, and literally remade the piece. ... The song's lyrics are thematically cohesive and the overall effect is of a musical whole, and not the type of whole that one would normally hear in a juke joint."

Johnson's recordings made him a prominent juke artist in the Delta area. Through the accounts of Honey-boy Edwards and Johnny Shines (as well as Townsend and Lockwood), we get a sense of his amazing abilities, including the extent of his repertoire. Another aspect was his ability to hear a song on the radio or a record once and be able to play it. Johnny Shines recalled, "Robert was a man who could sit and talk to you like I'm talking to you now, and be listening to the radio at the same time, and whenever he got ready he'd play whatever he heard on that radio. Note for note, chord for chord, ... ."

We are taken along not only on his travels in the Delta, but also to St. Louis where Townsend met him, and later the circumstances that Johnson, Shines and Shines' cousin Calvin Frazier traveled North after Frazier had killed a man. They eventually made it to Chicago, then to Detroit, where the trio would go to

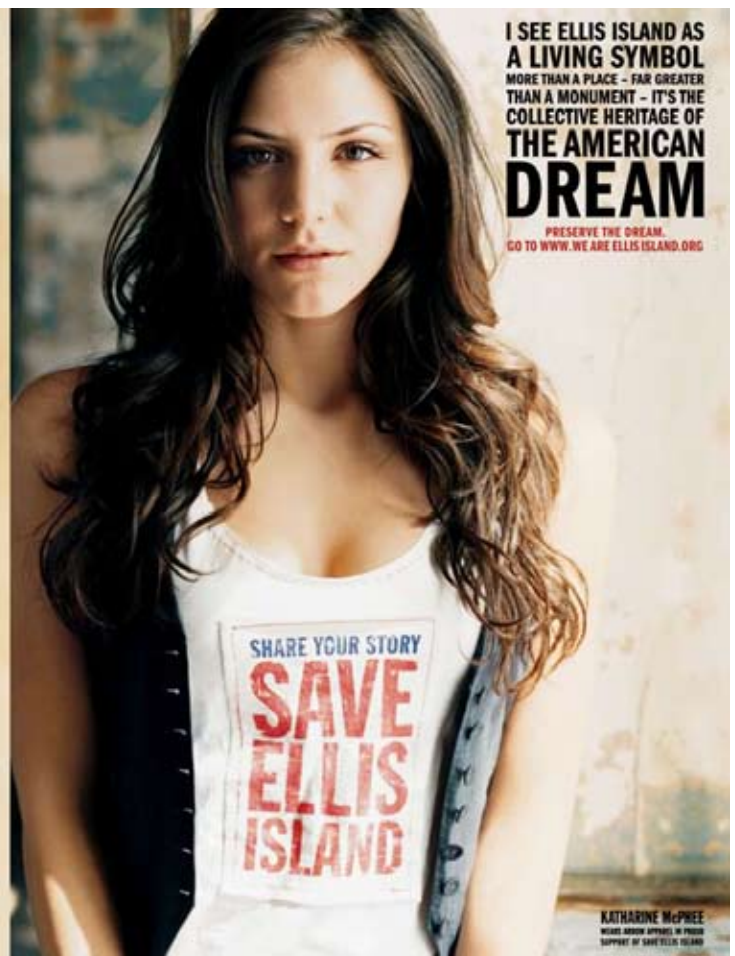
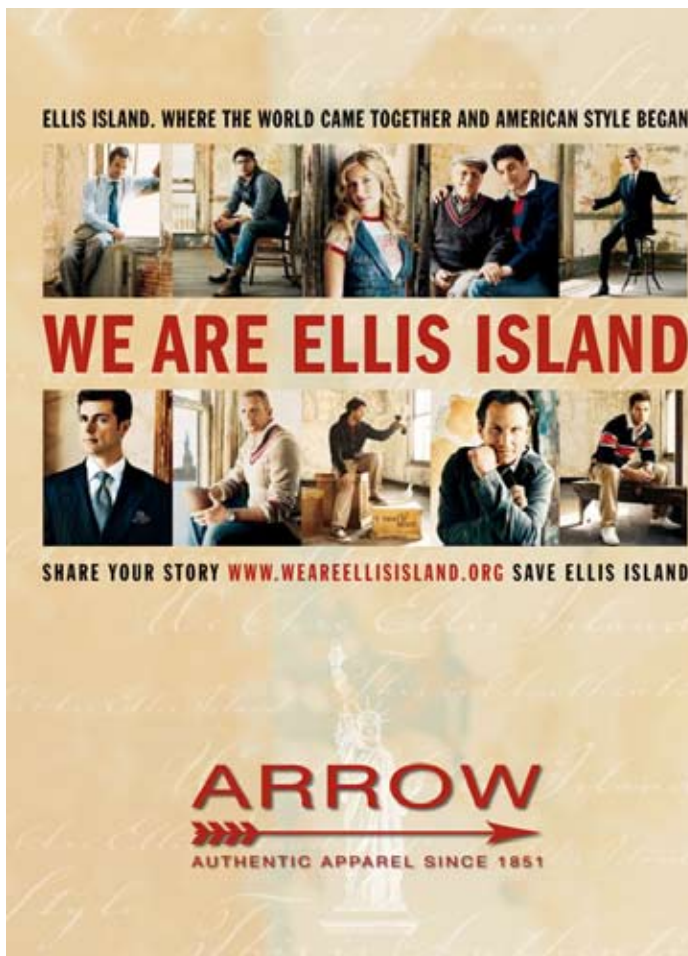
Windsor, across the river from Detroit and perform gospel songs for a gospel radio show. Frazier would remain in Detroit (where he recorded for the Library of Congress and later was part of the Detroit post-war blues scene). Johnson and Shines made their way to Buffalo and then New Jersey and New York City and even played an Italian wedding in Newark.

Eventually Johnson returns to the Delta for his final juke joint performances and the circumstances that led to his death by poisoning, including naming the person who gave him the corn liquor laced with mothballs that ordinarily would have simply made Johnson sick, but underlying health issues (including an ulcer) exacerbated the liquor's effects.

Detailing his burial and other post-death events, the authors state, "Robert Leroy Johnson, the man, was gone. His legend was just about to begin." It is a legend where myth would obscure reality, but thanks to Bruce Conforth and Gayle Dean Wardlow, we have his real story, which I find more fascinating than the tales spun about him. This will be a must for those interested in vernacular music history and one of the blues greatest artists.

This will be available on June 4 as a hardcover and ebook. *Ron Weinstock*

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