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**jazz**  
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**2010**  
**SUMMER**  
**FESTIVALS**  
**PART 2**

# jazz & blues report

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# 2010 SUMMER FESTIVALS PART 2

By Ron Weinstock

We continue with our selective survey of Jazz & Blues Festivals

**The 56th CareFusion Newport Jazz Festival** takes place August 6 through 8 in Newport, Rhode Island. One of the iconic jazz festivals and produced by George Wein, will open on Friday August 6 as Jamie Cullum and Grace Kelly perform at the International Tennis Hall of Fame. Saturday and Sunday, Fort Adams Park has three stages of music with performances by such artists as Ahmad Jamal, Anat Cohen, Arturo O'Farrill, Bob Brookmeyer, Brian Blade, Chick Corea, Chris Botti, Conrad Herwig, Harry Allen, Herbie Hancock, Howard Alden, Jason Moran, Jon Faddis, Kurt Vandermark's Powerhouse, Kenny Garrett, Maria Schneider, Marshall Allen, Matthew Shipp, Randy Brecker, Roy Haynes, and Wynton Marsalis. For more information visit <http://www.newportjazzfest.net/index.php>.

**The Riverfront Blues Festival** takes place August 6-8 in Wilmington Delaware at Tubman-Garrett P Riverfront Park. Performers Friday night August 6 include Bernard Allison and The Delta Groove Harp Project with Al Blake, Randy Chortkoff, Mitch Kashmar, Jimi Bott, Willie Campbell, Frank Goldwasser & Kirk Fletcher. Performers on Saturday include Matt Guitar Murphy & The Nouveaux Honkies; Donna Angelle & The Zydeco Posse; Rod Piazza & the Mighty Flyers and The Perfect Age of Rock & Roll Blues Band with Pinetop Perkins, Bob Margolin, Hubert Sumlin, Willie "Big-Eyes Smith", Mojo Buford, Matt Guitar Murphy & Bob Stroger. Performers on Sunday include Mike Zito, John Lee Hooker Jr. and The Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue featuring The Tommy Castro Band, Magic Dick, Deanna Bogart & Joe Louis Walker. For more information visit <http://www.riverfrontbluesfest.com/Home>.

**15<sup>TH</sup> Annual Litchfield Jazz Festival** at Kent School in Kent, Connecticut takes place August 6-8, and will celebrate Dave Brubeck's 90th year and more. Performers include All-Star Cannonball Adderley Tribute, Gabriel Alegria Afro-Peruvian Sextet, Wess Anderson, Dave Brubeck Quartet, Jane Bunnett & the Spirits of Havana, Gerald Clayton, Anat Cohen, Benny Green, Winard Harper, Bobby Militello, Aurturo O'Farrill Afro Latin jazz Orchestra, Valery Ponomarev, Dave Samuels and The Caribbean jazz Project, Avery Sharpe, Terell Stafford, Matt Wilson and more. The website is <http://www.litchfieldjazzfest.com>.

**10th Heritage Blues Festival** takes place August 13-15 in Heritage Port in Wheeling, West Virginia. Performers include Friday August 13 include Guy Davis, Tab Benoit, and The John Hammond Band. Saturday, August 14 performers include Grady Champion, Cedric & Malcolm, Shakura S'Aida, Janiva Magness and Pinetop Perkins, Willie 'Big Eyes' Smith & Hubert Sumlin. Sunday August 15 performers include Anders Osborne, Super Chikan, Duke Robillard, Bernard Allison and John Mayall. For more information visit <http://www.heritagemusicfest.com/>.


**2nd Vermont Blues Festival** takes place at Mount Snow, Vermont on August 27-29. It is produced by Michael Cloeren who produces the annual Pocono Blues Festival and is similarly devoted to real deal blues. Performers include Harrison Kennedy, James Armstrong, Andrew Jr. Boy Jones, Ryan Shaw, Ruthie Foster, Trombone Shorty, Johnny Winter, Big James Montgomery, Teeny Tucker, Joe Louis Walker, Marcia Ball and Kenny Neal. For more information contact <http://www.vermontbluesfest.com/>.

**Detroit International Jazz Festival** takes place September 3 through September 6. Subtitled "Flame Keepers: Carrying the Torch for Modern Jazz," the 31st annual Detroit Jazz Fest will pay homage to six trailblazers of modern jazz: Art Blakey, Ray Brown, Miles Davis, Horace Silver, Betty Carter, and Gil Evans. Performers include Take 6 with Mulgrew Miller Trio, Danilo Perez Quartet, Hot Club of

Detroit, "Hot Pepper" with Barry Harris & Gary Smulyan, Kirk Whalum: Tribute to Donny Hathaway, Terence Blanchard Quintet, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, Brownie Speaks: The Music of Clifford Brown featuring Dominick Farinacci and Jonathan Batiste, Kenny Barron & Mulgrew Miller, Tribute to Ray Brown with Christian McBride, Benny Green & Greg Hutchinson; Allen Toussaint, Branford Marsalis, Finger Poppin': A Tribute to Horace Silver with the Michael Weiss Quintet featuring Randy Brecker, Kurt Elling Quintet with special guest Ernie Watts, Manhattan Transfer/Detroit Jazz Festival Orchestra and special guest Gerald Wilson, Roy Haynes Fountain of Youth Band, Maria Schneider and more. Visit <http://www.detroitjazzfest.com/index.html>.

The first ever **Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival** will take place Friday, September 3-4, 2010 at the World Trade Center (WTC) on Piscadera Bay in Curaçao. Dutch Caribbean (or Antilles as some say.). Throughout the Festival, international artists with some of the biggest names in the jazz, funk, soul, Latin, Antillean and R&B worlds, will perform in and around the WTC. Headliners include John Legend, Lionel Richie, Sergio Medes, Luis Enrique, La India, George Benson, Simply Red, Raul Midón, Natalie Cole, Grupo Fantasma, Mulato, Randal Corsen, Roy Hargrove, and El Negro. There will be nine concerts each day, taking place at the same time on three different stages. All proceeds from the Festival will be donated to charity. For more information, visit [www.curacaonorthseajazz.com](http://www.curacaonorthseajazz.com)

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**The 53rd Monterey Jazz Festival** is September 17-19 in Monterey, California with highlights including the return of jazz legends Chick Corea, Dianne Reeves, Roy Hargrove, Chris Potter, Christian McBride, Billy Childs, Kenny Garrett, and more; the MJF debut of Harry Connick, Jr., Ahmad Jamal, Angelique Kidjo; the world premiere of Commission Artist Billy Childs' "Music for Two Quartets" with the Kronos Quartet; and showcase Artist Roy Haynes performing throughout the weekend with Freedom Band, Fountain of Youth. The Saturday Blues show in the Arena will have among the performers Delbert McClinton, Naomi Shelton & the Gospel Queens, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue and among the tribute performances will be John Firmin & the Nocturne Band "Tribute to Hank Crawford, David 'Fathead' Newman and Leroy 'Hog' Cooper"; and Javon Jackson with Les McCann "Swiss Movement Revisited." For more information including the schedule visit <http://www.montereyjazzfestival.org/2010/index.php>.

**The 25th Arkansas Blues and Heritage Festival** (formerly known as the King Biscuit Blues Festival) takes place October 7 through 9 in Helena Arkansas. One of the key blues festivals was founded in 1986, the first festival as a one-day event, with a small gathering of local residents and a flatbed truck as a stage. It has grown to a three-day event, with three stages and several activities, such as the Kenneth Freemyer 5K Run, the Blues in Schools program, and the Tour da' Delta bicycle tour. Notable performers at this year's festival on Thursday October 7 are Grady Champion, Willie Cobbs, Sterling Billingsley Band, James Harman

and B.B. King. Performers on Friday October 8 include Big Jack Johnson, Johnny Billington, Mojo Buford Bobby Rush, Smokin' Joe Kubek & Bnois King, Hubert Sumlin & Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, Michael Burks and Doctor John. Saturday, October 9 performers include Preston Shannon, Jimmy "Duck" Holmes, John Hammond, Lonnie Shields, Homemade Jamz Band, Larry McCray, Bobby Parker, Pinetop Perkins & Bob Margolin, Anson Funderburgh & The Rockets, Walter "Wolfman" Washington, Charlie Musselwhite and Taj Mahal. For more information visit <http://www.bluesandheritagefest.com/schedule/>.

