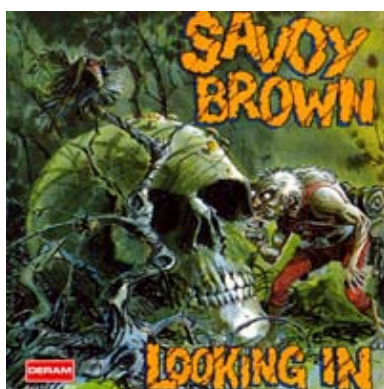
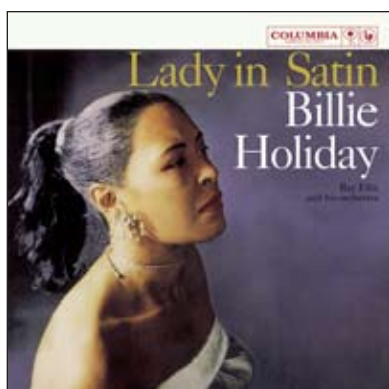
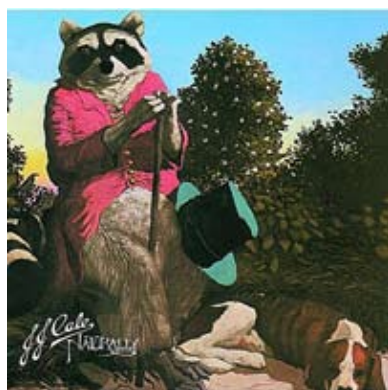
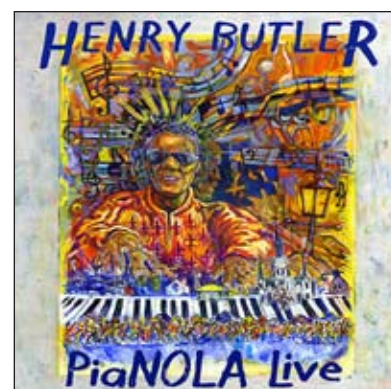
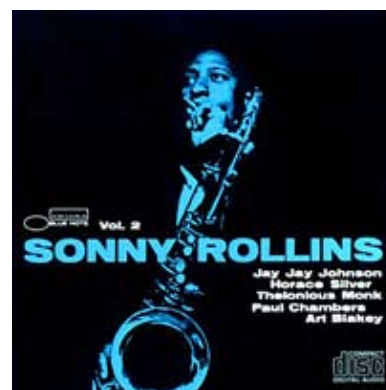


The Future of Album Art



jazz & blues report

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Check out our constantly updated website. Now you can search for CD Reviews by artists, titles, record labels, keyword or JBR Writers. 15 years of reviews are up and we'll be going all the way back to 1974.

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"Buffalorious"

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

Is Album Cover Art Gone For Good? The digital music age means no more packaging



By David Merline

Physical media is rapidly becoming a relic of the 20th Century. As music downloads, online gaming, and streaming video make listening, playing, and watching whatever we want whenever we want so simple and convenient, the need to own round pieces of plastic containing albums or games or movies seems ever more quaint. This sea-change in the way we consume media has upended the entertainment industry, and among the many casualties has been the art of the album cover.

Along with the advent of the compact disc came the advent of desktop publishing, another key factor in the worsening of album cover art.

In the beginning, record albums didn't have cover art. That's because the term "record album" didn't refer to a single slab of vinyl, but rather a bound collection of sleeves that housed numerous records, exactly the way photo albums hold numerous photographs (or used to, before the digital age made photographs even more obsolete than record albums). But as recorded music gained popularity in the post-World-War-II era, record labels began to use album sleeves as a marketing tool. Album art not only served as an ad for the album inside, but helped shape the image of the artist.

Album cover design, with a few exceptions, remained fairly generic

for much of the 1950s and 1960s. But in the psychedelic rock era, album cover art began to take on more significance, a trend pioneered by—who else—The Beatles, with their album—you guessed it—*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

That album was one of the first in which the cover design made as much of a statement as the music. It was one of the first rock albums to include printed lyrics, one of the first to have a custom inner sleeve, and its elaborate cover, composed of life-size cardboard cutouts of various artists, musicians, and celebrities, cost around \$5,000. That was an astronomical sum at the time (roughly equivalent to \$65,000 today), but that cover went a long way toward making *Sgt. Pepper's* one of the defining albums of its generation.

Throughout the rest of the '60s and well into the '70s, album cover art was taken very seriously. Design firms made millions conceiving and designing album cover art, and artists like Peter Blake, Storm Thorgerson, and Roger Dean produced cover designs that could compel people to buy albums without even knowing the music they contained.

Then came the compact disc, and the decline of the album cover was set in motion. With only 4.75-inches on which to display cover art (versus the album's 12-inches),

designers were forced to modify cover art designs. Text had to become larger, images had to become less detailed, and designs that once could have been rendered as gatefold sleeves with die-cuts and lyric sleeve inserts were all relegated to the space allowed by a small booklet and a tray card.

Along with the advent of the compact disc came the advent of desktop publishing, another key factor in the worsening of album cover art. What once was the realm of professional graphic designers, illustrators, painters, and/or photographers soon became the playground of the amateur.

Thanks to this confluence of events, album cover design quickly went from a large-budget affair involving designers, photographers, models, sets, etc. to something someone in the band did at home on their MacBook. Design suffered, but some bandmember or their friend got to play artist and the labels got to pocket all the money formerly spent on art budgets.

And now we're moving into the all-digital age, in which there is no artifact, and all accompanying art is screen-rendered (save for the underground music scene, in which vinyl is ascendant and even cassette covers are again designed and printed) and the only cover one sees is a 150-pixel square.

As with all things in life that change, there's a temptation to bemoan the loss of album cover art as somehow symbolic of some great loss to civilization, another step in the ongoing decline of everything that was better when we were young. But there's something to be said for not having all that "stuff" cluttering up one's life, even if that stuff was beautifully designed and printed.

By jettisoning the physical "product" of the record album, or the DVD, or the book, the art that was once contained within these packages has to stand on its own merits. With no nifty package to lure you into a purchase, you have to want to listen to your albums, or read your books, or watch your movies, or play your games, because there is no longer any "thing" to own, or admire, or display on a shelf.

David Merline is the music journalist for Web2Carz, an online lifestyle magazine. Visit www.web2carz.com



The Jazz Institute of Chicago and Estrada Pozananska announce 7th annual Made in Chicago Festival in Poznan Poland November 22-25, 2012

In 2006 the Jazz Institute of Chicago began a partnership with Estrada Poznanska, a municipal arts agency in Poznan, Poland to produce a three-day Made in Chicago Festival there. Each year we gather a large group of musicians who play together in different contexts throughout the festival. Estrada's artistic director Wojciech Juszczak confirms "we approach the Chicago jazz scene not as a constellation of stars of which each shines with its own light, but as a large community of artists looking together in the same direction and together building the name of Chicago jazz".

Over 60 Chicago musicians have performed in Poznan over the past 5 years and it has been a launching pad for several musicians' careers. The festival has commissioned and premiered new work, mounted visual arts exhibitions by participating musicians (and JIC's executive director Lauren Deutsch) produced CD recordings, television and radio broadcasts and began presenting workshops for high school and college students in 2008. In 2009 trumpeter, educator and conductor of the 55-piece Chicago Jazz Philharmonic Orbert Davis created a Poznan Jazz Philharmonic with classical music students at the Paderewski Academy. In 2010 Nicole Mitchell brought her Arc of O commission to Poznan directly following its premiere at the Chicago Jazz Festival to rehearse and perform it with Polish chamber musicians she had met there at a previous festival. Introducing Tatsu Aoki's Miyumi Project the first year led to an annual Asian American Jazz Festival in Poznan for the 3 following years.

The 2012 Made in Chicago presents 4 days of music that spans the spectrum of jazz:

Thursday 11/22 features vibist Jason Adasiewicz's Sun Rooms Trio with Mike Reed on drums and Nate McBride on bass, followed by saxophonist Dave Rempis' Trio with cellist Tomeka Reid and bassist Joshua Abrams.

Friday 11/23 features bassist Harrison Bankhead's Sextet, his first international outing as a leader with Mars Williams and Edward Wilkerson on saxophones, James Sanders on violin, Ernie Adams on drums and Avreeayl Ransom on percussion. They are followed by guitarist Mary Halvorson's Group with Nate McBride on bass, Tomas Fujiwara

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on drums and Taylor H Bynum on trumpet.

Saturday 11/24 presents Mike Reed's Living By Lanterns, originally premiered at the Chicago Jazz Festival in 2010 as Myth Science Assembly, featuring work inspired by found fragments of material from the Sun Ra archive. The group includes Mike Reed on drums, Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Tomeka Reid, cello; Joshua Abrams, bass; Greg Ward and Ingrid Laubrock, saxophones, Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet; Mary Halvorson, guitar; and arrangements by Jason Adasiewicz, vibes. This performance is followed by pianist Ken Chaney's Awakening with Ari Brown on saxophone, T.S. Galloway on trombone, Pharez Whitted on trumpet, Harrison Bankhead on bass and Ernie Adams on drums.

Sunday 11/25 the festival closes with Blowin' in From Chicago., a re-imagining of the 1957 recording with John Gilmore and Clifford Jordan that put the Chicago Sound on the map featuring Edward Wilkerson and Ari Brown on saxophones, Harrison Bankhead on bass, Ernie Adams on Drums and Ken Chaney on piano.

The festival has put Chicago on the map in Europe as a place where the unusual in music is common and expectations are usually exceeded by experiencing something indescribably wonderful. In other words, it has branded Chicago jazz as a unique, exciting, imaginative, innovative and constantly evolving music. It is a highly anticipated event in Poznan, with people coming in from all parts of Europe to see what Chicago has to offer.

For more information visit estrada.poznan.pl or call 01-48.61. 852.07.92 to reach Estrada or 312.427.1676 to reach the Jazz Institute of Chicago.

BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

New Release Blues.... Wow, November! Last chance to buy blues for yourself before your budget goes up in smoke buying for everyone else for the holidays. Here's a few to add to your collection now or add to your personal holiday wish list: **Gary Clark, Jr.- Blak and Blu;** **Joe Bonamassa- Beacon Theatre: Live from New York;** **Gary Moore- Blues for Jimi: Live in London;** **Robert Cray- Nothin But Love;** **David Hidalgo, Mato Nanji & Luther Dickinson- 3 Skulls & The Truth;** **Mitch Woods- Blues Beyond Borders- Live in Istanbul;** **David Maxwell- Blues In other Colors;** **Maria Muldaur- First Came Memphis Minnie;** **Bonnie Bishop-Free;** **Sunny Crownover- Right Here Right Now;** **Teresa James and the Rhythm Tramps- Come on Home;** **J. P. Real- The Road to Mississippi;** **The Bopcats- 23 Years of Rock n' Roll;** **The No Refund Band- The No Refund Band;** **Dave Widow and the Line Up- Waiting for the World to End;** **Red Lotus Revue- Fourteen Stories;** **Craig Chaquico- Fire Red Moon;** **Al Basile- At Home Next Door;** **Corey Lueck and the Smoke Wagon Blues Band- It Ain't Easy;** **John Lee Hooker, Jr. – All Hooked Up;** **Big Walker- Root Walking;** **Eric Gales- Live- Shemekia Copeland- 33 1/3;** **Joanne Shaw Taylor- Almost Always Never;** **Omar & the Howlers featuring Gary Primach- Too Much is Not Enough;** **Delta Moon- Goin' Down South;** **Harry Manx- Wise and Otherwise;** **Burton Gaar- Home of the Blues;** **Brenda Boykin- All the Time in the World;** **Perry Weber and the Devilles- The Riot Act;** **Doug Deming & The Jewel Tones- What's it Gonna Take?;** **Eric Bibb- Brothers in Bamako;** **Bessie Smith- The Complete Columbia Recordings;** **Doug Sahm- The Last Real Texas Blues Band Live in Stockholm;** **Samuel James- For the Dark Road Ahead;** **Elmore James, Jr- Old School Lover;** **Ann Rabson/Bob Margolin- Not Alone;** **Top Jimmy- Good Times are Killing Me;** **Too Slim & the Taildraggers- Knock 'em Dead;** **Dennis Gruenling- Rocking All Day;** **Junior Watson- Live from Outer Space;** **Shawn Pittman with the Moeller Brothers- Triple Troubles;** **Ron Hacker- Live in San Francisco;** **Linsey Alexander- Been There Done That;** **John Primer- Blues On Solid Ground;** **Ernest Lane & The Kings of Rhythm- The Blues Piano Man;** **Eddie Shaw & the 757 Allstars- Still Riding High;** **Sugar Blue- Raw Sugar Live;** **Betty Lavette- Thankful N' Thoughtful;** **Vance Kelly and his Backstreet Blues Band- Tell Me Why;** **Eddie Taylor Jr- So Called Friends.** On second thought, get out of the way: I feel a buying spree coming up!... *That's It for this Month. See Ya! Mark Smith*

LIKE JAZZ & BLUES PHOTOS?