## Guitar string problems at outdoor gigs? Here are some tips

### By Professor String

Playing an outdoor gig can be fun. Most guitarists spend their time playing and practicing indoors. So, when the opportunity arises to get some outside fresh air and sunshine, many guitarists will jump on it. This is especially true for players with short summers like Minnesota and Michigan. If you have played at an outdoor concert, then you are probably familiar with the issues that can arise. Temperature, humidity, pesky bugs, and rain all play a factor. If the proper precautions are not taken, you can end up with an instrument that will not play as easily as it did indoors. Many articles have focused on protecting an instrument from rain, wind, and harsh sunshine. Others have focused on getting your tone tweaked for an outdoor setting. Yet few, if any have discussed the issues around playability. This article will focus on the playability of an instrument outdoors.

When you step outside to play your guitar, one of the first things that will happen is a molecular change. Every material known to man has something known as the Coefficient of Thermal Expansion (CTE). The CTE is the measure of how much a material will expand or contract under specific temperatures. In the case of a guitar neck made of wood, the neck will slightly change in profile as it is exposed to different temperatures. This will have a direct impact on the action of the neck. A guitar, with low action, that does not have buzzing frets indoors might have frets buzzing when it is exposed to outdoor conditions. The frets, strings, neck, bridge and nut will all have their respected CTEs changing with the climate. You will certainly be reaching for the tuner more often at your outdoor gigs. While we are on the subject of tuning, let's now turn our attention towards the strings.

### Sticky Fingers

There is one particular part of playing outside that does not get much airplay. When the humidity goes up, your hands will become a little stickier on the neck and fret board. There will be considerably more drag on the strings. Shifting positions on the neck will become more challenging. The tone and sustain of the strings might start to change as gunk from your fingers starts to build up on your strings. So what do you do? Here are some solutions:

1. Light mineral oil – There are some products on the

market today that are used to reduce string drag. The best ones are made from light organic mineral oil. This type of oil does very well for two reasons: 1. It lubricates the strings without excessive build up. 2. It does not penetrate deep into the skin to soften calluses. When applying, it is best to wipe it on versus spraying. Trying to spray into a targeted area like a guitar neck, outdoors, is difficult. Again wiping the oil on will give better results.

2. Lemon oil on the fret board – If you are not keeping your fret board preserved with lemon oil today...do it. A light application of oil on rosewood fret boards will keep the wood from drying and cracking. The real benefit here is also reducing finger drag when shifting positions.

3. Handwipes – Don't you just love the smell of those little handy wipe moist towel lets that come in little packets? Be sure to keep a few of those in your guitar case. They are great for wiping off sticky hands while you are outside, or just simply cleaning hands after stage setup.

4. Coated strings – There are pros and cons to using coated strings. In addition to their corrosion protection, another advantage is their ability to reduce finger drag in high humidity situations. They have their place in outdoor gigs.

### What Should be Avoided?

Avoid using lotions on your hands. This might sound tempting at first as lotions can make things more slippery and comfortable. In the end, your fingers tips will soften, and the strings will get excessive gunk build up. The lotion will do no justice to your fret board as it will build up with gunk.

*the devil is an angel too*

# Janiva Magness

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Contrary to popular belief, dry cotton cloths to wipe of the strings will not improve the problem encountered outdoors. Excessive wiping of the neck and strings with cotton cloths will remove any natural oils left behind from your hands. This will increase friction and cause more string drag. If you have a lot of sweating, that makes the fret board slick, then lightly dab the cotton towel on your hands and the strings. If you rub and wipe, that will surely remove any natural oils from your skin, strings, and fret board.

Hopefully, these few pointers will make your next outdoor gig more comfortable and rewarding.

*Professor String is a leading expert in the musical string business. He leads a development group that specializes in guitar and bass string research for musicians. You can visit their site at <http://www.professorstring.com>.*

## BLUES WATCH

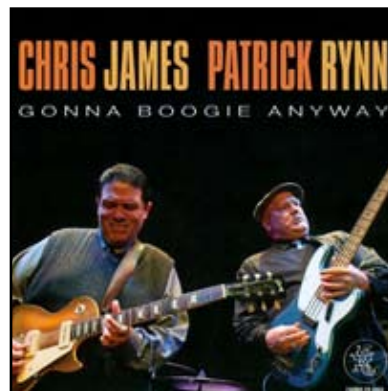
BY MARK SMITH

**New Release Blues...** With festival season hard upon us it is hard to imagine people spending much time inside shopping for discs. But blues fans are different- they know that many of their favorites will be on the road this summer and that they can pick up these discs right after the show. So, here's what to look for this summer: **Derek Trucks Band- *Roadsongs*; Elvin Bishop- *Red Dog Speaks*; Smokin' Joe Kubek and Bnois King- *Have Blues Will Travel*; Foghat- *Last Train Home*; Jimmie Vaughan- *Plays Blues, Ballads & Favorites*; Rick Derringer- *The Three Kings of the Blues*; Otis Taylor- *Clovis People, Vol. 3*; Pinetop Perkins and Willie "Big Eyes" Smith- *Joined at the Hip*; Michael Landau, Robben Ford, Jimmy Haslip and Nova- *Renegade Creation*; Jon Spencer blues Explosion- *Controversial Negro*; Watermelon Slim- *Ringers*; James Blood Ulmer- *Revealing*; Sleepy John Estes- *Working Man Blues (the Best of)*; Denise LaSalle- *24 Hour Woman*; Jason Elmore & Hoodoo Witch- *Upside Your Head*; Wendell B- *In Touch with my Southern Soul*; Tad Robinson- *Back in Style*; John Nemeth- *Name the Day!*; Various Artists (Jack Bruce, Rory Gallagher, Peter Green, John Lee Hooker and others)- *This is the Blues, Vol. 2*; Big George Brock- *Round Two*; Eric Bibb- *Spirit & the Blues*; Harper- *Stand Together*; Various Artists- *Armadillo Texas Blues*; Mitch Kashmar and the Pontiac- *100 Miles to Go*; Bob Corritore and Friends- *Harmonica Blues*; Lucky Peterson- *Heart of Pain*; Rosco Gordon- *Rosco Rocks Again*; Tamara Peterson- *Darling Forever*; Buddy Guy- *DJ Play My Blues*; Bettye Lavette- *Interpretations: The British Rock Songbook*; Mighty Mo Rodgers- *Dispatches From The Moon*; Steve Freund- *Lonesome Flight*; Shirley Brown- *Unleashed*; John Lee Hooker, Jr.- *Live in Istanbul, Turkey*; Magic Slim & The Teardrops- *Raising the Bar*; Steve Howell- *Since I Saw You Last*; Chubby Carrier and the Bayou Swamp Band- *Zydeco Junkie*; Otis Redding & His Orchestra- *Live on the Sunset Strip* and Dr. John and the Lower 911- *Tribal*...That's it for this month. See you in the crowd!**

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We only bring you  
the Cream of the Crop!



## CHRIS JAMES & PATRICK RYNN

**Gonna Boogie Anyway**  
EARWIG MUSIC

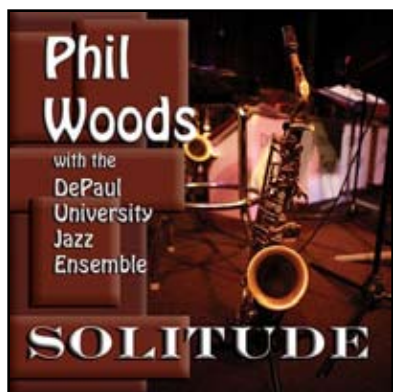
This writer first came across the San Diego based pair Chris James and Patrick Rynn at the 2007 Pocono Blues Festival where they backed Jody Williams. In 2008 they produced a terrific album of Chicago styled blues, on Earwig, "Stop and Think About It," that displayed their considerable skills in playing straight-ahead Chicago inspired blues. They have a follow-up to that Blues Music Award winning disc titled "Gonna Boogie Anyway," also on Earwig, that perhaps places James crackling, good guitar playing a bit more prominently on a set of some less than obvious covers and strong idiomatic originals. For this they have assembled some notable guests that include pianists Henry Gray and Dave Maxwell, harmonica players Bob Corritore and Rob Stone, drummers Sam Lay and Willie Hayes, and saxophonist Johnny Viau.

Listen to them romp through Jimmy Reed's "Can't Stand To See You Go," showcasing James' natural and convincing vocal delivery with Henry Gray pounding on the ivories like he did on a few of Jimmy Reed's recordings. But it contrasts with the equally compelling duet by James and bassist Rynn, the original "Headed Out West," that sounds like it could have been written by Eddie Taylor. The title track is a hot rocker featuring Henry Gray again pounding out the piano with hot sax riffs, with James taking a hot solo that rocks and swings in a manner that would have Jody Williams smiling with, I presume Viau blasting away to close this number out. "The Tables Have Turned" is a nice Tampa Red styled number (without the slide), with Rynn on upright bass and Maxwell laying down some tough piano as Stone adds some nice harp. "Life Couldn't Be Sweeter" is a hot shuffle with Chris James tossing in some Elmore James' styled slide and delivering his upbeat lyric about his gal being so good. There are two separate parts of "Money Don't Like Me." Part 1, that opens this disc, is an original where James sings about liking money but it don't like him, adding guitar that evokes the legendary Magic Sam. Part 2 is an instrumental take on this

theme, with more Magic Sam-inspired guitar and Viau taking a raspy sax solo suggestive of Eddie Shaw. It's important to note that James evokes, not recreates, Magic Sam's sound for his driving solos. Then there is a strong interpretation of Robert Lockwood's "Mean Black Spider," that the two do as a duo along with excellent renditions of a couple of early Bo Diddley numbers including the closing "Little Girl" with Bob Corritore's harp and Henry Gray's piano spotlighted on this rocking Chicago blues.

"Gonna Boogie Anyway" follows-up the prior award-winning recording with more of the strong playing, vocals and striking ensemble playing that made listening to that recording so rewarding. James and Rynn's musical partnership has produced a second marvelous helping of blues delicacies. This writer looks forward to more such helpings in the future.

Ron Weinstock



## PHIL WOODS WITH THE DEPAUL UNIVERSITY JAZZ ENSEMBLE

**Solitude**  
JAZZED MEDIA

For his third collaboration with the DePaul University Jazz Ensemble, saxophonist Phil Woods wrote all 10 tracks, three of which feature Woods' long-time rhythm team of bassist Steve Gilmore and drummer Bill Goodwin, with pianist Jim McNeely, a former member of Woods' Quintet.

A composer of more than 200 instrumental pieces, Woods has a strong association with DePaul through numerous teaching visits to its jazz Studies program. That familiarity seems to work for this recording of homogenous arrangements by Woods, DePaul Jazz Studies faculty members and current Ensemble members. From sambas, to the Blues, to swingers, boppers and ballads, the fare draws the best of Woods and the Ensemble soloists.

Woods' compositions provide foundations for his fluid, imaginative solos as well as for fine solos by Ensemble musicians. "A Child's Blues," written in 1966-67 when Woods was head of jazz at a Pennsylvania arts camp, features one of his best solos with Ensemble backing. The lightly swinging "Nothing But Soul," arranged by Joe Clark, features McNeely and Woods, as well as some fine section work. One of my favorites is the punched-up swinger "Ol' Dude," arranged by Thomas Matta. It's Woods' tribute to tenor saxman/arranger Bud Johnson, featuring Justin Thomas on vibes and some fine frontline weavings between Woods and Ensemble sax soloists. Highlights are plenty enough to make you a permanent fan

of Woods' all-around musicianship as well as an enduring fan of this Ensemble.

The DePaul University Jazz Ensemble (one of 14 student jazz groups and a regular performing band around Chicago) does an annual recording each spring featuring student, faculty and guest artists. Their commissioned works have been recorded with an array of jazz legends. Phil Woods adds nicely to that legacy with this disc, enhancing the contemporary big band sound. There's not a dull tune in the bunch!

Nancy Ann Lee



## JANIVA MAGNESS

**Devil Is An Angel Too**  
ALLIGATOR

Every time I have reviewed a disc by Janiva Magness I have thought that it is so good that it must certainly be the apex of her career. This has then caused me to approach her next release with some fear that it will be the first step over the hill towards the land of the ordinary. Well, I'm glad to say that based on this release Magness is still climbing towards the peak of her skills and appears to have nothing but blue sky ahead of her.

Not content to turn out a disc of "by the numbers" blues, Magness applies her wondrous vocals to a wide range of musical styles. This disc includes not only the slinky, atmospheric title cut but slow, sultry ballads, *I'm Feelin' Good*, raw, acoustic meditations on tenacity, *Weed Like Us*, mid-tempo rockers that conjure up a semi-tamed Janis Joplin, *Walkin' In the Sun*, some smoking blues/roots rock on the kiss off classic, *End Of Our Road* and Joe Tex's *I Want To Do Everything For You*, roadhouse rock on the Delbert McClinton staple, *Your Love Made a U Turn*, and some funky soul compliments of the Ann Peebles classics, *I'm Gonna Tear your Playhouse Down* and *Slipped, Tripped and Fell In Love*, which she imbues with just the right amount of sass.

While many vocalists shout along above the music and confuse speed with urgency, Magness, like Dinah Washington or Nina Simone, isn't afraid to place her vocals on even ground with the music and often lingers over each syllable as if it is a treasure that she won't possess again. The lush, torchy, ballads, *Save Me* and *Turn Your Heart In My Direction* are perfect displays of her vocal prowess and reveal a richness that would never find its way through the typical blues boogie or shuffle.

Joined by a crack band including her husband Jeff Turmes who contributes not only a rock solid bottom on bass but a couple of the tunes as well, Magness has crafted another gem. Wow, what's next?

Mark Smith  
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## TAEKO

Voice

FLAT NINE RECORDS

Born in Japan, yet assimilating American Jazz and singing it with few indications of her origin, Taeko brings a variety of influences into a varied musical program for what is her second recording, "Voice" (Flat Nine Records).

She is backed by a group led by co-producer, drummer Doug Richardson (he also is heard on melodica) with Greg Lewis on organ, Lou Rainone on piano, Kevin McNeal on guitar and Gaku Takanashi on bass and wah wah guitar. It's a band that can lay down some funk as well as dreamy romanticism.

Opening up is a vocal adaptation of Herbie Hancock's "Cantaloupe Island (Get Up)," as Taeko hiply delivers Juanita Flemming's lyrics against the familiar music, followed by her singing and scatting the Jon Hendricks lyrics for the Monk-Hawkins collaboration, "I Mean You (You Know Who)." "Soochow Serenade" was a 1940's hit in Japan and she delivers the Japanese in a lovely fashion with Rainone's effective, spare piano.

She whispers and cajoles the meaning out of Marvin Gaye's "Inner City Blues" in an understated manner. I should not imply she is a sultry singer, because she can belt out a lyric and moan, or scat like a Rex Stewart trumpet solo with all sorts of half valve effects.

She scats and trumpets out the lyrics of "A Clear Day" before a swinging, rolling piano solo, followed by her original, "Spring Nocturne," where she goes from a whisper to an all out delivery, followed by her cooing of the Doug Carn lyrics to the Brazilian samba tinged Wayne Shorter composition, "Infant Eyes," as she entreats the one with infant eyes "To make your dreams come true," with a lovely guitar solo.

"Biwako," a folk song about Japan's largest lake and her hometown, is heard in both Japanese and English renditions and is handled with a mid-tempo backing with Richardson taking a melodica solo. Greg Lewis' organ sets the tune for Ted Daryll's lyrics to Stanley Turrentine's "Sugar" (with its refrain, "he's sugar to me"), followed by an Ellington indigo ballad, "I Didn't Know About You," accompanied by McNeal's lovely guitar. "Stand" showcases her ability to provide a jazzy interpretation to the Sly Stone soul funk classic with her horn like scatting.

An intriguing recording by a vocalist who displays considerable vocal range as well as her choice of material.

*Ron Weinstock*



## JIMMY DAWKINS

Presents The Leric Story

DELMARK

Leric Records was an independent blues label operated by bluesman Jimmy Dawkins in the 1980's. During its relatively brief existence, it issued a number of 45-rpm singles by lesser-known members of the Chicago blues community, including some still active today. Dawkins produced or purchased for release the sides issued on Leric, playing on some of the sessions, but mostly making available some interesting music. Delmark has just issued "Jimmy Dawkins Presents: The Leric Story" with 16 selections, including several previously unissued selections.

Little Johnny Christian opens this collection up with a driving "New Life," with the band including Michael Coleman on guitar and Eddie 'Jewtown' Burks on harmonica with a terrific tagline "Why every man gotta have two women, and a good woman only needs one man." Outside of the functional, unimaginative horn arrangements, there is some nicer playing including fine vocal and guitar. Dawkins' penned "Luv Somebody," has a strong chugging groove that would be at home on a Johnny Taylor Recording with Vance Kelly taking the lead guitar. The two other Christian performances give further evidence of what a fine singer he was and also were the first session for guitarist Chico Banks. "Ain't Gonna Worry About Tomorrow," which uses the "Cummins Prison Farm Blues," melody is an impressive performance with strong singing and terrific playing from Banks.