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



Cécile McLorin Salvant

**2010 Thelonious Monk Competition Winner,
Vocalist CECILE McLORIN SALVANT,
Signs with Mack Avenue Records**

"Cécile McLorin Salvant, who recently turned 23 and is still mostly unknown to jazz audiences, though not for much longer...Ms. Salvant is as serious as a library, and never corny...she radiates authority and delivers a set with almost a dramatic arc." - The New York Times

"She has poise, elegance, soul, humor, sensuality, power, virtuosity, range, insight, intelligence, depth and grace. Yeah." - Wynton Marsalis

"I've never heard a singer of her generation who has such a command of styles ranging from Bessie Smith to Betty Carter. To have an artist with such a handle on jazz vocabulary while being extremely expressive and soulful, that's very rare." - Aaron Diehl

Mack Avenue Records is proud to announce the signing of **Cécile McLorin Salvant**, winner of the 2010 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition. The announcement comes as the 23-year-old prepares for her debut album in 2013, titled **Woman Child**.

"Recording for Mack Avenue has been a truly wonderful experience," reflects Salvant. "As a young artist, I have found the support and encouragement that is paramount in this stage of my development."

Al Pryor, Mack Avenue Record's Executive Vice President of A&R, said, "Cécile has the preternatural ability to delve deeply into the core of a song and then serve it up to an audience. Calling on the vocal techniques of Ella, Sarah and Betty Carter, together with the intelligence of Billie Holiday's phrasing and the wisdom of Bessie Smith's lyricism, she heralds a new generation of female jazz vocal-

ists. We are thrilled to partner with Cécile as she adds the vocation of recording artist to her journey as a jazz singer and performing artist who will undoubtedly contribute to the legacy of those artists who came before her."

Salvant was born and raised in Miami, Florida of a French mother and a Haitian father. She began classical piano studies at age five, and began singing in the Miami Choral Society at age eight. Early on, she developed an interest in classical voice, began studying with private instructors, and later with Edward Walker, vocal teacher at the University of Miami.

In 2007, Salvant moved to Aix-en-Provence, France, to study law as well as classical and baroque voice at the Darius Milhaud Conservatory. It was in Aix-en-Provence, with reedist and teacher Jean-François Bonnel, that she began learning about improvisation, instrumental and vocal repertoire ranging from the 1910s on, and sang with her first band. In 2009, after a series of concerts in Paris, she recorded her first project *Cécile* (self-released), with Jean-François Bonnel's Paris Quintet. A year later, she won the Thelonious Monk Competition in Washington D.C., judged by Patti Austin, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Kurt Elling, Al Jarreau and Dianne Reeves.

With performance experience in Europe as well as the United States, Salvant has been accompanied by renowned musicians such as Jean-François Bonnel, Rodney Whitaker, Aaron Diehl, Dan Nimmer, Sadao Watanabe, Jacky Terrasson (with a noted collaboration on his latest album, *Gouache*), Archie Shepp, and Jonathan Batiste, among others. She has performed at numerous festivals, including Jazz à Vienne, Ascona, Whitley Bay, Montauban, Foix, the Spoleto Jazz Festival, and the Detroit Jazz Festival; with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in New York's Rose Hall and Chicago's Symphony Center; and with her own band at the Kennedy Center. Additionally, for the second consecutive year, her sole voice can be heard backing the CHANEL® "Chance" ad campaign.

On her forthcoming album, **Woman Child**, Salvant continues her approach in performing unique interpretations of unknown and scarcely recorded jazz and blues compositions (with a theatrical execution). The project features label mates Aaron Diehl and Rodney Whitaker (Diehl's Mack Avenue debut is set for February 19 release) as well as Herlin Riley and James Chirillo. The project is slated for mid-2013 release (exact time frame to be announced).

Upcoming Cécile McLorin Salvant Appearances:

November 16 / Ritz Kinam - w/Aaron Diehl / **Pétion-Ville, Haiti**

November 20 / Pierre Hotel - 2012 History Makers Gala w/Jonathan Batiste / **New York, NY**

December 17 / l'Olympia of Paris w/Jacky Terrasson / **Paris, France**

December 29 / The Kings Arts Complex
- Jazz on the Ave - The Holidays - w/Aaron Diehl / **Columbus, OH**

February 2, 2013 / Allen Room - Lincoln Center's American Songbook / **New York, NY**

For more informatio visit: cecilemclorinsalvant.com

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

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

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



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

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

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can



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

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.

powerfully on the piano, but it was the full orchestra that he considered his most compelling instrument. He introduced improvisation to his compositions — a process unheard of using a 15-piece orchestra. The result was a different approach to jazz that sparked a revolution and an evolution. His music spread across the world with songs like "Sophisticated Lady," "In a



Art. Ask for More.

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Smooth jazz cruising on both coasts

The Smooth Jazz Cruise unveils a new West Coast sailing for 2013 along with the lineup and ports for the 2014 East Coast excursion

St. Louis, MO - As the perennially sold-out sailings of The Smooth Jazz Cruise: The Greatest Party at Sea prepares to launch its 10th anniversary excursions in January 2013, parent company Entertainment Cruise Productions is determined to keep the party going strong by creating a West Coast outing from San Diego to exotic Mexican ports in the fall of 2013 with music hosts Brian Culbertson and Boney James. Grammy winners David Sanborn and Marcus Miller will perform on the new program and continue to serve as the music hosts of the traditional January sailing of The Smooth Jazz Cruise in 2014 that will embark from Fort Lauderdale to Caribbean paradise as it has done for a decade. Both 7-day cruises will be held aboard a luxurious Holland America ship and feature performances by legends, hitmakers and fan favorites.

"As we enter the second decade of The Smooth Jazz Cruise, we want to keep things fresh for our loyal family of cruisers that comes back year after year. Thanks in part to their suggestions, we decided to spread the love by creating a sensational West Coast cruise. With a cruise on both coasts, we feel that the hosts should reflect the different personalities of each coast. I cannot imagine a more exciting cruise menu than Brian Culbertson and Boney James hosting a West Coast cruise and David Sanborn and Marcus Miller topping an East Coast cruise. Brian, Boney, David and Marcus will perform on both cruises as will Jonathan Butler and Candy Dulfer. We're going to showcase 22 incredible headliners between the two cruises," said Michael Lazaroff, Executive Director of St. Louis-based Entertainment Cruise Productions.

The first-ever left coast departure for The Smooth Jazz Cruise, the West Coast expedition will make its maiden voyage on the m/s Westerdam October 12-19, 2013 from San Diego and visit Cabo San Lucas, Puerto Vallarta and Baja Coast. Joining Culbertson, James, Sanborn, Miller, Butler and Dulfer as performers will be Rick Braun, Norman Brown, Richard Elliot, Euge Groove, Kenny Lattimore, Earl Klugh, Oleta Adams, Brian Simpson, DW3, comedian Alonzo Bodden and special guest Tower of Power.

The Smooth Jazz Cruise 2014 will cruise on the m/s Eurodam from Fort Lauderdale January 11-18 with stops in Turks & Caicos, San Juan, St. Maarten and Half Moon Cay. The parade of performers will consist of Sanborn, Miller, Culbertson, James, Butler, Dulfer, Simpson, Kirk Whalum, Peter White, Sheila E, Keb Mo, Keiko Matsui, Maysa Leak, Mindi Abair, DW3, Bodden and special guest Jeffrey Osborne.

Affectionately known amongst passengers as "The Greatest Party at Sea," The Smooth Jazz Cruise spot-

lights music icons, Grammy winners and chart-topping contemporary jazz, R&B and adult contemporary artists aboard a first-class, full ship charter. It is an extraordinary week devoted to live music with the luminous lineups presented in theatre, club and intimate piano bar settings. The velvet rope is removed allowing cruisers to mix and mingle freely with the musicians at cocktail parties, informative seminars, autograph and Q&A sessions, theme nights, sporting contests and special land excursions while in port. The magic of The Smooth Jazz Cruise is best understood by first-hand experience. Nearly 60% of the passengers are repeat guests. To reserve a cabin, call toll-free in the U.S. and Canada 888.852.9987 and 800.852.99872 from abroad. For further information, please visit www.thesmoothjazzcruise.com.

The largest private music ship charter company in the world, St. Louis, Missouri-based Entertainment Cruise Productions, LLC owns, produces and promotes The Smooth Jazz Cruise and The Jazz Cruise (www.thejazzcruise.com), and is proud to partner with Time Life for The Malt Shop Memories Cruise (www.maltshopcruise.com) and the new Soul Train Cruise (www.soultraincruise.com), Ship of Fear Horror Cruise, The Studio 54 Cruise and The Country Music Cruise. Entertainment Cruise Productions, LLC prides itself on providing first-class musical vacation experiences featuring marquee stars from their respective genres for devoted passengers, many of whom make the cruises an annual affair. Additional information is available at www.ecpcruises.com.

"A BAZOOKA ASSAULT OF FOOT-STOMPIN' BLUES AND SLOW-BURNIN' KNEE-BUCKLERS." —*Chicago Sun-Times*



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Receive tour info and special online offers by subscribing to the Alligator mailing list at alligator.com



We only bring you
the Cream of the Crop!



PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND

The 50th Anniversary Collection
COLUMBIA/LEGACY 4-CD BOX SET

A half-century ago, several New Orleans lovers decided to present performances of some of the living masters of traditional New Orleans Jazz in a setting removed from the hucksterism that was part of the Bourbon Street scene at the time. It was an opportunity to present such artists as George Lewis, Jim Robinson, Billie and DeDe Pierce, Sweet Emma Barrett, Alton Purnell, Kid Howard, Percy Humphrey and so many others in a setting that gave them a respect their artistry merited. These concerts evolved in what we know as Preservation Hall, and while these artists became legendary in traditional jazz and have all passed on, Preservation Hall and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band have become iconic and institutions.

Celebrating the half-century is a new box set on Columbia/Legacy by the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, "The 50th Anniversary Collection." It is taken from several sources including three of the albums Atlantic issued in a series of Jazz at Preservation Hall along with recordings made by Preservation Hall itself and some of those issued on CBS (later Sony). From recordings documenting the bands that played at Preservation Hall to the contemporary editions of the Preservation Hall, one has a richness of music and

performances. Also included are some of collaborations with artists from outside Preservation Hall that were on some of the more recent recordings of the Hall. There are some previously unissued recordings among the 57 tracks that are spread across the 4 CDs in this box.

Old and new are intermixed throughout. For example, the first disc opens with the late Allan Jaffe introducing the band on tour followed by a rollicking "Eh La Bas" by Billie and DeDe Pierce from 1966, followed by the 1986 Band with Percy and Willie Humphrey on "Oh Didn't He Ramble." Then we hear from the same 1986 session Narvin Kimball singing "I Get the Blues When It Rains," which is followed by a 2008 recording of "St. James Infirmary," with Clint Maedgen with a hyperactive vocal and a hot Latin-infused groove. Then there is a 2009 rendition of "Ice Cream," a perennial of George Lewis and other bands half a century ago, and then we go back to 1967 for a marvelous rendition of the Humphrey Brothers led band doing the Leroy Carr classic "In the Evening (When the Sun Goes Down)," with pianist James 'Sing' Miller handling the vocal and George Lewis' 1962 recording of "Down By the Riverside."

There is such a richness of material here that I will only reference some of the gems that include the marvelous rendition of "In the Evening," referred to above; "I'm Alone Because I Love You," featuring the irascible Sweet Emma Barrett; a wonderful "Do Lord" from 1994 featuring Wendell Brunious singing and on trumpet and a band that included Ellis Marsalis on piano, and Dr. Michael White on clarinet; Billie and DeDe Pierce's "St. James Infirmary," with Billie's vocal, and George Lewis' clarinet; Pete Seeger and friends joining for a spirited "We Shall Overcome"; Tuba Fats' vocal on "His Eye Is On The Sparrow"; "Nellie Gray," a marvelous vocal by Percy Humphrey on a previously unissued 1986 recording; a rendition of "Lil Liza Jane" from 2001 with Louis Jones on trombone and benefiting from Shannon Powell's R&B tinged groove and vocal; Kid Howard's vocal on the George Lewis Band's rendition of "In the Sweet Bye and Bye"; and "I'll Fly Away" from the 2010 collaboration with the Del M Band.

Other gems include "Blue Yodel #9," a revival of the Jimmie Rodgers country recording that Louis Armstrong played on the original; George Lewis' hauntingly beautiful "Burgundy Blues"; Sweet Emma leading the group on "Chimes Blues," originally recorded by King Oliver at a historic 1923 session for Gennett; a marvelous take on "Sing On," a staple of the Brass Bands repertoire; the spirited 1976 take of "Joe Avery"; "Shake That Thing," a 2009 revival of a late twenties Sam Morgan recording with a vocal by Clint Maedgen and nice interplay between Charlie Gabriel on clarinet, Freddie Lonzo on trombone and Mark Braud on trumpet; the lovely 1966 "Freight Train Blues," with Billie Pierce's heartfelt vocal and clarinet by George Lewis; and Punch Miller's 1962

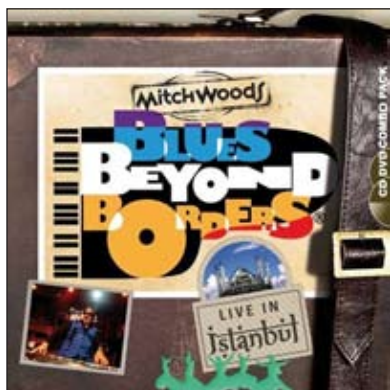
rendition of the languid “Nobody Knows The Way I Fell This Morning.”