Dawkins' recognizable guitar is present on the sides by the late bassist-vocalist Queen Sylvia Embry (including the excellent "I Know I Ain't Number One") and the early sides by Nora Jean (Bruso) whose sides show more promise that has been realized on her recent recordings, including an excellent disc on Severn. Dawkins' also supports a fine performance from bassist Robert 'Big Mojo' Elem who once anchored the bands of Freddie King and Luther Allison. His side was previously unissued as were the three sides (one an instrumental) by singer-guitarist Vance Kelly who is still active. "Use What You Got," is a mix of soulful singing and a down home blues groove. Tail Dragger is represented by two sides with a solid band but I find his Howlin' Wolf styled performances over-bearing and suffer from his mumbling diction, but others will disagree. Sister Margo and Healing Center Choir close this compilation with two solid gospel performances.



In summary, a solid collection of 80's Chicago blues, which exhibit more than a little soul, but remain rooted in the more traditional blues. David Whiteis contributes a concise overview of the music here. It is not an essential release, but one that still is valuable, especially for making available music from Christian and Kelly.

*Ron Weinstock*



**MANU KATCHE**  
**Third Round**  
ECM

Thanks to drummer Katche and group, one need not resort to "smooth jazz" to partake in breezy grooves. Third Round is as "mellow" a set as one could ask for, topped most often with graceful sax "heads" appropriately serene or light-footed as required. These are backed and spelled by simpatico piano and propelled by a savvy rhythm section.

Tenor/soprano saxophonist Tore Brunborg and pianist Jason Rebello are the primary, and very capable, frontmen. But much of this set's distinction from more cookie-cutter, corporate fare can be credited to the creative role of Katche and section partner, bassist Pino Palladino. The latter's consistent underplay and the former's creative spatial sense take these seemingly "easy going" tracks to interesting regions.

*Duane Verh*

**STEVE FREUND**  
**Lonesome Flight**  
9BELOW PRODUCTIONS

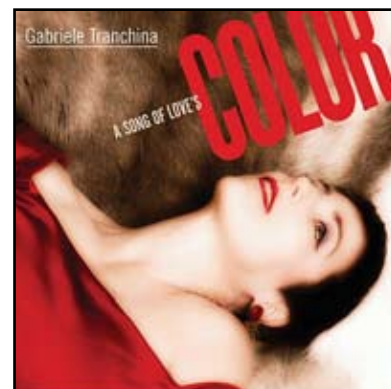
Guitarist Steve Freund established himself as part of the Chicago scene several decades ago working with blues legends like Sunnyland Slim. Relocated to the San Francisco area, he has matured into a terrific blues guitarist, rooted in the classic Chicago blues. One hears tinges in his playing that evokes Muddy Waters, Big Bill Broonzy, Luther Tucker and others, but he has mixed in a jazzy style that also shows his listening has extended to Grant Green, Wes Montgomery and others. He has just issued his first album in six years, "Lonesome Flight" (9below Records), with some originals and several choice covers.

The disc opens with a tribute to Big Bill Broonzy, "Hey Mr. Bill," with some deft guitar evoking Broonzy's masterful swinging style with a lyric asking Big Bill to play the blues as Steve feels so lowdown, and his music helps Steve more than Bill can realize. The title track has tinges of Muddy and Luther Tucker in Freund's playing backing about hearing that his father died and Steve Freund packed his suitcase, went out into the night

and caught that Lonesome Flight. The backing band includes some pretty fine harp from Scot Brenton. "Boogie in the Rain" has an easy shuffle groove with the backing including droning guitar and harp, one that lends this a sound like it was a tribute to the original version of Canned Heat with Henry Vestine and Alan Wilson. What's nice about this performance is how relaxed the groove is. "LaMorr is Blue" is a jazzy instrumental with Freund using a box to get an organ-like tone, while "Still Pickin'" is based on Elmore James' "Pickin' the Blues," which allows Freund to pay homage to James as well as Earl Hooker with his playing here. John Brim's "Tough Times" receives a lyrical updating with references to lacking health insurance and bills being long overdue, and Brenton contributes more fine harp here. "On Highway 101" is a rocking number (musically a reworking of the "Rollin' & Tumblin' & "Meet Me in the Bottom") with a lyric about riding to the West Coast with Sunnyland Slim. He does a more than credible version of King Curtis' "Let Me Down Easy" (Freddie King did the original), followed by a nice shuffle rendition of mandolinist, Johnny Young's "Keep On Drinking," further illustrating Freund's ability to take a tune and make it his own

Freund may not be a great singer, but he ably delivers the songs in a genuine sounding manner. His fine playing and the understated backing by his fine band, anchored around bassist Burton Winn and drummer Robi Bean, is responsible for much of the success of the performances. Five selections, including "Still Pickin'," "Tough Times," "Let Me Down Easy" and "Keep On Drinking" have Randy Bermudes on bass, and former Robert Lockwood drummer, June Core. All these elements make Freund's "Lonesome Flight" a noteworthy new release for blues enthusiasts.

*Ron Weinstock*



**GABRIELE TRANCHINA**  
**A Song of Love's Color**  
JAZZHEADS

European-raised New York-based Gabriele Tranchina brings love of our multi-cultural and interconnected world, a distinct musical sensibility and a multilingual talent to center stage on her new release, "A Song Of Love's Color" (Jazzheads). At a relatively early age she was introduced to the music of Antonio Carlos Jobim, Chick Corea's "Return to Forever" with singer Flora Purim, as well as Ella Fitzgerald, music that left a deep imprint on her and is reflected in her music today. On "A Song Of Love's Color," she performs 11 songs in six languages and vocalise, which her publicity materials describe as a mix of lead and harmonized vocals, RAP, recitation, chant and descant. She is backed by a band that includes her husband, Joe Vincent



Tranchina, on piano and backing vocals; Santi Debriano on bass; Renato Thoms on percussion and backing vocals; Bobby Sanabria on drums, percussion and backing vocals; and Roberta Sanabria on backing vocals.

She has such a delightful voice, as is evident from the opening "Chante Comme Si Tu Devais Mourir Demain," matched to the lively Brazilian rhythms which explode towards the performances finish. Her husband contributed the lovely Latin-spiced title song about rainbows. "Samba De Uma Nota So," ("One Note Samba") is one of Antonio Carlos Jobim's most famous songs, which she delivers with seeming effortless delivery but her pitch and her sense of timing is flawless including an interlude with a spoken rap-like delivery over smoldering percussion.

The ballad "Today" opens languidly to match the opening lyrics about sad reminiscences before the tempo livens up as someone catches her eye. "Sing a Song Of Children" is a thoughtful celebration about the songs, laughter and joy of childhood, which stands out even in this strong release. Another Jobim song, "Inutil Paisagem," has a lovely, languid vocal with a solid bass interlude from Debriano.

An indication of the varied material her is her Husband's adaptation of a Hindu prayer and chant, "Asato Maa (Sat Chit Ananda)," with a light Latin rhythm as she sings about being led from untruth to truth and ignorance to wisdom." "Duérmete Niño Bonito," is an enchanting performance of a Spanish folk lullaby (that will sound familiar to some) to which Joe Vincent Tranchina has added English lyrics and music. "Voz" is a mesmerizing, salsa-flavored wordless vocal with the percussion of Thomas and Sanabria standing out along with Jon Vincent's firm, yet understated piano. Thomas, Sanabria and Joe Vincent collaborated on "Solamente Pasión," with a crisp salsa flavor as she delivers a chorus of "El amor solamente pasión" ("Love is only passion"), against the rap of the band members before the closing "Siehst Du Mich," a German poem set to music by Jon Vincent with a lovely arco bass solo.

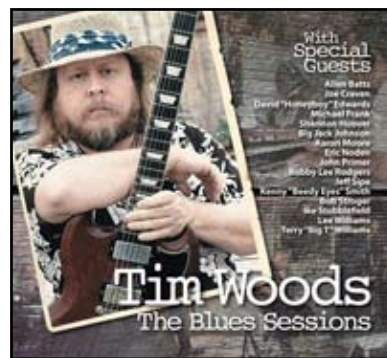
"A Song Of Love's Color" is a wonderful release that is sure to charm listeners with not only Gabriele Tranchina's lovely voice, but also her wonderful expressiveness and the tight playing in support of her. This is a recording that easily lends itself to repeated listening. Her website is <http://www.gabrieletranchina.com/>, from which it can be purchased. An earlier cd of hers is available on cdbaby.com so one might expect it to be available there. It is available on itunes and from amazon.com.

Ron Weinstock

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## TIM WOODS

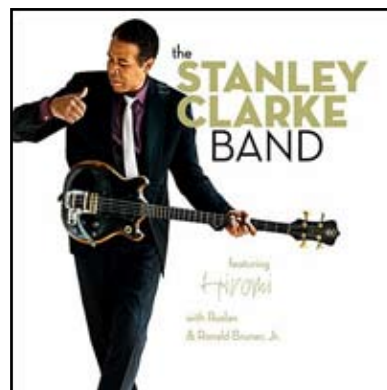
### The Blues Sessions

#### EARWIG

Some of the songs have been heard countless times before, but few recent blues releases give off the vibes of energy and enthusiasm of guitarist Woods' new offering. With a trans-generational cast of players in tow, most notably David "Honeyboy" Edwards, Woods comes out swingin', acoustically, electrically and vocally on a set that continuously pulses with the pleasure of taking care of blues business. The peak moments of the disc arrive in Woods'/Edwards duets, "Bad Whiskey& Cocaine" and "Drop Down Mama".

While he digs in solidly on well-traveled classics such as "Spoonful" and "Built For Comfort", Woods has one of his strongest performances on Willie Dixon's lesser-known "It Don't Make Sense You Can't Make Peace". *The Blues Sessions* is a cut-above release.

Duane Verh



## STANLEY CLARKE

### THE STANLEY CLARKE BAND

#### HEADS UP

While Clarke, the original "lead" bassist, promotes a group entity with this release, it's still his phenomenal facility that's the main draw here.

The leader plies his technically formidable trade atop backdrop of continuously morphing terrain. From deftly orchestrated fusion grounded in Clarke's Return To Forever roots to retro funk to serene solo constructs, Clarke still dazzles in the dialect that he, for all intents and purposes, invented.

That said, Clarke is on occasion spelled up front by several guests including guitarist Charles Alorta and, most notably, by band member Hiromi. The pianist serves up her own technical and inventive fireworks on the classically-flavored "Labyrinth" and swings sufficiently on the frothy tribute "Sonny Rollins."

Duane Verh



## GRADY CHAMPION

### Back In Mississippi Live at the 930 Blues Café EARWIG MUSIC

Mississippian Grady Champion has been singing the blues and playing harmonica for a number of years, having self-produced his debut CD and then he had two albums on Shanachie before returning home to Canton, Mississippi in 2002, where he played locally with Eddie Cotton before putting together The Grady Champion revue. In 2007 he recorded the CD "Back In Mississippi Live At The 930 Blues Cafe," that was issued on GSM. Earlier this year, he was the winning performer at the International Blues Challenge and is appearing on a number of major festivals as a result. Earwig has just taken over the distribution of "Back in Mississippi Live."

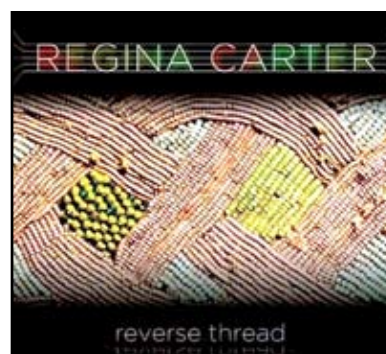
I have had the original release of this and have listened to it at various times over the past two years. The album's strengths include the fact that Grady is a terrific vocalist who exhibits considerable personality and enthusiasm as he sings and has a first-rate backing band, with standout guitar from Eddie Cotton (his playing on "Lonesome Bedroom Blues" is simply one example of his exceptional guitar playing throughout this recording). We do not need new recordings of "I'm Ready" or "Spoonful," but he does place his own vocal stamp here as well as on the hard-edged "Baby What You Want Me Do." He is an effective, credible harp player if not a virtuoso, with Rice Miller being an obvious personality. Champion also writes some very interesting original material including "You Got Some Explaining To Do," with a nice funky groove as he tells his woman that too many of her stories just don't add up or ring true, or "1-800-Blu-Love," the number for a woman to call when her man ain't at home. The latter number has a nice harp break.

There is social commentary on "Policeman Blues," where he sings about being stopped and beaten by Mr. Policeman. It is curious how restrained Grady's lyrics are compared to the language a rapper would use (and there is a rapper "jacktoen Swift" on this track who is a bit more forthright about this mistreatment.) Of the songs covered here, the slow, doomy rendition of "Lonesome Bedroom Blues" stands out, with Cotton's afore-mentioned guitar playing and Grady's fine singing. "Love and Memories" is a heartfelt R&B ballad dedicated to his mother's memory. "Wine and Women" don't mix and leave you with a terrible fix is the message of the rocking shuffle that Grady and Eddie Cotton co-wrote and is followed by "Brother, Brother," which oddly evokes (in these

ears) the Doobie Brothers with a nice groove and rhythm. Then there is a lovely ballad, "I'm Yours," as he sings "your my heart, my everything ... you can count on me, I'm your lover, I'm your friend, I'm your man." The disc closes with a fine holiday blues, Grady's "Blues on Christmas."

There's plenty of music here (71 minutes or so), and even if some of the material might be overly familiar, there is plenty new material, some of it being really good songs. It is certainly helpful that Earwig has picked this up which, along with Grady's greater visibility from winning the IBC, should ensure that he becomes a more familiar name to the blues world.

*Ron Weinstock*



## REGINA CARTER

### Reverse Thread E1 ENTERTAINMENT

Violinist Regina Carter is certainly best known for her music in the jazz idiom, but is equally at home in classical, R&B and pretty much anything else she chooses. Never to be labeled "predictable," Carter offers up a new side of her musical prowess with each new recording. "Reverse Thread" is no exception, as she enters the world music arena with a beautiful, very well crafted collection of traditional African songs delivered with enough of a contemporary flair to appeal to a very wide audience.

She visited the World Music Institute in New York and found a wealth of material, including ethnographic field recordings. Two of these songs are based on field recordings from the Ugandan Jews. Carter penned one song, "Day Dreaming On The Niger," a beautiful, mesmerizing song, which should see a lot of airplay worldwide.

She teamed up with some excellent musicians using instruments such as the accordion and the kora, a West African harp, played by the celebrated, Mali-born Yacouba Sissoko. The instrumentation here consists of violin, kora, accordion, bass and drums/percussion, with guitar added for a few songs. The band takes you on a wonderful journey with bright melodies continually popping up along the way.

In short, this is a first class album blending world music with jazz. Sound interesting; be sure to check out some songs at Amazon. Very nice indeed!

*Bill Wahl*

**jazz-blues.com**





## MISSISSIPPI HEAT

Let's Live It Up

DELMARK

It has been nearly twenty years since Pierre Lacocque formed the Chicago blues band and revue in one, Mississippi Heat, who have just issued their latest album on Delmark, "Let's Live It Up!"

Over the years, Lacocque has assembled various line-ups and for this disc vocalist Inetta Visor returns while Christopher 'Hambone' Cameron handles the keyboards and Stephen Howard the bass with Kenny Smith handling the drums for some of the 14 performances. Special guests include guitarists Carl Weathersby and John Primer, with the latter handling several vocals, and the Chicago Horns.

Lacocque contributed most of the songs here (originals with one exception), including the wild-ass party rocker that opens the set. He covers so many bases as a writer, and is able to handle songs in a traditional Chicago style such as 'Steadfast, Loyal and True,' with some prime singing and playing from Primer. 'Jumpin' in Chi-Town,' is a supersonic tempoed rocker with nice chromatic harp and brassy horns punctuating Inetta's sassy vocal, while Inetta soulfully delivers "She Died of a Broken Heart," an original she and Cameron collaborated on.

Primer is up front on "Betty Sue," a hard rocker in the vein of "Linda Lu," with some driving chicken-picking guitar in addition to Primer's vocal. "Another Sleepless Night" is a soul-blues with a strong lyric and an insistent vocal from Inetta backed by a driving backing with nice imaginative harp and a strong chromatic solo. "Peace Train" is a gospel number with rollicking piano in the backing, while Weathersby's biting guitar is prominent on "Been Good To You," with choice solos also by Cameron and the leader.

The one cover here is the lively rendering of Sugar Pie DeSanto "I Want To Know." Another highlight is "Daggers & Spears" which introduces another singer, Rhonda Preston, who belts out the vocal. His delivery is more in the vein of a shouter in contrast to Inetta Visor's more dry, sober approach with Giles Covey taking a solid solo. Primer's own "I Got the News Today" is another terrific performance in the traditional Chicago blues style, before the closing "Until We Meet Again," a peppy closing number that is unusual to hear on a recording with Giles Covey a spirited solo before Lacocque closes it out on chromatic.