More gems include the bluesy collaboration with Tom Waits of an old Mardi Gras chant “Tootie Ma Is a Big Fine Thing”; a nice 1976 rendition of Paul Barbarin’s “Bourbon Street Parade”; Ralph Johnson’s clarinet rendition of Sidney Bechet’s “Le Petit Fleur”; “One More ‘Fore I Die,” another collaboration with the Del McCoury Band with lovely clarinet by Clarinet Gabriel and mandolin by Ronnie McCoury; a Percy Humphrey vocal on the spirited “Shake It and Break It”; the beautiful funeral march “Westward Dirge” played straight with little improvisation; and Richie Haven’s moving vocal on “Trouble on Mind” with considerable restraint shown in the Band’s backing..

In addition to the music, Bruce Boyd Raeburn provides an overview of Preservation Hall’s history. Current Hall Creative Director, Ben Jaffe whose father Allan had a similar role with the Hall for several decades, provides his own commentary on each of the selections contained in this box set. My advance copy only had the booklet’s text, so I cannot comment of any photos or other graphic material included in the accompanying booklet. I trust these will complement the excellent music.

This is a joy and soulfulness of all of the performances here (not simply the ones I have highlighted) on this celebration of 50 years of what is truly a cornerstone of American culture, not simply music.

Ron Weinstock



MITCH WOODS

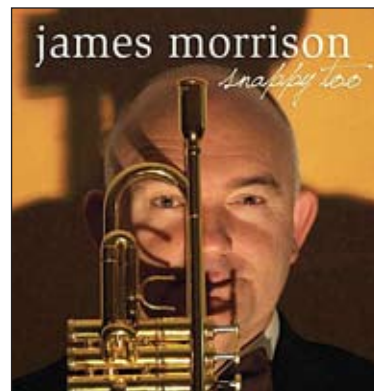
Blues Beyond Borders

VIZZ-TONE / CLUB 88 CD/DVD SET

It took a few solid numbers to cause the transition but master blues-and-boogie pianist Woods & crew eventually gets their appreciative, but reserved Istanbul festival audience to respond like a real roadhouse crowd.

The leader’s reliable two-fisted work is evident throughout a set stocked primarily with originals including “Solid Gold Cadillac” and “Boogie Woogie Bar-B-Q, setting up bassist Cornell Williams’ crowd-rousing slow blues vocal feature on the Eddie Boyd/Willie Dixon classic “Third Degree”. A concert-plus-extras DVD completes the package.

Duane Verh



JAMES MORRISON

Snappy Too

ALEPH RECORDS

James Morrison is a virtuoso in the true sense of the word. He not only plays trumpet, but also trombone, euphonium, flugelhorn, tuba, saxophones, double bass and piano.

He has played with countless musical legends including Dizzy Gillespie, Cab Calloway, Woody Shaw, Red Rodney, George Benson, Ray Charles, B.B. King, Ray Brown and Wynton Marsalis. His musical career is a fairly varied one that goes beyond the usual jazz gigs. He recorded “Jazz Meets the Symphony” with The London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lalo Schiffrin, performed concerts at the Royal Albert hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden for Princess Anne. He was also the artistic advisor to the Sydney Symphony’s “Kaleidoscope” series, which has included performances by Chick Corea, Dianne Reeves, Gary Burton and Kristjan Jarvi.

In 1990, James Morrison recorded “Snappy Doo,” an album that featured Morrison along with three legendary artists (Ray Brown, Herb Ellis, and Jeff Hamilton) creating a seventeen-piece big band sound through the use of overdubbing. Ray Brown and Herb Ellis have passed on, but Morrison has recorded its sequel, “Snappy Too (Aleph Records).

For this album he did not replace Brown or Ellis, so he had to pull out his acoustic bass and brush up on guitar, in addition to playing trumpet, trombone, sax, and piano as he did for the first album. This was recorded mostly in his Sydney studio before moving to Los Angeles where Hamilton added the drum parts and Morrison added some improvised solos.

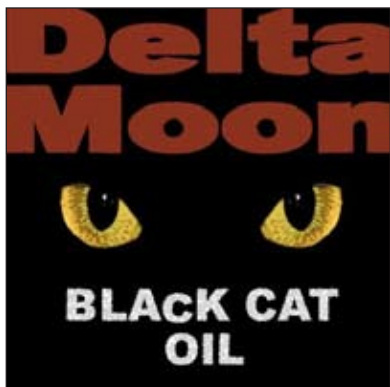
This writer has not heard the earlier recording, but if one listened to “Snappy Too” without knowing how it was recorded, one would be knocked out by this big band recording, although it opens up sounding like a slightly scratchy Dixieland recording of “All of Me” that segues into the tight big band setting for Morrison to take a crisp, bright trumpet solo initially against just a bass accompaniment before the full big band backing resurfaces. Morrison’s own “The Master Plan” is a nice slow groover that hints at “A Night In Tunisia” mixed with the “(Theme From) The

Pink Panther” with some cool West Coast styled tenor (think of Stan Getz, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn). Then he turns to trombone as the lead instrument on “Getting Sentimental Over You.” His playing on trombone, like tenor sax and trumpet, has crispness and an appealing lyricism in the solos while the big band arrangements and accompaniments are lush but not syrupy.

The original “The Call” is a Basie styled-blues with a loping beat with marvelous ensemble work. I particularly like the brass riffs that accent his trumpet solo that has him hitting quite a few high notes here. “No Regrets” has a pensive quality with Morrison featured on alto saxophone and trumpet and followed by him on trumpet on the lively big band bop-flavored “Zog’s Jog.”

“Sad Blues” moves from the big Band setting to that of a traditional New Orleans jazz band with idiomatic tailgate-flavored trombone and trumpet set against a crisp parade-like rhythm. Another non-big band performance is “Someday My Prince Will Come” taken as intimate trombone - guitar duet. Morrison’s gospel-inflected “Going Home” is in two-parts with the first part being somewhat more sober with a stride-inflected piano interlude leading into a more exhilarating mood. It’s a spirit-raising close to a remarkable recording. “Snappy Too” is an astonishing technical achievement, but more importantly the music heard is wonderful.

Ron Weinstock



DELTA MOON

Black Cat Oil
RED PARLOR

Delta Moon is a blues-rooted Atlanta based band built around the twin slide guitars of Tom Gray (also a notable songwriter who wrote for Cyndi Lauper - “Money Changes Everything”, Carlene Carter and others) and Mark Johnson. They are a blues-rooted band with echoes blues, country, folk and rock blended to produce a strong roots stew. One can hear echoes of Bob Dylan, Fred McDowell, Blind Willie Johnson, Johnny Cash, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Tony Joe White, and Lonesome Sundown. Bassist and backup vocalist Franher Joseph and drummer Marlon Patton fill out the band’s line-up.

On their new album “Black Cat Oil” (Red Parlor), Gray contributed 10 of 11 songs heard here, some in

collaboration with Johnson and other band members. This writer is familiar with Delta Moon from “Hellbound Train.” In reviewing that I was “struck by a certain Dylan-esque quality to some of the performances in terms of the song imagery and the strong blues feel of the performances.” That observation continues to apply to Gray’s gravelly vocals and the overcall cast of the performances such as “Neon Jesus” where Gray sings that he wants it to shine on him and people talk about what they think things used to be.

The crisp rocking “Down and Dirty” opens this up as Gray sings about losing his job and his woman won’t stick by you so just let her go. Up next is “Blues In a Bottle,” a lament about wishing one could lock the blues up with nice trebly guitar adding atmosphere. The title track is an atmospheric performance about some mythical remedy with the restraint in the biting guitar adding embellishments. “Jukin’” is a bluesy-rocker about a place where folks can go and stomp and screaming all around. It is taken at a nice medium tempo, and displays how steady the band is and how they do not rush the tempo but play at the right pace.

A rocking rendition of Mississippi Fred McDowell’s “Write Me A Few Of Your Lines” is the last track here and one on which they adapt for a strong interpretation. It ends an exceptional blues-laced recording.

Ron Weinstock



DANIELA NARDI

Espresso Manifesto: The Songs of Paolo Conte
ACRONYM RECORDS/EMI MUSIC CANADA

Canadian vocalist Daniela Nardi is new to me as is the legendary Italian artist Paolo Conte, whose stature in Italy is comparable to that of Jacques Brel in France or Tom Waits in America, and whose songs are part of the Italian songbook. Nardi, of Italian descent, has put together “Espresso Manifesto: The Songs of Paolo Conte” (Acronym Records/EMI Music Canada) saluting Conte’s music which to her is as Italian as Espresso coffee.

This was recorded and mixed in Italy with a band consisting of her husband Ron Davis (co-producer) on keyboards along with some of the top musicians on the Italian jazz scene: Dario Rosciglione on bass; Fausto Mesolella on guitars; Michele Rabbia on per-

cussion; Luciano Biondini on accordion; Fabrizio Bosso on trumpet; Gabriele Mirabassi on clarinet; and Marcello DiLeonardo on drums.

In addition to not previously being familiar with Conte's oeuvre, I am not conversant from Italian so I likely mix some of nuances in Nardi's interpretations that aurally span the cabaret and music hall to the jazz club. Some of the performances come across as a blend of playful with melodrama, like the opening "Via Con Me" with her mix of Italian and English (and some scatting) with lovely clarinet from Mirabassi. "Sotto le Stelle del Jazz" is as much a showcase for Bosso's lyrical trumpet playing as Nardi's singing.

Nardi's forceful singing on the tango-tinged "Gioco D'Azzardo" is complemented by the accompaniment featuring Biondini's accordion along with Davis' piano with Mirabassi's clarinet taking the song to its close. "Come Di" has an evocative and spirited accompaniment with Mirabassi's lively clarinet and Bossi's growling trumpet set against a breakneck pace followed by the somber feel of "Nina" with guitarist Mesolella adding backing vocal with Bosso adding elegiac trumpet.

Daniela Nardi's tribute to Paolo Conte also serves as her affectionate and moving tribute to her origins. "Espresso Manifesto: The Songs of Paolo Conte" is a fascinating mix of moods and musical flavoring. It is wonderfully recorded, performed and played, and its pleasures are enhanced by careful listening.

Ron Weinstock

BONNIE BISHOP

Free

BE SQUARED RECORDS

This seven cut disc features Texas native Bonnie Bishop using music as a medium to not only exorcise the demons of a bad relationship but to celebrate her rebirth as an adult in charge of her own destiny. With soulful vocals that are pained yet defiant at the same time, she awakens to the harsh reality of being used, *Keep Using Me*, but then revels in the lightness of being unshackled from the past, *Free*. While being free has its advantages, she notes it is easy to be passed off as a *Bad Seed* by those that live to levy judgment on those that don't conform to expectations.

That's not a problem for her though as she shrugs it all off noting she's no *Shrinkin' Violet* and just needs the right man to help her blossom. With a musical backdrop that varies from majestic ballads, *World Like This*, to greasy rockers that channel the rough hewn sound of the Black Crowes, *Shrinkin' Violet* or Christine Ohlman and Rebel Montez, *Bad Seed*, Bishop mixes things up vocally with everything from full-throated raspy roars that would make Susan Tedeschi proud to gospel inspired work outs with a full complement of background singers. Given the strength of this release and having just landed a song, *Not Cause I Wanted To*, on Bonnie Raitt's new disc, Bishop's future is on a solid footing.

Mark Smith



ALEX TERRIER

Roundtrip
BARKING CAT

"Roundtrip" (Barking Cat) by the Alex Terrier NY Quartet, is the second CD by the Parisian-born and Brooklyn based saxophonist. Originally classically trained as a pianist, he turned to jazz when first exposed to it, with Parker, Miles, and Coltrane being initial inspirations, and later he crossed the Atlantic to study at Berklee. He has established a reputation as a saxophonist, composer and band leader on both sides of the ocean. The NY Quartet is comprised of Roy Assaf on piano, François Moutin on bass, and Steve Davis on drums with guitarists Akira Ishiguro and Edouard Brenneisen each appearing on two of the 11 tracks.

The publicity for the disc suggests that the music here has the energy of the New York scene meeting the melodic poetry of European jazz. The opening "Roundtrip," a burner inspired by a Wayne Shorter piece, features his alto but gives space to all of the quartet to display their talents. "The Spirit Will Not Descend Without a Song" has him on soprano and is an original inspired by reading Leroy Jones' "Blues People," and has some dreamy sections with Ishiguro adding some color with his single note runs often against Assaf's melodic lines. "E.S.B. and Ecstasy," is a multi-sectional composition in the mode of some of the Dave Holland Quintet with Terrier's soprano (sounds occasionally overdubbed as two sopranos) snaking around Moutin's bass line.