Mississippi Heat maintains their winning formula on "Let's Live It Up!" with good original material, strong and

authoritative singing, an excellent band that is comfortable in several different blues styles and excellent soloists. The result is another collection of blues that should appeal all to those loving Chicago blues.

*Ron Weinstock*



## DEREK TRUCKS BAND

Roadsongs

SONY

As good as their studio recordings have been, The Derek Trucks Band is an even better live band, which is unquestionably a reason for the group's popularity. Vocalist Mike Mattison in the booklet for this release states it simply, "This was a multi-generational, multi-cultural, and above all, *live band*." (Emphasis on original). They have previously issued "Live at the Georgia Theater" on their own, and a Live DVD was issued after the "Songlines" album, which have displayed this 'live fire.' "Roadsongs" has been issued by Sony legacy and is a two CD release (106 minutes of music and priced as a single CD) that is the Trucks' Band first live CD issued by a major label. It was recorded in April, 2010 at The Park West in Chicago with the DTB of Mike Mattison on vocals; Todd Smallie on bass & vocals; Yonrico Scott on drums and vocals; Kofi Burbridge, keyboards, flute and vocals and Count M'Butu on percussion on vocals augmented by a three piece horn section that provide added color to the performances in their arrangements.

The Derek Trucks Band is centered around the phenomenal playing of Mr. Trucks, whose highly vocalized playing brings elements of the blues slide guitar tradition, the blues-based style of Duane Allman as well as the sacred steel guitarists with whom Trucks has often shared the stage. He constructs horn-like lines with his keen, whining tone conjuring up the human voice as the band rocks solidly behind him. Yonrico Scott is a terrific and responsive, jazz-rooted drummer, while Smallie keeps the groove steady and Burbridge is a strong keyboard player as well as an accomplished flautist, while M'Butu adds his distinctive rhythmic accent. Mattison is a soulful singer that brings a convincing voice to the blues, reggae, rock and other material represented here.

The music ranges from the bluesy "I'll Find My Way" and "Down in the Flood," from Bob Dylan's songbook; reggae with a gospel tinge on "Sailin' On," to an homage to John Coltrane on the Mongo Santamaria classic "Afro-Blue," with Burbridge on flute stating the theme with Trucks blistering guitar. "Get What You Deserve" is built upon a familiar blues riff with a terrific slide solo. "Days Is Almost Gone" is a soul



ballad (with gospel roots), with more splendid singing and stinging guitar. Bob Marley's "Rastaman Chant" is another extended instrumental jam with Trucks incorporating a French Children's song as part of his melodic development. A very strong rendition "Key to the Highway" offers some terrific piano from Burbridge under Trucks' driving solo.

This disc certainly stands as a souvenir for fans of The Derek Trucks Band, but more importantly it is a superb recording by one of the most interesting and electrifying bands of any genre today.

*Ron Weinstock*



## **BILL TOMS & HARD RAIN**

### **Live At Moondog's: Another Moonlight Mystery BILL TOMS / AMERISON**

If you've ever been to Pittsburgh, then you know where Moondog's is out by Blawnox, north of the city. If not, you've probably been in a bar like it at some point in your life: a roadhouse in every sense of the word. It's a true workingman's music bar and don't expect any of those foo-foo umbrellas sticking out of the glasses. Thus, it's only logical that hometown guitarist Bill Toms would go there to record his latest disc and a live one at that, in more ways than one.

Bill Toms has been around the Pittsburgh rock scene for a long time and, if you have to lay hands on his music, I'll go with roots rock aka a combination of blues, rock, country and just about anything style-wise that this country has cooked up in its history.

With the exception of the encore "Satan's On My Shoulder" (a "non-denominational gospel song," as Toms refers to it), everything else here goes the eclectic route that I expected. With secret weapon/drummer Bernie Herr laying the foundation throughout, Toms gives the band more than enough spotlight from sax man Phil Brontz' work on "Cover It Up" and the extended "Smithfield Cafe."

Like guitar work? There's not only Toms himself, but also guitarist Tom Breiding on frets, plus guest guitarist Rick Witkowski, best known with his work with the band Crack The Sky, popping in for a couple numbers that includes 'Sudden' Steve Binsberger's piano welding the boogie into the boogie woogie "Move It On Down The Road."

Throw in for good measure a little funky R&B, thanks to bassist Scott P. Tamulinas, during "Together" and Another Moonlight Mystery hits all the Americana highlights on Route 66 without having to get a Triptik from the AAA.

*Peanuts*



## **MAX WILD**

### **Tamba OBLIQSOUND**

Zimbabwean-born, NYC-based saxophonist Wild and crew here meld contemporary African music and jazz-fusion and the mix could not sound more agreeable- and infectious. Earthy, uncomplicated guitar lines and simmering percussion merge with sophisticated harmonics and rhythms with Wild's congenial alto mediating the affair.

The disc's title is the word for "dance" in Zimbabwe's predominant tongue and most every track here provides an unencumbered route from the ears to the feet. The track "Kuvakidzana", featuring guest vocalist Chiwoniso, literally *dares* the listener to sit still. *Tamba* will likely cross the minds of sharper scribes later in the year as they contemplate 2010's top releases.

*Duane Verh*

## **TEENY TUCKER**

### **Keep the Blues Alive TEBO RECORDS**

Daughter of Tiny Tucker, who was best known for the smash "High Heel Sneakers," Teeny Tucker has been establishing herself as a blues vocalist of the first order. She has just issued her fourth album, "Keep the Blues Alive," (TeBo Records) and it displays her continuing maturation as a vocalist on a set of mostly original music. Her band is led by the fine guitarist Robert Hughes (also an exceptional photographer), who collaborated with her on many of the originals here.

"Ain't That The Blues" kicks this set off and is about the circumstances that give folk the blues. This track shows her poise and how she can go from a soft passage to belting out without any annoying mannerisms. She cites the great Big Maybelle as an influence, and her ability to caress a lyric as well as shout it out suggests that blues legend. "Make Room For Teeny" is a lively number as she announces its time for her to take her place in the blues world, recalling her roots and that she is here to stay.

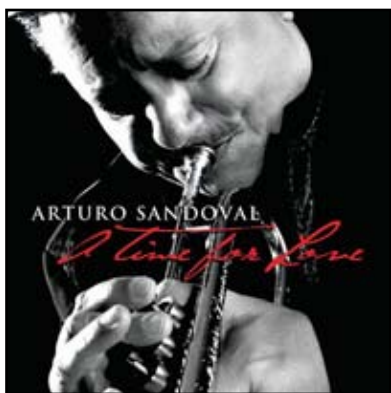
"Daughter to the Blues" is a slow Chicago styled blues with harmonica in the backing as she recalls her father telling her to just sing the blues and it won't go wrong. "You're the daughter of the blues, and that's the part of me I left to you." "Old Man Magnet" is a humorous look at dressing up and attracting older men who stick to her like glue. "I Wish We Could Go Back" is a slow blues where she reflects about the relationship falling apart and going back before the storm began with Hughes contributing some fine guitar here. The title track is a gospel styled performance

(with backing singers) about singing and preaching about the blues with another fine guitar solo, but the rhythm is pretty stiff here.

One of the standout tracks is the acoustic tribute "John Cephas," written by Hughes and Tucker as a tribute to the late Piedmont blues master. It was performed at the 2010 DC Blues Festival that was dedicated to Cephas' memory. This performance is hauntingly beautiful as Teeny lovingly sings "It looks like John Cephas with his guitar in his hand, don't worry he ain't sad, because he is playing with all of his friends." I am not sure how well Teeny and Robert knew John, but this performance is simply stunning. It's followed by a spirited rendition of Jon Thomas' 1960 hit, "Heartbreak," although one wishes the rhythm section swung it more. Not sure that a new recording of "Got My Mojo Workin'" was needed, but it is strongly sung. The set closes on a back porch, acoustic note on "Respect Me and Respect the Blues," starting as a talking blues and Teeny notes how people have differing tastes in food, cars and music. People keep telling her she should stop singing the blues, because she sings a great R&B song and a gospel tune to which she asks them "respect me and respect the blues."

"Keep The Blues Alive" will certainly build Teeny's audience. There is some exceptional material on this and Teeny is fabulous. I wish the rhythm was on the same level as Teeny and guitarist Hughes, as it would have made the exceptional singing sound even better. This quibble aside, "Keep The Blues Alive" is highly recommended. Burnside Distribution is handling it and it is available on cdbaby.com.

*Ron Weinstock*



## ARTURO SANDOVAL

**Time For Love**  
CONCORD

Havana-born trumpeter Arturo Sandoval is best known for his Afro-Cuban jazz style, so this album, when pitched to record labels, wasn't all that well received.

Determined, Sandoval recorded 20 tracks in his home studio, playing all the instruments and synthesized strings. He was set to release the album himself when a twelfth-hour meeting with Concord and subsequent discussions with album producer Gregg Field resulted in this lush, romantic set of 14 standards featuring Sandoval backed by Shelly Berg on piano, Chuck Berghofer on bass and Field on drums/percussion with a studio orchestra conducted by Jorge Calandrelli. Enhancing the fare are guest artists: trumpeter Chris Botti on Ravel's "Pavane for a Dead Princess," pianist Kenny Barron

on the bonus track ("Every Time We Say Goodbye"), and vocalist Monica Mancini on Astor Piazzolla's "Oblivion (How to Say Goodbye)."

The mixture of tunes draws from the American Songbook as well as from classical repertoire, as Sandoval is a classically trained musician. He admirably shows the breadth of his talents on this album, even softly singing on the familiar Brazilian gem, "Estate." Other tunes include "Speak Low," "I Loves You Porgy," "Smile," "All the Way," "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" and more. This is a gorgeous set that should broaden Sandoval's audience. It's one of those comfortable albums you'll want to play over and over.

*Nancy Ann Lee*



## THIS IS THE BLUES

**Volume One**  
EAGLE RECORDS

While the "when", "why" and "how" of these sessions is not explained, the "who" and the "what" are very clear. These two discs draw from a number of studio takes laid down by a pool of solid Brit blues journeymen, with a sprinkling of "names" among them. And for those fond of high-energy jamming, there are generous hunks to enjoy here.

Volume One is big on rock-blues guitar and axe-meisters Jeff Beck, Mick Taylor and Gary Moore are standouts. Moore's track additionally includes the venerable bassist/vocalist Jack Bruce doing his best Muddy Waters impression on "I'm In The Mood". An acoustic break comes courtesy of T.S. McPhee's run through of "Drop Down Mama".

*Duane Verh*

## THIS IS THE BLUES

**Volume Two**  
EAGLE RECORDS

Rory Gallagher provides a lively lead-in on a more diverse, and generally more polished, grouping than on Volume One. There are enough Peter Green compositions present to suggest some of these were headed for a tribute disc. "Love That Burns" with token "Yank" Southside Johnny on vocals and a nicely laid-out run-through of "Albatross" are highlights. Hard core British blues freaks should enjoy these, and even be familiar with everyone in the cast.

*Duane Verh*



# 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

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).



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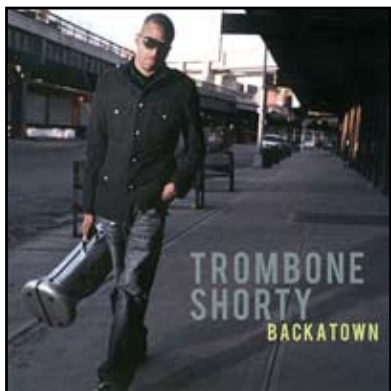
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## TROMBONE SHORTY

### Backatown

VERVE FORECAST

Since emerging nationally as a member of Lenny Kravitz's Band, and his appearance on a nationally televised Hurricane Katrina, Troy 'Trombone Shorty' Andrews has emerged as a favorite band on touring and festival circuits with his blend of funk, Brass Band riffs and some hip-hop & soul seasonings. He is a member of a musical family as his older brother James was a founder of the New Birth Brass band and recorded a brassy album that was produced by Allen Toussaint. Another brother, trumpeter James helped mentor him and Troy's grandfather was the late Jessie Hill who had a major hit with the New Orleans R&B classic "Ooh Poo Pah Doo."

Busy beyond his years, Troy has recorded a CD with his brother, and a previous CD with his band Orleans Avenue along with plenty of studio work. Now he has a new release, "Backatown" (Verve Forecast), that seems destined to increase his fan base even more.

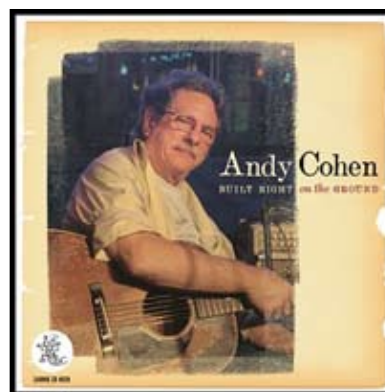
The title of this album refers to the area of New Orleans that includes Tremé, the historic neighborhood where so many great musicians came from and which was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Produced by Galactic's Ben Ellman, Troy's band, Orleans Avenue (Mike Ballard on bass, Pete Murano on guitar, Joey Peebles on drums, Dwayne Williams on percussion and Dan Oestreicher on baritone sax) is the core behind him with special guests that include Allen Toussaint, Kravitz, Marc Broussard and Charles Smith (Orleans Avenue's original drummer playing synth bass). Troy wrote all except one of the 14 numbers on this.

The tone is set with the opening "Hurricane Katrina," with its hip hop rhythm mixed with a funk up brass band sound, followed by Allen Toussaint's "On Your Way Down," where the legendary pianist plays as Troy delivers the message that the folks you see on the way up are the ones you will pass on the way down. After another funk up instrumental, Kravitz joins on guitar and backing vocal on "Something Beautiful," as he asks "Can You Show Me Something Beautiful," which is quite catchy. The title track opens with some dark sounding synth bass from Smith before Troy enters with some buzzing trombone, with some ripping baritone from Oestreicher as the horns weave around each other. Broussard adds a vocal to "Right to Complain," with a message about all who complain but no one wants to do anything. The instrumental "Neph" has a mesmerizing

cowbellish groove before Troy on trumpet conjures up a strong Spanish tinge with stirring interludes of his trumpet soaring over the percussion. "Suburbia" opens with some metalish guitar before Troy adds some trombone and trumpet playing that suggest a call to arms. The groove of "In the 6th," with the baritone helping set the funk riff, sounds like a homage to the Dirty Dozen and other modern New Orleans Brass Bands that his music is rooted in. "Where Y' At," is a composition that originated in some onstage jamming with "new ideas coalescing out of improvised sections of existing pieces." Troy credits Marvin Gaye as inspiration for the ballad "Fallin'."

Anyone who has seen Trombone Shorty and Orleans Avenue know how electric the performances can be. A studio recording can only go so far in capturing this aspect of his music, but "Backatown," is a recording that undoubtedly will increase his growing visibility (his appearances on the HBO series "Tremé," also contribute to this) and certainly please his many fans.

*Ron Weinstock*



## ANDY COHEN

### Built Right On The Ground

EARWIG MUSIC

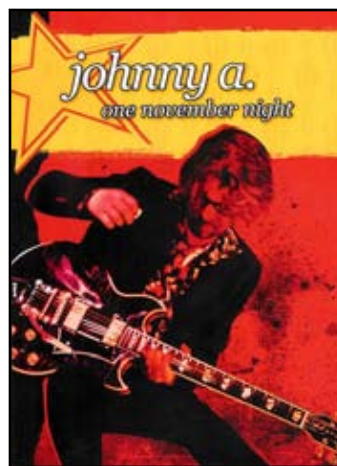
Andy Cohen has been playing older music styles on guitar, piano, dulciana and assorted instruments for several decades now and has a number of recordings over the year. His latest disc is "Built Right On The Ground," on Earwig, ranges from stomping boogie-woogie, Reverend Gary Davis influenced guitar rags, Memphis Minnie songs to a Woody Guthrie talking blues. On several tracks he is joined by his wife, Larkin Bryant on vocals and mandolin, or Kurt Anderson on vocal and guitar. As William Lee Ellis observes, "He had certainly been every bit the standard-bearer, if not an outright genius, when it comes to the interpretation of prewar blues and gospel music."

And what a choice of songs starting from the opening title track which was recorded eighty odd years ago from Blind Teddy Darby that captures the flavor of the original recording, but with his deft picking and wonderfully delivered vocal it comes out as his own. His updating of Sam McGee's old-timey blues, "Railroad Blues," features impressive picking along with an amusing lyric about voting for Obama because his mama told him to. I wonder how many who do their flashy Robert Johnson covers could do such a nice rendition of Henry Spaulding's "Cairo Blues," which is wonderfully paced and as well as sung. There is a credible, if hardly spectacular, rendition of Meade Lux Lewis' "Honky Tonk Train Blues," which illustrates his versatility as a musician. Cohen especially is

adept at numbers that features fingerpicking in the vein of the Piedmont tradition, but also he is able to channel the facile, rhythmic playing of a Furry Lewis and Memphis Minnie as displayed on his interpretation of "Soo Cow Soo."