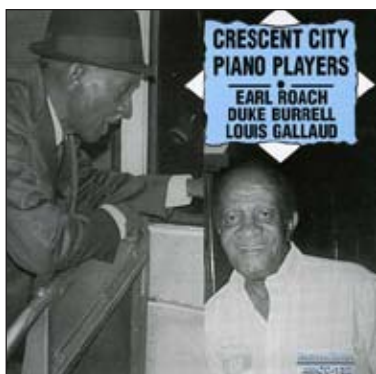
The ballad "Song for Keli" shows how effective Terrier and his group is in this vein, while "Le Miroir Des Anges Deguises (The Mirror of The Disguised Angels)" is a poetical evocation of a famous Paris bookstore and its mirror where people leave messages for others to read as the band plays with shifting moods and some really intense alto and some impressionistic piano on a performance that fans of the Blue Note Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter sides should appreciate. "Ton Coeur De Petite Fille Est Mort" is a reflective performance featuring his soprano that captures the sentiment of the title, which roughly translated is "Your Little Girl's Heart Has Died."

A walk around the Village, with an artist friend, inspired the joyfully playful "Tompkins Square with

Terrier's playing shifting from a serene melodicism to an energized ecstasy, animated in part by Brenneisen's guitar.

The closing "The Dark Side of Democracy" is an Ornette Coleman inspired number with Terrier on tenor, going from a whisper to an ecstatic shout, as the band displays the same interplay between each other that is one of the hallmarks of this impressive contemporary jazz recording. Terrier is as impressive here as his reputation would suggest. His music is muscular and cerebral at the same time and his NY Quartet provides the foundation for some remarkable performances.

Ron Weinstock



VARIOUS

Crescent City Piano Players

AMERICAN MUSIC

George Buck's American Music label has issued an interesting compilation, "Crescent City Piano Players," of three lesser known piano players associated with the City of New Orleans, Earl Roach, Duke Burrell and Louis Gallaud.

Roach was born in Maine but came to New Orleans at the early age. His nine selections open with the simple, firmly played instrumentals "Blues" and "Boogie." There are a couple of simply delivered vocals as well as renditions of older songs "Play Jack Carey" and "Bucket's Got a Hole In It." Plenty of charm by a player in an older style, as his stomping "Whistling the Blues," would suggest.

Burrell is a bit better known to me as he was on a tour and record date with Louis Jordan shortly before Burrell passed away. He played on sessions in New Orleans in 1950 and 1953 backing other performers. A student of Burnell Santiago, Burrell incorporated a bunch of more modern influences in his piano style. He was a solid, sophisticated blues player, as his rendition of "After Hours," as well as his "Boogie Woogie" indicates. Also of interest is his modernistic interpretation of the Duke Ellington classic, "Caravan." On "Louisiana and Me," he displays a definite charm as a vocalist. His repertoire was fairly wide and included the movie theme of "Love Story" and "Indiana."

Pianist Louis Gallaud is heard on two vocals of very old pop numbers and was a simple, functional pianist. His performances though are not up to the level of those by Roach and Burrell and ultimately serve as

filler on an intriguing, and engaging, album of solo New Orleans piano.

Ron Weinstock



JOHN DAVERSA

Artful Joy

BFM JAZZ

The jubilant vibe of the brief, high-energy bash that leads this set off sets the emotional tone for most of what follows. L.A.-based trumpeter/flugelhornist Daversa presides over a small-group situation where, with due respect to his very savvy writing and arranging, the sheer joy of jazz cooking prevails. Daversa's chemistry with soloist partner tenor saxophonist Robby Marshall in particular is evident early on, during their trade-offs on the perky "Shelley's Guitar", spilling over into soulful steamer that follows, "No Frets, No Worries".

Daversa is a graceful soloist, frequently punctuating nicely sculpted lines with brief double-time bursts, doubling even those up at times. Strong solo choruses here are found on the waltz-time "Moonlight Muse" and a most precocious blues vamp, "Flirty Girl". Guest artist Yellowjacket Bob Mintzer contributes to the "up" atmosphere on bass clarinet, working out with Daversa on the *bop nouveau* "Rhythm Changers". With both play and interplay of high caliber, *Artful Joy* is about as straight-up a celebration of the jazz experience as they come.

Duane Verh



ANN RABSON W BOB MARGOLIN

Not Alone

VIZZ-TONE

I have known Ann Rabson for a little over 25 years. I remember meeting her at a DC Blues Society picnic

and seeing her, Gaye and Earline, the original line-up of Saffire-the Uppity Blues Women when they used to play regularly in a small Georgetown bistro and also at some DC Blues Society events.

It was a joy to see them go from being a local blues act to the world-spanning performers that they became. While Saffire has ended its run, Ann, Gaye and Andra Faye have continued with their own musical endeavors.

Some may know that Ann has had serious health issues recently, so word of a new recording was warmly welcome. Bob Margolin, who adds his guitar and vocals to Ann's piano and vocals, joins her on this set. His presence gives the disc its title "Not Alone" on the Vizz-Tone label release. There is a mix of familiar and lesser-known songs that go down easy with good, heartfelt singing, solid musicianship and good feelings.

Ann is a straight-forward, two-handed pianist who eschews flash for her solid playing and there is plenty of her heart in her rendition of the late Thomas Dorsey's "I'm Going To Live the Life I Sing About In My Song," with Margolin adding some biting electric fills. Her touch and timing is assured throughout with her cover of Tampa Red's "Let's Get Drunk and Truck," while she is wistful on Leroy Carr's "How Long Blues," on which Margolin shares the vocal in addition to his acoustic guitar break while it rides out with stately piano from Ann.

I am not familiar with Jim Ritchie, and Ann sounds quite animated on his "It Ain't Love," with Margolin's crying slide providing additional support. Margolin takes the reflective vocal on Memphis Slim's "Guess I'm a Fool," with Ann's firm support under the vocal, and Margolin playing in a jazzier vein here. Ann notes that Louis Jordan's "Caledonia" is a fun number, although like almost every cover of I have heard (and that includes recordings by Muddy Waters, Pinetop Perkins and Gatemouth Brown), it is wonderfully played but does not stand out. Woody Herman is one of the few whose cover of the song captured some of the ebullience of Jordan's original.

In contrast, Ann's matter-of-fact approach to "Let's Go Get Stoned," provides a delightful personal rendition of a very well-known song. Ann's tango-rooted Crescent City-flavored playing stands out behind Margolin's "Let It Go," a nice lyric calling for having perspective about things and if one cannot make things better, avoid making things worse. After a plaintive "Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby,"

Ann gets things rollicking as she sings that "Anywhere You Go" Ann can go there too and can love you like no one can do. After telling us that she has "No Time For The Blues."

Bob handles the vocal on a sober reading of Percy Mayfield's "River's Invitation." It is the final track of a very genial recording that captures Ann Rabson and Bob Margolin in an intimate, low-keyed setting that should delight many.

Ron Weinstock



MANU KATCHE ECM

On 2010's *Third Round*, drummer Katché's ensemble served up "groove" music of a highly creative caliber and his eponymously titled new offering takes a similar path. This time the frequent Peter Gabriel sideman works without a bass partner; the low registers of pianist / B3 organist Jim Watson's axes covering "bottom" chores. *Third Round* saxophonist Tore Brunborg and trumpeter Nils Petter Molvaer "front" the sound, the latter frequently opting for a gauzy, expanded presence, employing sound loops.

Ten concise, distinct statements make up the set list; the drums-and keyboard axis sketching out each tune's parameters. Watson's is a versatile voice, showing graceful ballad sense on either keyboard, as exemplified on "Bliss" and "Loose" and a flair for swinging funk on "Beats & Bounce".

While never neglecting a drummer's responsibility to "drive" the band, Katché mostly uses his expanded space sparingly and with much seeming deliberation. Highly focused brush work, light cymbal rides and splashes are as likely his sole contributions on the appropriate track as is an insistent minimal funk pattern. One of the year's freshest releases. **Duane Verh**



LOUISIANA RED When My Mama Was Living LABOR

In the 1970s when Kent Cooper first met the late Louisiana Red, Red was working at the Bayonne (New Jersey) Barrel Company and had given up music as the way to support his family. Red had recorded prior

to that including an album for the Atlantic Atco subsidiary. Cooper wrote some songs including "Sweet Blood Call," and Red recorded some of Cooper's as well as his own that led to the critically acclaimed "Sweet Blood Call" and other albums on Blue Labor, which also issued albums by Johnny Shines, Roosevelt Sykes and Peg Leg Sam during this period. Red's career continued for many years, and he continued to record relatively regularly in the past couple decades with the recordings having a consistent quality despite variations in the musical settings and supporting musicians. When Louisiana Red passed, he was rightfully regarded as a great blues artist who was an heir to the legacies of Muddy Waters, Elmore James and Lightnin' Hopkins.

Labor Records has issued a new CD, "When My Mama Was Living," that brings together 16 tracks comprised of one track issued on CD for first time and the rest being previously unissued selections or unissued alternate takes. On these selections, he is sometimes backed by either Peg Leg Sam or Lefty Dizz. There is variety in the musical settings that add to the listenability of these performances.

While these may have not been issued previously, there is plenty of strong blues to be heard. Red was in strong vocal form at the time and put so much into delivering the lyrics. "Walk All Over Georgia" sets the tone backed only by his harmonica followed by his interpretation of Slim Harpo's "King Bee," where he plays spare trebly guitar and overdubbed harmonica. The title track is another selection where his harmonica provides the sole accompaniment and throws in an occasional whoop to accent the lyrics. "

"Bad Case of the Blues" is one of several selections that finds Red playing the manner of Lightnin' Hopkins followed by a solo Peg Leg Sam Piedmont harmonica blues "Little Susie James." Lefty Dizz adds support behind Red's slide on "Got a Girl With a Dog Won't Bark," which adapts the melody of "Shake Your Money Maker." Red's playing on this previously unissued alternate take is a bit tentative sounding to this listener. "Cold White Sheet" is another Hopkins' styled blues as he sings about can't stand the city no more and would rather die on a southland farm, while "Going Back to Georgia" adapts the "44 Blues" melody for his lyric about leaving those Northern gals behind.

"You've Got To Move" is the traditional sacred number in the style of Fred McDowell with Peg Leg Sam adding harmonica behind Red's slide with Jim Robinson adding a second vocal. Peg Leg Sam sounds feisty on "I'll Be Glad When You Are Dead You Rascal You," with plenty of crying harmonica. Cooper and Red's "Cold, Cold Feeling" is another traditionally grounded blues strongly performed in the vein of Lightnin' Hopkins. Red accompanies Peg Leg Sam on his spirited "John Henry." This album closes with Red's "Joanna." This was recorded with a small group at WKCR and Red lays down nice slide guitar adding some spoken interjections to his vocal.

This writer has long been fond of the Blue Labor

Louisiana Red recordings and this new release of unissued songs and alternate takes is most welcome. Louisiana Red was in quite fine form during this period and "When My Mama Was Living" certainly stands up as an excellent release that lovers of down home blues will certainly appreciate.

Ron Weinstock



ANAT COHEN

**Claroscuro
ANZIC**

The award-winning, Israeli born Clarinetist Anat Cohen's latest release is "Claroscuro" (Anzic). Cohen and her clarinets and saxophones are joined on this recording by her quartet of pianist Jason Lindner, bassist Joe Martin and drummer Daniel Freedman. There are also appearances by Paquito D'Rivera on clarinet, Wycliffe Gordon on trombone and Gilmar Gomes on percussion.

The album takes its title from the Spanish word describing the play of light and shade (chiaroscuro in Italian) and was a title that Cohen believes most accurately describes "the contrasts within the sounds of the album mainly between light (buoyant and joyous) and dark (multi-layered and intense)." The music exhibits playfulness on Lindner's Anat's Dance," exhilaration on the duet with D'Rivera on Pixiuinha's "Um a Zero," as well as melancholy on another duet with D'Rivera on Artie Shaw's "Nightmare." There is an intensity manifested by the clarinets on that number that contrasts with the pensiveness Cohen, on tenor saxophone, conveys on Abdullah Ibrahim's "The Wedding."

In addition to the variety of emotions expressed, Cohen transverses the traditional and the modern. "La Vie En Rose," a song associated with Edith Piaf. H Wycliffe Gordon adds trombone (with some nice growling mute playing) and a Louis Armstrong-inspired vocal in edition to Cohen's lovely clarinet that would bring a smile to Barney Bigard. A particular favorite selection is the contemporary rendition of Pixiuinha's classic choro "Um a Zero," with the dazzling clarinet duets as well as percussionist Gomes and drummer Freedman both getting a chance to be in the spotlight. Cohen, on tenor saxophone, conveys a pensive mood on the lovely interpretation of Abdullah Ibrahim's "The Wedding." It is the final selection in another outstanding recording from an increasingly significant jazz voice.

Ron Weinstock



HANS THEESSINK & TERRY EVANS FEATURING RY COODER

Delta Time
BLUE GROOVE

This cross-Atlantic collaboration between Dutch native Hans Theessink and Mississippi born soul/gospel singer Terry Evans is a delight from beginning to end. With Theessink's deep baritone vocals laying down the bottom end and Evans soaring through the mid and high end range, the duo work their way through old classics including *Pouring Water On a Drowning Man*, Bobby Charles' *How Come People Act Like That?*, J. B. Lenoir's *Down In Mississippi*, and Jimmy Reed's *Honest I Do* along with a number of Theessink originals.