On "Jim Dickinson Stomp," dedicated to the late musician and producer, he plays some lovely guitar in the Memphis style as well as the dolceola, followed by the sentimental Jimmie Rodgers tune "My Old Pal," where Kurt Anderson takes the vocal (and the two collaborate on another Rodgers sentimental tune, "Miss the Mississippi and You"). "Temptation Rag" was a piano piece (also recorded by reed players, Sidney Bechet and Benny Goodman), that gets a lovely and adept guitar treatment in the manner of Gary Davis, which Cohen also gives to Jelly Roll Morton's "Grandpa's Spells." There is also a jaunty take on Big Bill Broonzy's "Mopper Blues." He returns to piano for a lively "Shake-a-You-Boogie," which he learned from Blind Jim Brewer, "Shake a Boogie" (which likely was derived from John Lee 'Sonny Boy' Williamson, and "Too Fat Boogie"). Cohen treats us with the amusing Woody Guthrie "Mean Talkin' Blues," before he and his wife (who is on mandolin) close out this CD with a marvelous rendering of the late Bobby Charles' "Tennessee Blues."

I agree with William Lee Ellis that in a perfect world, Andy Cohen would be as famous as Taj Mahal and Ry Cooder. "Built Right On The Ground," showcases not simply how good a player he is and the extensiveness of his repertoire, but also the warmth and genuineness of his vocals. This recording is a must for lovers of acoustic and traditional blues. **Ron Weinstock**



## JOHNNY A. One November Night AGLAOPHONE

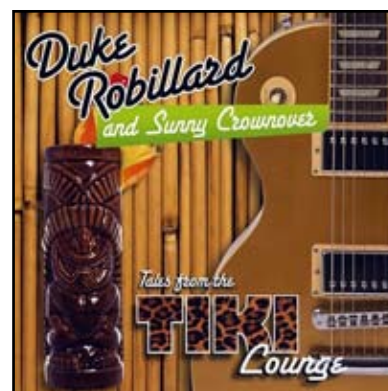
A live recording by Boston jazz rocker Johnny A., best known for his playing with Peter Wolf from the J. Geils Band's solo work, ONE NOVEMBER NIGHT is a two headed monster, one disc of the live performance and a DVD of the same show. Backed by bassist Jesse Bastos and drummer Chris Farr, both have the sweet picking of "I

Had To Laugh" and a touch of flamenco on "Lullabye For Nicole" as the recorded disc only includes a handful of covers like a playful take on the Beatles' "The Night Before" and a reflective mood during Jimmy Webb's "Wichita Lineman." The pair of presentations spotlight most of the guitarist's best known work including the foreboding "Get Inside" and his smoking fast "Ignorance Is Bliss." The bonus on the DVD is Johnny A. playing the Left Banke's "Walk Away Renee" to a fading sunset out in a field somewhere.

So the big question here is "which disc is better?" Depends on what you like, I'd guess.

If you are into the music without the visual, there is the cd. If you'd rather look at the band playing the music, there's your second option enclosed. Both are souvenirs of the same live show in Boston last November, so do you want to listen to it or look at it? If in charge, my call would have been to record a brand new set of originals for the disc and have the live DVD cover Johnny A.'s previous work. He even says in the bio "For me, ONE NOVEMBER NIGHT is a special way to end the chapter of my career that (his earlier cds) represent."

**Peanuts**



## DUKE ROBILLARD AND SUNNY CROWNOVER Tales From The Tiki Lounge BLUE DUCHESS RECORDS

The ever prolific Duke Robillard follows up last year's successful pairing with vocalist Sunny Crownover, *Sunny & Her Joy Boys*, by pairing with her again for this tribute to Les Paul. Modeled loosely after Paul's recordings with Mary Ford, Robillard provides a jazzy, backdrop to Crownover's



silky rich vocals.

Those with a taste for exotic Tiki Lounge music should head straight to the rumba/swing of *Tico Tico*, the mysterious sounding *Occidental Woman* first performed by none other than Mae West, the flamenco fueled *Besame Mucho*, the strutting *Kiss of Fire* and the percussive *Sway* which get both a straight reading and an edgier re-mix. *Put the Blame on Mame (parts 1 and 2)* puts you firmly into the Rita Hayworth/Glenn Ford film noir classic "Gilda" from which it came while *Smoke Rings* is an unhurried, sexy come on. Robillard and Crownover make the oft covered Willie Nelson classic *Crazy* seem positively fresh with jazzy guitar riffs and vocals that drip emotion. As good as that track is, the duo's take on the bluesy *I'm Still in Love With You* is so perfectly realized that the song should move from the obscure to the oft covered. While most of the material moves along at an unhurried pace, *Bye Bye Blues* swings pretty hard and *Goody Goody* hits a higher gear as Crownover plots her revenge against an errant lover.

Classy from beginning to end this disc evokes thoughts of low lights, hard drinks and close dancing. Based on the strength of this release, we should be hearing plenty from this duo in the future.

Mark Smith

## books



### LONG LOST BLUES: POPULAR BLUES IN AMERICA, 1950-1920

Peter C. Muir  
2010: UNIVERSITY OF  
ILLINOIS PRESS

A new book has been published examining the emergence of blues in popular American music prior to the face race records recordings of the music. Peter

Muir, described as "an internationally recognized pianist, composer, scholar and conductor," provides the reader with a musicological analysis of blues that was published and sold in sheet music form as well as a textual analysis of these published songs that supplement what we know about the emergence of blues as a song form and as a musical idiom. There are many musical examples included. The extensive use of musical examples is also accompanied by recordings that can be downloaded on the book's website and Muir also provides verbal descriptions to facilitate those who are not able to read musical notation.

It is a study of the emergence of the blues industry and Muir brings to our attention a number of interesting facts including the fact that on January 12, 1912, a piece of sheet music was registered for copyright by the Library of Congress entitled "The Blues," and was authored by two

African-American writers, Chris Smith and Tim Brymn, who had been active in the popular music industry for over a decade, and had collaborated before. Muir observes that while essentially a ragtime song, "The Blues" contained much that was blues related including a scenario of a woman grieving for a deserting lover, but most telling is the chorus when the singer declares "I got the blues, but I'm too blamed mean to cry," with music that makes striking use of blue notes, represented by a musical example as well. Muir further notes that it was the second publication to describe itself as a blues, the earlier composition was "I'm Alabama Bound," subtitled "The Alabama Blues." But by 1912 four more songs described as blues would be copyrighted and he then traces and shows the increasing number of such sheet music over the decade, as well as shows the links with black and white vaudeville. In 1916, blues compositions were published with an aggregate through 1916 of 92, and in 1920, when blues recordings for Blacks started to become available; there were 147 published and an aggregate amount of 457 published.

His analysis involves distinguishing folk blues from popular blues, which includes describing some of the elements of popular blues (which I suspect many would not consider blues, but rather vaudeville) as well as discusses the performances of such music. He furthermore considers the origins of the word "blues," and postulates that blues was in a sense a cure for the condition that was a theme of many blues songs and then categorizes songs as either homeopathic and allopathic, a distinction between a singer singing a depressed song to drive his blues away, as opposed to employing a lively tempo number to cure the blues. He suggests that most folk blues are homeopathic while popular blues is in the latter category. He accompanies this discussion with a history that goes back to Greek times of music as a cure for melancholy and depression.

There is also a discussion of several notable composers of blues, including a full chapter of W.C. Handy, as well an overview of such important early blues as "Dallas Blues" and "Baby Seals Blues," and such other notable composers as Euday Bowman, Perry Bradford and George Washington Thomas (Sippie Wallace's oldest brother). The final chapter on Proto-Blues of the 18th Century examines some of the published parlor songs and minstrel that use the phrase "I Got the Blues," as well as the evolution of the twelve-bar sequence that is found in some of blues ballads such as "Frankie and Johnny" and "Boll Weevil," as well as compositions of ragtime pianist Hughie Cannon, the most famous song associated with is "Bill Bailey Won't You Please Come Home." He also shows how the blues ballad musically was distinguished from the blues song.

This is a fascinating book, which will bring to light an aspect of blues in American musical life that has not been given attention, and helps our understanding of how blues emerged in the early 20th century, and got disseminated to become so influential in wide areas of American culture. Ron Weinstock

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San Rafael Desert, Utah © David Muench

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