Sometimes harmonizing, other times trading verses the duo's voices merge into a nearly perfect mix. In addition to melding their voices, the two also weave an effective musical backdrop with their acoustic guitars playing off one another as if they have shared the same stage forever instead of only occasionally. *Mississippi*, *Heaven's Airplane*, *Build Myself a Home*, *Shelter From The Storm* (not the Dylan song) and the title track, get an added boost from guests Willie Greene, Jr and Arnold McCuller who add warm gospel harmonies. Ry Cooder (who frequently featured Evans and duo partner Bobby King on his own releases) also guests on a couple of cuts creating a rich tapestry of guitar sounds.

While a number of the tracks are very low key traditional blues, the duo lets loose on *I Need Money* which percolates with the energy of a Keb' Mo' number and on the old Turnarounds classic, *The Birds and the Bees*, which the two threw into the mix to honor the fact it was the source of Evan's first real money when he sang it over 50 years ago.

Mark Smith

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THE BEN WOLFE QUINTET

Live at Smalls
SMALLSLIVE

Bassist Ben Wolfe led a terrific quartet at the Greenwich Village club, Smalls, for some hot music recorded for the club's SmallsLive label as part of its "Live at Smalls" series. Joining Wolfe were pianist Luis Perdomo, trumpeter Ryan Kisor, saxophonist Marcus Strickland and drummer Gregory Hutchinson. They are heard on nine originals by the leader who shows himself to be quite the composer as well as bassist.

There is an ambience of classic Blue Note sessions from the sixties from the opening "Block" which evokes some of the Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock Blue Note Recordings from when they were in Miles Davis' band on which Freddie Hubbard replaced

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Miles. Some outstanding playing from Kisor followed by Perdomo is heard and Wolfe and Hutchinson are terrific with Strickland playing with fire. "For the Great Sonny Clark" has a nice loping feel and a very appealing theme with Wolfe taking the initial solo, followed by Kisor in a brassy, melodic vein, and then a short fiery burst from Strickland with Perdomo contrasting with fluent, lyrical playing. "Telescope" is another bouncy hard bop number, which has Strickland taking the initial solo with some strong playing that exhibits his individualistic sound and his ability to craft a solo. After Kisor and Perdomo have their features, Hutchinson takes concise, and exciting, solo.

A short, lovely ballad "I'll Know You More" opens with Strickland stating the theme displaying warmth in contrast to more aggressive playing elsewhere as Hutchinson's cymbals accent his deliberate playing. "Czech Mate" displays a Thelonious Monk flavor as Kisor and Strickland (employing the bottom register of the tenor) state the theme and Wolfe takes successive choruses before the horns take this out. Coleman Cab opens with a lengthy bass solo prior to the full band entering with interesting horn voicings and an outstanding solo from Perdomo.

"The Trade," a brief duet between Wolfe and Hutchinson, is the final selection that concludes this superb recording. This is a recording I have been listening to repeatedly over the past couple weeks and one I am sure I will be returning to in the future. One can purchase this from SmallsLive directly as a CD or just a download (CD purchases include downloads) or from Amazon and other vendors. **Ron Weinstock**



AL BASILE

At Home Next Door
SWEETSPOT/CITY HALL

Al Basile is a weaver of sorts, weaving music with his first love of writing. AT HOME NEXT DOOR is a two disc set with the first disc being a "best of" of Basile's first eight releases and the second disc being brand new material.

Still playing with Roomful of Blues, Basile has many members of the Rhode-Island based act appearing throughout, starting with Duke Robillard's guitar in "Go Back Home To The Blues." Jerry Portnoy's harp

leads "I Got To Love And Be Loved." Along with the audio gumbo of "Picked To Click," the blues of "I Really Miss You" might be the highlight of the first disc with the jazzy "Bad Intentions" not far behind.

On the newer stuff, Brad Hallen's funky bass starts off "Only Jodie Knows," (if you were ever or knew someone in the Army, you'll know what that phrase means) with a push from the horn section. "She Was Sayin' Giddyup (And I Was Sayin' Whoa)" is jump and jive as the horns drive "A Little Too Far," thanks to Hallen lifting the bass riff out of the Supremes' "You Can't Hurry Love." Also of interest is the big band feel of "My Phone's Got A Mind Of It's Own."

If familiar with either Roomful Of Blues and/or Al Basile's solo work, you will dig how AT HOME NEXT DOOR came out. **Peanuts**



VÉRONNEAU

Joy of Living
VÉRONNEAU MUSIC

Based around the vocals of Quebec native Lynn Véronneau, Véronneau has established itself around the Washington DC area with its interesting blend of musical inspirations ranging from gypsy jazz, Brazilian sambas, folk and Beatles. In addition to her, the group is comprised of Ken Avis on guitar, vocals and percussion, David Rosenblatt on guitar and percussion and Pete Walby on drums. On their self-produced recording "Joy of Living" (Véronneau Music), they are joined by David Kline's violin and Jeff Antoniuk's tenor saxophone.

Lynn Véronneau has a lovely voice immediately evident on the opening "La Mer" (known here in the States from Bobby Darin's recording "Beyond the Sea"), with the light backing of the guitars and drums and Kline's violin. She has a gift for Brazilian tunes including "The Gentle Rain," "Concovado" and "One Note Samba," with the band providing subtle and complementary backing. This style is also present on the charming rendition of "The Street Where You Live," with a nice single-note acoustic guitar solo as well as Kline's violin adding coloring. Saxophonist Antonuik adds a nice flavor on "The Gentle Rain," that might suggest to some the Getz-Gilberto collaborations.

There is a enchanting rendition of the traditional Mexican Ranchera song, "Cielito Lindo" that might be more familiar from performances of it by Mariachi

Band and she also places her own stamp on “Brazil.” with her gentle longing beginning transformed into a lively samba. David Rosenblatt contributed an original instrumental “Abertura do Verao (Opening of Summer),” that is a lovely guitar duet, while Antoniuk returns for the lively closing “Blue Skies.”

If there is a favorite selection on this, it may well be the lovely rendition of Lennon & McCartney’s “For No One,” as she sings “she no longer needs you, in her eyes you see nothing,” with a lovely violin break over the two-guitar accompaniment. The gentleness of the performance accentuates the heartache reflected in this classic Beatles number. She simply has a way of touching the listener’s heart and this track may exemplify this best, but there is plenty of “Joie de Vivre” on this excellent recording, which is available at Amazon.com.

Ron Weinstock



MARIA MULDAUR, RORY BLOCK & OTHERS

... First Came Memphis Minnie STONY PLAIN

Memphis Minnie was a pioneer in what we now call “country blues,” who recorded over 200 sides from the late twenties until the early fifties. One of the greatest blues performers of her time, her popularity was reflected by the fact that she recorded as often as she was. As marvelous a guitarist as she was a singer, she often recorded duets with then husband Kansas Joe McCoy in what some would call the “Memphis style.” After the break-up of their marriage, she started playing in small combos that would foreshadow the post-war Chicago blues ensemble style. In her career she made numerous classic recordings including “Bumble Bee,” “Frisco Town,” “What Fault You Find Of Me?”, “What’s The Matter With the Mill,” “Tricks Ain’t Workin’ No More,” “Joe Louis Strut,” “Me and My Chauffeur,” and “Black Rat Swing.” She recorded over 12 hours of blues over her career.

Maria Muldaur has long been a fan of Memphis Minnie and performing Minnie’s songs for decades. She has produced “... First Came Memphis Minnie” (Stony Plain), which is subtitled “a loving tribute.” Included are performances by Maria along with Rory Block, Ruthie Foster, Bonnie Raitt, Phoebe Snow and

Koko Taylor with support from Del Rey, David Bromberg, Steve Freund, Alvin ‘Youngblood’ Hart, Steve James and Roy Rogers. 11 of the 13 performances are newly recorded. The performances of Phoebe Snow and Koko Taylor were previously issued.

There’s plenty of music to enjoy here, much of it performed by Ms. Muldaur herself on a program that includes a few of Memphis Minnie’s most famous songs and a number of lesser known ones. If her voice is not quite as supple as in her own girlish days, Maria Muldaur is perhaps even more expressive a singer now, and this is evident on the opening “Me and My Chauffeur Blues” with Roy Rogers providing a nice easy swinging backing. “Ain’t Nothin’ in Ramblin’,” has a wonderful vocal from Bonnie Raitt with Steve Freund adding his guitar to hers. “I’m Goin’ Back Home” is one of two vocal duets by Maria with Alvin ‘Youngblood’ Hart (who provides guitar backing) that revive Minnie’s duets with Kansas Joe McCoy.

There is a bit larger group including Del Ray and Steve James backing Maria’s vocal on “I’m Sailin’” with its wistful lyric. Rory Block sings “When You Love Me” backed by her guitars followed by Maria’s hopeful vocal on “Long As I Can See You Smile,” with Steve James adding mandolin in addition to Del Ray’s guitar, followed by “Lookin’ the World Over,” with just some lovely accompaniment from Del Ray. Phoebe Snow’s rendition of “In My Girlish Days” dates from

a 1976 recording that included David Bromberg in the backing who adds mandolin along with guitar in the backing of Snow's vocal. Ruthie Foster backed, by a small group with Steve Freund's guitar, delivers a wonderful vocal on "Keep Your Big Mouth Closed," which makes use of the "Sitting on Top of the World" melody. Maria's vocal on "Tricks Ain't Walkin'" is one of her finest here with Del Ray on guitars and Dave Earl adding mandolin.

The album closes with Koko Taylor's rendition of "Black Rat Swing" that was licensed from Alligator from what I believe was her last album. Bob Margolin was among those on the session. It is an interesting choice insofar as it was written and sung by her husband, Ernest 'Little Son Joe' Lawler, under whose name it was released. In any event it is a nice finale to this loving tribute to one of the greatest blues artists who ever lived.

Ron Weinstock



RJ & THE ASSIGNMENT

Deceiving Eyes

WWW.RJANDTHEASSIGNMENT.COM

Don't let the r&b/hip-hopish name of this crew fool you. This is primarily a jazz piano trio disc, and a most listenable one at that. Chicago-bred pianist RJ (no further name info is offered) skillfully balances his inventiveness with ever-present, keen melodic instincts. Here, grouped with various rhythm partners, he sure-h

andedly navigates through some very familiar turf: Herbie Hancock's "Dolphin Dance", the theme from M*A*S*H- "Suicide Is Painless", and "Someday My Prince Will Come", as well as a string of very respectable originals.

Technically solid, his play constantly conveys the pleasure of the craft and strongly suggests a catalog of high quality releases to come. One of the tastier piano offerings in recent times.

Duane Verh



ROYAL SOUTHERN BROTHERHOOD

Royal Southern Brotherhood

RUF

This new blues supergroup features Cyril Neville on vocals and percussion, Mike Zito on vocals and guitar, Devon Allman on vocals and guitar, Charlie Wooton on bass and Yonrico Scott on drums. While traditional blues take a back seat to soulful, riff heavy, southern blues rock, there's plenty here for blues fans to relish.

Allman and Zito lock their guitars together like they've been sharing leads forever. Meanwhile, Neville's funky percussion and the rock solid rhythm section provide not only the launching pad for the guitarists but the rhythmic spice that makes the songs stick. While you can't help but hear references to the musician's own bands and influences, such as the swampy roots of Allman's, *Left My Heart in Memphis*, or the New Orleans funk of Neville's *Sweet Jelly Donut*, the fact that many of the cuts are co-written by at least two band members results in a marriage of sounds that is unique to the collective group.

The instrumental *Brotherhood* has an incessant guitar riff that could come straight out of the sessions for the Allman Brothers' *Melissa* but the choppy percussion makes it more of a toe tapper than a straight guitar fest. Likewise the Wooten/Neville number, *Fired Up!*, pulls in not only Santana style guitar leads but some righteous funk that likely wouldn't find its way onto any of the artist's own work. The other story here is the wondrous way that Neville, Allman and Zito weave their voices together in tight harmonies that add a degree of richness to the tunes that would make them stand out even without the hot shot musical backdrop of the songs.

Here's hoping that this group will remain a brotherhood for the foreseeable future.

Mark Smith

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DEXTER GORDON

Love For Sale
STEEPLECHASE

"Love For Sale" (Steeplechase) is a newly issued live recording of Dexter Gordon during the period of his lengthy stay in Europe in the sixties and seventies which has been extensively documented primarily by Steeplechase. This is the fifth of a series "Dexter in Radioland" which makes available a radio broadcast from Montmartre Jazzhus. This series has extended at least to a fourteenth volume with a recent release "Satin Doll." Long Tall Dexter on tenor sax was accompanied by an excellent band of Tete Montoliu on piano, Niels-Henning Ørsted Pederson on bass and Alex Riel on drums.

Besides the title track, Dexter and his combo also perform "I Guess I'll Hang My Tears To Dry," both numbers he first recorded on the classic Blue Note album, "Go." The other performances include "Big Bad Butterfly," with a vocal, an original "Soul Sister," and a fast rendition of "Cherokee."

After his introduction of the band and then his introduction to the Cole Porter penned classic that gives this release its title ("Old love, new love... love for sale"), it is quickly evident that he was in excellent form and the remainder of his band is top notch. The arrangement and tempo is from the Blue Note studio date.

In his own manner he introduces the next number (a stunning ballad performance) to those in radioland, "When I want rain, I get sunny weather, guess I'll hang my tears out to dry, out to dry. Arpeggio, s'il vous plait." "Big Bad Butterfly" provides a vehicle for swinging, amusing vocal jive followed by some hot tenor, sensational piano from Montoliu, and some strong bass by Ørsted Pederson.

"Cherokee" opens with some swing trappings before Dexter launches into a straight bop rendition with echoes of Charlie Parker's "Koko" in the hot solo. It's a really nice performance, with solos by everyone, but alas is an incomplete performance as it cuts off in the middle of Riel's drum solo. This cutoff might be the only complaint about this first-rate recording as it caught Dexter in his prime, playing with great authority and panache.

Ron Weinstock



SUNNY CROWNOVER

Right Here Right Now
SHINING STONE RECORDS

Boston based vocalist Sunny Crownover has come to the attention of music listeners through several swing-oriented albums produced by Duke Robillard. Now Duke has recorded her first contemporary blues album, "Right Here Right Now" (Shining Stone Records). In one sense it should not be surprising that they have put together a straight blues recording as Duke first saw her performing with 2120 South Avenue, a Boston based blues band led by Harvard University professor Charles Sawyer.

Duke on guitar anchors the backing band that includes the keyboards of Bruce Bears, Brad Hallen's bass and Mark Teixeira on drums and percussion. There is a horn section including Doug James present on several songs, while Sugar Ray Norcia's harmonica enhances several tracks. Songwriter Gary Nicholson collaborated with Duke on a number of songs. There is a strong consistency to the performances throughout.

Having heard Sunny Crownover's more restrained approach from an earlier recording that featured her, I was struck from her opening vocal on the Memphis soul-based "Oh Yes I Will!" how much more of a presence she displayed singing on this. The material is quite varied and includes some Chicago-style blues with Norcia on harp and one more traditional jazz-blues with the clarinet of Billy Novick.

Robillard's jazzy guitar fills and solo with restrained backing frame her singing on Brenda Burns' "One Woman Man," as she sings "no more love for free, you gotta do some work before you get it from me." In addition to her soulful vocal on "Love Me Right," there is rollicking piano from Bears and strong harmonica from Norcia. Robillard's trebly guitar, Norcia's harp and the lazy groove lend a swampy feel to Robillard's "Roll Me Baby."

"Cook In Your Kitchen" the groove rocking and rolling with Bears being outstanding as he channels Johnny Johnson. The strutting horns on "Warned" take the blues uptown, whereas on Al Basile's "I Might Just Change My Mind," the horns and buoyant rhythm section sounds more in a jump blues vein. Billy Novick's

clarinet on “Hi-Heels and Home Cookin’” lends a old-school jazz flavor behind her delightful vocal as she sings about all that a lady needs to do to keep her man satisfied. Duke’s slide guitar channels Elmore James on “Trust Your Lover” while Norcia adds his fat tone harp playing while Sunny sings about having to let go of one’s suspicions and trust one’s lover so one doesn’t worry one’s mind.

A swampy and soulful rendition of Joe Tiven’s “Can’t Let Go” is the final selection on this excellent album. Sunny Crownover’s earlier recordings displayed talent and promise. On “Right Here, Right Now,” she has certainly arrived.

Ron Weinstock



BEKA GOCHIASHVILI
EXITUS ENTERTAINMENT

Comparison of this 16-year old pianist’s debut to that of Tony Williams in Miles’ group- this compliment courtesy of Stanley Clarke- rings true within a few seconds’ sampling of his skills. Beyond the phenomenal chops the young native of Tbilisi, Georgia possesses is an instinct for intelligent improvisation and a mature sense of statement not expected in a player so young.

He truly “gets” jazz, and is here provided splendid company with whom to share his talent: drummer Lenny White, also the disc’s producer, trumpeter Wallace Roney, a pack of world-class bassists- Clarke, John Patitucci, Victor Bailey, and others.

He is also showcased in an array of diverse settings. Gochiashvili’s self-declared influences of Chick Corea and Keith Jarrett are certainly present- the first two tunes are dedications to each respectively.

The theme of “Un Gran Abrazo” is informed by the Return To Forever “book”, “For Keith” sways elegantly and provides space for ultra-fleet, brilliant flourishes. He swings smartly on “New York”, a brief quartet piece also featuring a solid Roney chorus, and kicks it old-school in trio mode with guitarist Oscar Moore and bassist Ben Williams on “Coco”.

Few debuts reveal this much talent, this one’s definitely worth chasing down.

Duane Verh

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JUNIOR WATSON
Jumpin’ With Junior
ROYAL REGAL RECORDS

Among the most respected blues and roots guitarists associated with the West Coast swing and jump blues scene is Junior Watson, and Bharath Rajakumar and Wally Herson have produced the recent “Jumpin’ With Junior” (Royal Regal Records).

He is joined by long-time collaborator Fred Kaplan on piano and different rhythm sections for this recording that was recorded in Montreal and Pasadena. Bharath plays harmonica on 2 of the 8 Montreal selections, while Gordon Beadle adds sax to two of the 7 Pasadena recordings.

There is plenty of attention to tone and atmosphere on the recordings here opening with the hot “Butter Top,” while his affection for the Memphis guitar stylings of Floyd Murphy, Willie Johnson and Pat Hare is evident on the twisting lines laid down on “Knee High Boogie.” Watson is adequate as a vocalist on Floyd Jones’

“Stockyard Blues,” with Bharath channeling Snooky Pryor and Walter Horton, while Watson’s playing here is in an Eddie Taylor vein. No one is going to purchase this for Watson’s singing, but the vocals provide a change of pace.

“Bo-Nanza” is an interpretation of the theme of the classic TV show as if it had been recorded by Bo Diddley, and another take on a TV theme song is the reggae groove on “Beverly’s Hillbilly.” These contrasts with the late night, jazzy tinge of “Velvet Mood,” and “Happy Hoppy” is a bouncy salute to Houston steel guitarist Hop Wilson, with Watson playing some taut steel. “Dagnet Blues,” originally recorded by Johnny Moore’s Blazers, with Frankie Ervin on the vocal on this Charles Brown styled performance.

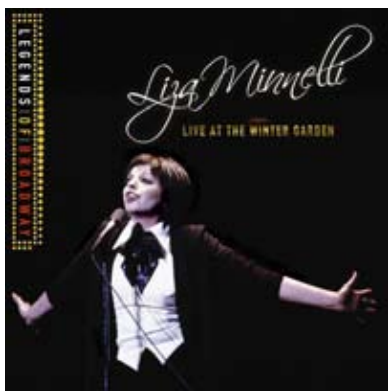
The title track is a hot instrumental with driving single note runs accented by slashing chords. His slide guitar rendition of “One Night With You” may conjure up Earl Hooker, while “There’ll Be A Day” (with nice harmonica added) is a fine cover of a lesser-known Jimmy Reed number.

“Mr. Downtime” is an atmospheric late night cocktail blues instrumental while “Boppish” provides an interesting contrast between Watson’s jazz-accented blues style and Beadle’s tenor sax that channels Illinois Jacquet and Wardell Gray on this, while on the closing “The Barn

Burner" Beadle sounds more in the honking style of Big Jay McNeely.

Junior Watson rarely records under his own name and that is enough reason for many to be interested in this. There is plenty of intriguing and imaginative playing throughout that makes for much fun listening.

Ron Weinstock



LIZA MINNELLI

**Live at the Winter Garden
MASTERWORKS BROADWAY**

Liza Minnelli's legendary Columbia album "Live at the Winter Garden" has long been unavailable because of contractual conflicts over the fact that performance of songs from the "Cabaret" score infringed on the then-current soundtrack album. Under the Masterworks Broadway imprint Sony has issued this album with a few previously unissued selections as part of its "Legends of Broadway" series of recordings.

Minnelli, like her mother Judy Garland, is one of the

great singers of theater and stage and on this recording she is supported by a superb orchestra with terrific arrangements that certainly made for a smashing show on Broadway from which these performances represented a slice of her month long stay at the Broadway theatre.

Clive Barnes in his contemporaneous New York Times review remarked about Minnelli having a "voice that can purr, whisper, snarl and soar." Listening to this recording, one finds Barnes description quite apt. There are some terrific renditions of standards like "Shine On Harvest Moon," and "More Than you Know;" along with interpretations of Gordon Lightfoot's "If You Could Read My Mind," Bobby Hebb's "Natural Man," Johnny Nash's "I Can See Clearly Now," and Stevie Wonder's "You and I;" selections from Edith Piaf and Charles Aznavour" and songs from John Kander and Fred Ebb including new ones in addition to selections from "Cabaret."

There is a brilliance and so much personality invested in the music by Minnelli. This is not simply a lovely, sweet rendition of classic songs, but interpretations Minnelli not simply places her own interpretative stamp on, but provides us with a recording that is timeless like the other great interpreters of popular song like Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra and Barbara Streisand. Liza Minnelli's "Live at the Winter Garden" is a classic American recording that is lovingly restored and made available here.

Ron Weinstock

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MAGIC SAM

Raw Blues Live
ROCK BEAT

With a small body of studio recordings augmented by live recordings, a new CD of club performances by the legendary Magic Sam is certain to be warmly received by West Side Chicago blues lovers.

17 performances (Nearly 80 minutes of music) from Mandrake's in Berkeley, California are made available on "Live 1969 - Raw Blues" on the Rock Beat label. These July 1969 performances date five months before his passing, and give a strong display of the blues world's loss. I believe Sam's legendary Ann Arbor Blues Festival performance was shortly thereafter. On these club recordings Magic Sam was backed by Bruce Barlow (later with Commander Cody and the Lost Planet Airmen) on bass and Sam Lay on drums. These were the same musicians that were with Sam at his legendary Ann Arbor Blues Festival appearance.

Songs include familiar items of his repertoire from his Cobra recordings and his Delmark albums such as "All You Love," J. B. Lenoir's "Mama Talk To Your Daughter," Willie Cobb's "You Don't Love Me," Junior Parker's "I Feel So Good," Bobby Bland's "I Don't Want No Woman," Freddie King's instrumental "San-Ho-Zay," and his own instrumental "Looking Good." Less familiar material includes renditions of B.B. King's "I Got Papers On You," and "You Done Lost Your Good Thing," as well as Albert Collins' "Tremble," and Freddie King's "Just Pickin'."

There are some minor variations from his recordings such as in the guitar accompaniment on "You Don't Love Me," which is a bit simpler than the "Black Magic" rendition. On "I Feel So Good," and "Looking Good," the tempo goes into warp drive while Sam avoids sounding frenzied. The performance of "I Got Papers On you Baby" is representative of the intensity he invested into his performances.

The album closes with a fiery "Sweet Home Chicago." It was Sam's recording and performances of this perhaps had a role in making it the blues anthem it has become. The accompanying booklet includes Mark A. Humphrey's astute overview of the music and Sam's career and legacy. Sound is not high fidelity but not terrible with the power of his searing guitar and soaring vocals evident. Magic Sam's "Live 1969 - Raw Blues," undoubtedly will be on many lists of the best blues releases of 2012. The music is that good.

Ron Weinstock



RONI BEN-HUR & SANTI DEBRAINO

Our Thing
MOTÉMA MUSIC

"Our Thing" (Motéma Music) is the first studio collaboration between Israeli-born guitarist/composer Roni Ben-Hur and Panamanian-born bassist/composer Santi Debraino.

The idea and inspiration for the collaboration started in the summer of 2011 within the walls of the beautiful Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-la-Sardaigne, a 12th century church atop the tiny village of Saint Cezaire, France, where Ben-Hur and Debraino co-lead a much-lauded annual jazz camp.

The pair also presents an eagerly awaited annual concert as a centerpiece event of Festi-Jazz.

"Our Thing" brought them into the studio with the Brazilian born drummer Duduka Da Fonseca who, like them, is part of the vibrant New York scene. And there is considerable magic heard in this trio from the opening moments of their spirited interpretation of Thelonious Monk's "Green Chimney," to the closing moments of Irving Berlin's "Let's Face The Music And Dance." Seven of the eleven tracks are originals from the trio and bring together a blend of sounds and rhythms as expected from their diverse backgrounds.

Debraino's "Milonga For Mami," for example is a lovely ballad with the bass up front after Ben-Hur states the theme accented by De Fonseca's parade like cadence.

Debraino also contributed the title track, a lively Bossa Nova with Ben-Hur delighting with imaginative single note lines as the rhythm deftly propels the performance along. Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Fontographia" is a lovely performance that further displays the trio's rapport and how well they complement each other.

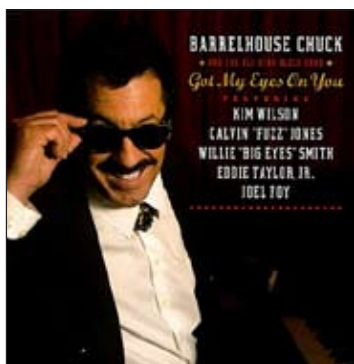
Ben-Hur's "Anna's Dance," is another original with a Brazilian cast that Da Fonseca effectively drives with an understated attack, while his "Ear's Key" is a lively blues where the guitarist takes the lead with his crisp attack followed by Debraino's assertive solo before trading fours with Da Fonseca.

Irving Berlin's "Let's Face The Music And Dance," is given a spicy Latin accent that again showcases Ben-Hur's propulsive playing and musical invention that Debraino and Da Fonseca support thoroughly.

The musical delights of this trio are captured in a beautifully engineered recording. It is a performance that

merits listening to on headphones to catch the nuances of the three. This superb recording is also one of the better jazz guitar recordings this listener has heard recently.

Ron Weinstock



BARRELHOUSE CHUCK

Got My Eyes On You
THE SIRENS RECORDS

I have been a fan of Barrelhouse Chuck Goering ever since he came to Washington DC area to do some recording and do a show at the Childe Harold with the late Ben Andrews and Mark Wenner.

He is one of the most accomplished traditionally oriented blues pianists, having been mentored by Little Bother Montgomery and Sunnyland Slim, amongst others.

While apparently from 2006, I just became aware of The Sirens release by Chuck, "Got My Eyes On You." It has a terrific band backing him of Kim Wilson on harmonica; Joel Foy and Eddie Taylor Jr, on guitars; Calvin 'Fuzz' Jones on bass; and Willie 'Big Eyes; Smith on drums.

Chuck on piano and Farfisa organ handles a variety of songs, most of which are associated with a number of blues legends that influenced and/or mentored him including Floyd Jones, Detroit Junior, Little Brother Montgomery, Memphis Slim, Smokey Smothers, Big Moose Walker, Sunnyland Slim and Muddy Waters.

With Kim Wilson's harp channeling Snooky Pryor, the album opens with a solid instrumental "Floyd's Blues," followed by Chuck's rendition of Detroit Jr.'s "Call My Job," introduced by Ella Evans, Junior's companion with a nice groove and some solid singing as he notes he had "too much weekend." Chuck plays piano and Farfisa on the title selection (from Smokey Smothers which evokes "Help Me"), with strong singing and a tight ensemble behind him.

The instrumental "Cleo's Mood" is a feature for Wilson on which Chuck sits out and then is followed by a first-rate take on Sunnyland Slim's "It's You Baby," as Chuck captures the flavor of Sunnyland's piano style here. After a nice rendition of Floyd Jones' "School Days" (with convincing vocal, tough sounding piano and great Wilson harp), there is an instrumental rendition of "The Bright Sounds of Big Moose," a cross between John Lee Hooker's "Dimples," and "Help

Me," with Chuck on organ and nice guitar from Big Moose John Walker. On "Big Town Playboy," Eddie Taylor, Jr., evokes his legendary father on an excellent performance. "Red River Rumba" is a nice medium tempo instrumental, followed by Chuck ably singing Little Brother Montgomery's "Mama You Don't Mean Me No Good." On this, pianist Eiko Izumi-Gallwas recreates Little Brother's piano style.

The closing original by Chuck, "Iza Mae" with guitarist Foy and mandolinist-fiddler Gregg Rodriguez, is a brief, acoustic, ragtime-tinged instrumental. While its approach contrasts to the classic Chicago blues of most of this marvelous recording, it is similarly a performance that is wonderfully paced and rendered. If like me, you missed this when it first came out, it is not too late to enjoy this marvelous album.

Ron Weinstock



RICK GERMANSON QUARTET

Live at Smalls
SMALLSLIVE

Among the latest batch of recordings of "Live at Smalls" on the SmallsLive label is one by the Rick Germanson Quartet. Pianist Germanson was joined that night by the trumpet of Dr. Eddie Henderson, the bass of Paul Gill and the drums of Lewis Nash. Germanson, best known for his association with Louis Hayes (especially the Cannonball Legacy Band), certainly has a McCoy Tyner influence, among others, in his energetic playing.

On this date, backed by an excellent rhythm section and benefiting from Henderson's bright, brassy playing (in a Freddie Hubbard vein), he leads off with a driving interpretation of Bobby Timmons' "So Tired." Henderson employs a mute for a fresh and imaginative take on "Surrey With A Fringe On Top," lending more of a Miles Davis tone here although the performances allude to the melody and chord structure of "Surrey" with little direct rephrasing or embellishment of the familiar melody.

"Shorter's Waltz" is a Germanson original evocative of some of Shorter's compositions with some strong work by Gill and Nash providing the base supporting more fine playing Henderson and Germanson.

Playing solo, Germanson provides a lovely impressionistic rendering of Duke Ellington's "The Single Petal of a Rose," which is followed by another appealing ballad, "Say It (Over & Over Gain)," with Gill and

Nash adding light, understated support. A Germanson original, "Edge" brings Henderson back who plays in a fiery mode on this hard bop cooker. It closes another strong live recording of straight ahead hard bop from the Greenwich Village jazz club. **Ron Weinstock**



EARL THOMAS

Introducing the Blues Ambassadors EARL THOMAS MUSIC

The biggest highlight of the 2012 Pennsylvania Blues Festival for this writer was a riveting set by the San Francisco Bay Area's Earl Thomas with his band The Blues Ambassadors.

Thomas brings to mostly original blues and soul numbers a raspy, vibrato-laden vocal style that may evoke some classic deep soul acts of thirty years ago. His band is a tough outfit that complements his searing vocals. In actual performance he has the stage presence of a Wilson Pickett crossed with Jackie Wilson that makes for some musical fireworks.

His performance impressed me to purchase his CD, "Introducing the Blues Ambassadors" (Earl Thomas Music). On the CD the Blues Ambassadors include Kedar Roy on bass; Robert Sidwell and Bob Welsh on guitars (Welsh doubles on electric piano); Takeshi Komori on organ and Paul Revelli on drums. The Band at the Festival was different but in both cases provided a firm backing for Thomas' vocals.

This is a nice set of originals and covers from the strutting opening "I'll Be Alright" with slide guitar helping drive the fast walking tempo as Thomas sings about having the blues as he walks down the road but will be all right.

There is a pretty straight cover of Magic Sam's "All Your Love" with a strong vocal that exhibits Thomas' vibrato and some broiling guitar followed by a fresh take on the Big Maybelle classic "One Monkey Don't Stop No Show," performed as if he was covering a Billy Boy Arnold Vee-Jay recording. His raspy voice, moving from talking to shouting, helps deliver this terrific lyric.

The mood changes on the soulful ballad performance "Never Can Tell," followed by the rocking groove of "Don't Do Me This way," as he sings of the pain in his heart as he feels like rain on a sunny day. Another soulful ballad "Standing in the Rain" is fol-

lowed by a bluesy cover of the late Paul Pena's "Jet Airliner," which is true to Pena's lyrics as opposed to those sung by Steve Miller in his better known version. "She Fooled Me" is a cover of Billy Boy Arnold's "I Was Fooled," and the band captures the feel of the classic Chicago blues sound behind Thomas' singing. "All Talk No Action," is an instrumental that conjures up classic Booker T. & the M.G.s while the topical "How Come?," is a nice, understated performance.

I look forward to seeing and hearing more from Earl Thomas in the future. "Introducing the Blues Ambassadors" is an impressive recording although it did not exhibit all the electricity Thomas and his Band generate in a live performance. This is an artist and band we will be hearing more from in the future.

Ron Weinstock



DUDUKA DA FONSECA QUINTET

Samba Jazz - Jazz Samba ANZIC RECORDS

Brazilian born drummer Duduka Da Fonseca bridges the world of samba and jazz on his latest recording, "Samba Jazz - Jazz Samba" (Anzic Records). His quintet includes a band of well-regarded players (and bandleaders): Anat Cohen - clarinet and tenor saxophone; Helio Alves - piano; Guilherme Monteiro - guitar; and Leonardo Cioglia on bass. This release is a follow-up to the acclaimed "Samba Jazz in Black and White" (Zoho).

The liner notes note that despite not performing often, regular rehearsal has helped develop the ensemble's style. Dom Salvador's "Depois Da Chuva" opens with Cohen on tenor while pianist Alves also shines with the leader and Cioglia providing a solid, nuanced groove. Da Fonseca opens "Sabor Carioca" with some crisp playing before Cohen states Raul Mascarrenhas' theme. Monteiro taking the initial solo before Cohen plays some more robust tenor sax. Given the spotlight on Cohen's clarinet playing, one forgets just how marvelous she is on tenor sax. They swing nicely and Monteiro, Alves and Cohen trade fours.

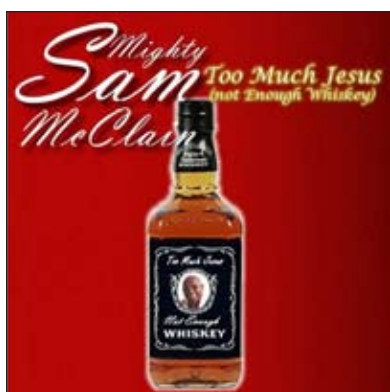
On Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Rancho Des Nuvens," Cohen switches to clarinet and establishes the morose spirit of the performance embellished by Alves' light comping and the understated rhythm. It is followed by Cohen's imaginative arrangement of

Ornette Coleman's "Blues Connotation," transforming it into a straight-ahead number with fine playing by Monteiro along with Cohen's sinewy tenor. Based on this stunning performance, one would not be surprised if Cohen's arrangement of the Coleman classic was adopted by organ jazz combos.

Cohen's woody clarinet lends a wistful flavor to Jimmy Rowles' "The Peacocks," while Monteiro adds melodic single note guitar. The leader's "Flying Over Rio" is a charming original with a light samba feel with Cohen's tenor enchanting as is Alves in his solo. Cioglia also takes a solo with light embellishments from the leader with exemplary cymbal playing. Da Fonseca plays more vigorously, pushing the groove on Toninho Horta's "Dona Olimpia."

The lively "Melancia" closes "Samba Jazz - Jazz Samba," an appealing album with strong ensemble playing on a varied set of compositions. Duduka Da Fonseca throughout keeps his group flowing and swinging whether with brushes and light cymbal work or more emphatic playing on his kit. One looks forward to more from the Duduka Da Fonseca Quintet.

Ron Weinstock



MIGHTY SAM McCLAIN

Too Much Jesus (Not Enough Whiskey)
MIGHTY MUSIC

One of the finest of the blues and soul vocalists that are working in the vein pioneered by great singers like Bobby 'Blue' Bland and the late Solomon Burke is Mighty Sam McClain. McClain has a new CD "Too Much Jesus (Not Enough Whiskey)" (Mighty Music) that was produced by Gerry Putnam, Pat Herlehy and McClain.

The 14 originals have the singer backed by a band that includes a killer band that includes Pat Herlehy – guitar, tenor sax, flute, clavinet, Hammond B-3, strings, percussion and drums; Chad Owen – bass; Rick Page – drums; Joe Deleault – piano, organ, Fender Rhodes; Scott Shetler – tenor sax, baritone sax; Russell Jewell – trombone; Grayson Farmer – trumpet; and Concetta – background vocals. The recording features arrangements by Herlehy, with horn arrangements by Shetler and Herlehy.

This particular recording has more of a straight southern soul feel than some of his other recordings

such his recent collaboration with Norwegian guitarist Knut Reiersrud, "One Drop Is Plenty" (Valley View). The grooves on this new release are funkier and the horns are more prominent with less blues-styled guitar. This tone is set on the opening "Wish You Well," with a brief sax solo as McClain sings about wishing one well when their short romance has run. In contrast, "Missing You" has him singing about his regrets about another relationship that ran its course, although as he prays to God to make things clear about what went wrong.

"Feel So Good" is a funky number where McClain sings about "grooving on your love and getting ready to land on your heart." "Stand Up!" is a message song about standing up for the children, together and for love, with nice guitar fills and punchy horns. "Real Thing" has an intriguing mix of sacred and secular in its lyrics while "Use Me" is song of praise where Sam thanks the Lord for all he has given Sam.

Other songs also deal with relationships as being what God planned such as "So Into You," or a direct specific gospel message on "Wake Up Call," although the title song has an interesting take about someone losing their friends because the only thing on their mind was too much Jesus on their mind and not enough fun in their lives. Herlehy's arrangement is quite ingenious with the atmospheric employment of strings.



Even as he urges everyone to get on the floor on the closing “Dance,” there is reference to the higher power. At the same time, there is never anything contrived or forced about the performances here. The songs are sung with complete authority and the backing is solid and full. The result is another marvelous Mighty Sam McClain recording. *Ron Weinstock*



CASSANDRA WILSON

Another Country
ENTERTAINMENT ONE MUSIC

Cassandra Wilson’s newest album, “Another Country (eOne Music)” is a collaboration with the Italian guitarist and producer, Fabrizio Sotti. Produced by the two, “Another Country” was recorded in Florence, Italy with some additional recordings done at Piety Street Studios in New Orleans and Sotti Studio New York.

In addition to Sotti’s guitar (which has some gypsy jazz tinge), the complementary backing makes judicious use of percussionists Mino Cinelu and Lekan Babalola, the electric bass of Nicola Sorato, as well as as accordionist Julien Labro.

The ten performances on “Another Country,” include eight vocals from Wilson and two acoustic guitar solos from Sotti. Wilson’s eight vocals are mostly originals (Sotti collaborated on six songs).

From the opening moments of “Red Guitar,” to the closing “Olumuturo,” Wilson’s sultry and intimate vocals benefit from the backing. It is not simply Sotti’s guitar accompaniment but also Labro’s subtle embellishments from his accordion that enhance the mood of the opening number. Then there is her haunting vocal on “No More Blues,” with a nice single string solo over which Wilson lightly scats.

Not everything is in an indigo vein. There is the Brazilian rhythms of “Almost Twelve” with more marvelous playing from Sotti. An unusual selection is Wilson’s folk-jazz arrangement of “O Sole Mio,” bringing a understated blues tinge to the operatic standard with a lovely guitar solo. Sotti’s own atmospheric guitar solos, “Deep Blue” and “Letting You Go” fit in the tenor of the vocal performances.

On “Another Country,” Wilson and Sotti display a rapport with each other that results in the enchantment heard here.

Ron Weinstock



MISSISSIPPI HEAT

Delta Bound
DELMARK

Celebrating the band’s 20 years, “Delta Bound” is the new Delmark release by Mississippi Heat, the band that is led by harmonica player Pierre Lacocque, who also contributes most of the new material. Mississippi Heat has always been a band that has focused on an ensemble sound and supporting its singers.

Inetta Visor is still the band’s vocalist, but for this album as an additional treat the band’s original featured vocalist, Deitra Farr, returns for three songs. The rest of the band consists of guitarists Giles Corey and Billy Satterfield; Chris ‘Hambone’ Cameron and Johnny Iguana on keyboards; Joseph Veloz on bass and Kenny Smith on drums. In addition to Deitra Farr, there are guest appearances from Chubby carrier on accordion for one track, as well as guitarists Carl Weathersby and Billy Flynn.

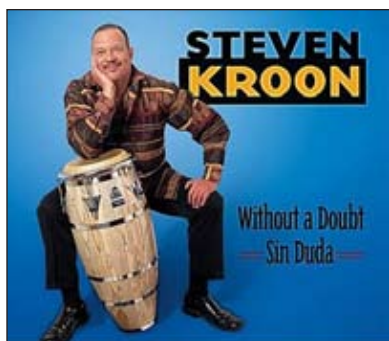
Lacocque’s growth as a harmonica player is immediately evident with chromatic playing on the torrid opener “Granny Mae,” as Visor is jubilant about her lover returning after 8 long weeks with Smith displaying why he is among the finest living drummers. “Look-A-Here” is a classic Chicago blues shuffle with Deitra Farr handling the vocal about a mistreating lover.

Given the infrequency that Deitra Farr has recorded, the three new vocals here with a clean, natural singing is a special treat and Lacocque’s harp also stands out on this song and throughout. Farr is long-due for a new album under her own name. Chubby Carrier adds his accordion to “New Orleans Man” with its second line groove and Visor’s singing about her man from Louisiana man who loves everything about her.

A highlight of this recording might be the rendition of “Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood” that many will be familiar with from the Animals recording but was originally waxed by the great Nina Simone. Visor is outstanding here and it is one of the selections on which Weathersby lends his searing guitar. Billy Flynn’s guitar adds a nice touch behind Deitra Farr on “What’s Happening To Me.” “Going to St. Louis” is a jazz-tinged number with a light Latin groove with Kenneth Hall on vibes, and the leader on chromatic harmonica. I can’t praise enough Velez and Smith for the

groove they lay down. Weathersby returns to add his fire behind Visor on "Mr. Mistreater," while "Lemon Twister," is a nicely paced instrumental with nice interplay between Johnny Iguana on organ and Lacocque on harp as well as a sharp solo from guitarist Giles Corey. "Sweet Ol' Blues" is a particularly new song about the blues being a trusty companion with another strong vocal from Farr.

One continues to get impressed by Mississippi Heat. Pierre Lacocque continues to write interesting and varied new blues songs that are rooted in the blues and not blues-rock. Match the material with the tight backing, string solos and excellent vocals and he continues to bring us first-rate and fresh-sounding new blues after 20 years. **Ron Weinstock**



STEVE KROON

Without a Doubt
KROONATURE RECORDS, LLC

Percussionist Steve Kroon has lent his remarkable skills to dozens of the most popular pop music, R&B and jazz artists of our time as a key participant on hundreds of recordings and in concert settings around the world.

He has returned to his Latin music roots for his fourth CD "Without a Doubt" (Kroonature Records, LLC) with his band that Igor Atalita on keyboards (and musical director and co-producer of this CD); Bryan Carrott on vibraphones; Ruben Rodriguez on electric bass; Craig Rivers on flute; and Diego Lopez on drums in addition to the leader's own percussion. A couple of special guest make appearances as well: Bobby Franceschini on saxophones and Carla Cook on a vocal.

Kroon talks about his band and working out the material in clubs prior to recording in the studio. The result is ten lively Latin jazz performances (nearly an hour of music) that are crisply played with panache as well as drive.

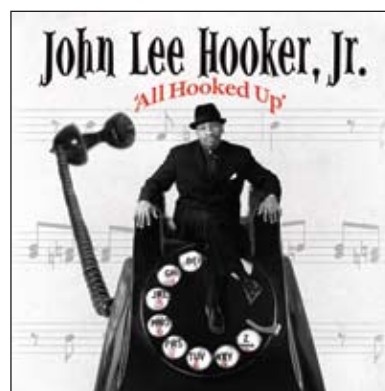
There is plenty to enjoy from the opening moments of "Monterey" with its hot percussion to the more measured grooves of the title track. The performances provide plenty of space for the various players to display their talents. Vibraphonist Carrott displays a nice touch whether providing spare accompaniment for a bass solo on the title track, or on his own solos. Flautist Rivers is outstanding throughout this disc whether displaying a pure tone, or occasionally a

more breathy one.

Franceschini's "Sabrosongo" has an interesting opening followed by some outstanding playing by Rivers, and then Carrott mesmerizes while Kroon and Lopez drive things along marvelously. Franceschini makes himself forcefully heard here as well. Barry Harris' "Nascimento" was written to celebrate the great Brazilian performer with a lovely arrangement from James Shipp as Atalita opens this lively performance up followed by Rivers and then Carrott. The performance displays the ensemble's tightness, yet facility with a lighter groove. On Zaccai Curtis "Mizo (Agua)," the two flutes of Franceschini and Rivers provide atmosphere for Carrott's shimmering vibes with the marvelously danceable rhythms.

Carla Cook sings on the interpretation of the Roberta Flack classic recording, "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," and the arrangement by Hubert Eves III and Kroon provide a fascinating tension with Cook's lovely vocal and the tinged-tinged backing with Eves guesting on piano as Carrott adds color and flavor on vibes. The mood contrasts with the heat generated from Bobby Watson's "Pamela" where Franceschini is outstanding as Carrott's vibes in support provide an interesting contrast and there is another outstanding piano solo from Atalita with some driving playing from Lopez and cook.

"Without a Doubt" brings together a lively Latin jazz ensemble that combines driving grooves with thoughtful and imaginative arrangements and playing that results in a superb recording. Steve Kroon's website is www.stevekroon.com and this is available from cdbaby.com and other sources. **Ron Weinstock**



JOHN LEE HOOKER JR.

All Hooked Up
STEPPIN' STONE

In another example of the apple not falling far from the tree, John Lee Hooker Jr. has many of the better musical features his late father had. Born on blues & R&B, Junior is now out with his fifth recording and runs a strong gauntlet of sounds throughout the project.

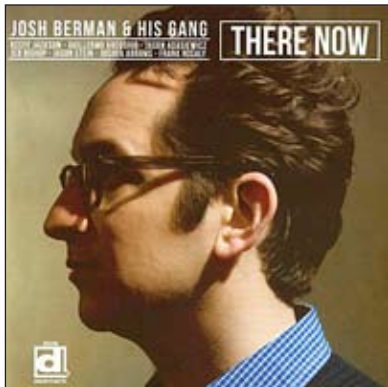
If you like horns, you're really going to love this package as a three man horn section (sax Doug

Rowan, trumpets Tom Poole or Louis Fastman and trombone Ric 'Mighty Bone' Feliciano) drive most of the tunes here, starting with the opener "Tired Of Being A Housewife." Lucky Peterson puts some nice guitar in the tribute to the troops, "You Be My Hero" as John R. Burr tickles the 88's during "Listen To The Music." Guest vocalist Betty Wright duets with Hooker via "I Surrender," while Will 'Roc' Griffin's B-3 leads the way on "Hard Times."

"It Must Be The Meds" is funky in more ways than one, though someone throws a strong, uncredited harp into "Tell It Like It Is" (not the Aaron Neville tune). There's a bonus disc here, that will fit into the DVR, that depicts the blues tune "Dear John," via animation, with a spoken intro before the blues kicks in. Oddest thing of all on ALL HOOKED UP has to be John Lee Hooker Jr. not playing any guitar, just handing off the six-string work to the hired guns.

"How, how, how, boogie with the Hook" was the catch phrase for his Dad (who I think still holds the record at the old Cleveland Agora for being booked for a show and never showing up). Junior can easily start using the phrase, thanks to ALL HOOKED UP, and not worry about someone yelling plagiarism.

Peanuts



JOSH BERMAN & HIS GANG

There Now
DELMARK

The back cover of a new Delmark release by cornetist Josh Berman & His Gang, "There Now," describes it as "a collection of jazz hybrids: both new compositions and arrangements of early jazz standards.

The Gang is concerned equally with the great musical legacies of Louis Armstrong, Pee Wee Russell, Derek Bailey and the Art Ensemble of Chicago." To this Bailey has brought together some of Chicago's accomplished players including Jeb Bishop on trombone; Jason Stein on bass clarinet; Guillermo Gregorio on clarinet; Keefe Jackson on tenor saxophone; Jason Adasiewicz on vibraphone; Joshua Adams on bass and Frank Rosaly on drums.

Of the eight performances on "There Now," five are Berman's arrangements of songs associated with the Chicago Jazz of the 20s and 30s including "Liza,"

"Sugar" and "I Found a New Baby," while three are originals by him. With this unusual instrumentation and the imaginative arrangements, some may not recognize these songs. An example would be Stein's free bass clarinet playing with his growls and sheiks that open "Love Is Just Around the Corner," before Berman takes the lead with his cornet followed by Bishop's growling trombone with imaginative horn voicings supporting the solos and a pulse replacing a steady beat.

An oversimplification of what Berman and his Gang has brought here is that some of these performances come off as if the Eric Dolphy of "Out To Lunch" had approached such material. Perhaps it is the presence of Adasiewicz on vibes (Like Bobby Hutchinson on the Dolphy album) that generates this thought, particularly on the leader's original "One Train May Hide Another." Throughout this recording there is a blend of imagination, abstraction, free as well as melodic playing that this ensemble handles in a cohesive and imaginative fashion.

The interplay between the horns through ranges from contemplative to fiery as in where Berman's cornet adds fore to Bishop's growling attack on the original "Clouds." Free playing follows surging traditionally ensemble passages on "Liza," with Stein's post-Dolphy bass clarinet here spanning a warm woody tone to bluesy leaps and squeals. "I've Found a New Baby" is usually taken at a hot tempo, but after bassist Abrams opens, the theme is stated at a very slow tempo as if they are performing a dirge prior to the middle section which evokes the little instruments and similar soundscapes provided by the Art Ensemble of Chicago and other AACM artists.

Kevin Whitehead's liner notes provide background and insights to aid those listening to "There Now!" While this CD may not appeal to those rooted in traditional jazz, those familiar with contemporary post-bop jazz will find "There Now!" to be a most imaginative and fascinating album that is full of surprises and passion in the performances.

Ron Weinstock

books

BUDDY GUY WITH DAVID RITZ

When I Left Home: My Story
DE CAPO PRESS 2012

In the mid-1970s I was pleased to have Buddy Guy for an interview for my blues show on WBFO in Buffalo. Buddy was then, and of course remains, one of the greatest blues performers around with his dazzling guitar pyrotechnics and his fervent vocals. In 1999 "Damn Right I've Got The Blues" co-authored with Donald Wilcox appeared, but it is now superseded in part by a new autobiography "When I Left Home" that Buddy did with David Ritz (Da Capo Press).

Ritz has emerged as one of the finest collaborators

with blues, soul and rock musicians having worked with Ray Charles, Etta James, Jerry Wexler, Leiber and Stoller, B.B. King, Scott Wieland, and Bettye Lavette as well as writing a biography of Marvin Gaye, "Divided Soul." He helps Buddy Guy bring his story to life in this wonderful book.

When Buddy recorded Mercy Dee's "One Room Country Shack" for Vanguard 45 years ago, this writer had no idea it was something Buddy could so readily to identify growing up in rural Louisiana. And from such humble origins he tells how he first started playing music and how he had to overcome his shyness. He tells us about seeing Lightning Slim perform and later listening to records after his family finally got electricity.

Seeing Eddie 'Guitar Slim' Jones was a watershed for the young Guy and the flamboyancy of Slim's performances (such as coming out from the audience with a 200 foot guitar cord) stayed with Guy, as was the wild, electrifying guitar sound Jones had. It was a sound that Guy emulated, especially when he came to Chicago where he was befriended by the likes of Magic Sam, Otis Rush and the man who became like a second father to him, Muddy Waters.

Willie Dixon was the one who brought him to record and later he recounted how he became a session player for Chess Records and he also started recording him, but resisted Buddy's efforts to have him record Buddy

as he sounded in the clubs with a bit of wildness that reflected the influence of Guitar Slim. Still Buddy produced quite a body of recordings for Chess, and other labels after leaving Chess, and eventually was able to get recorded in the manner in which he performed.

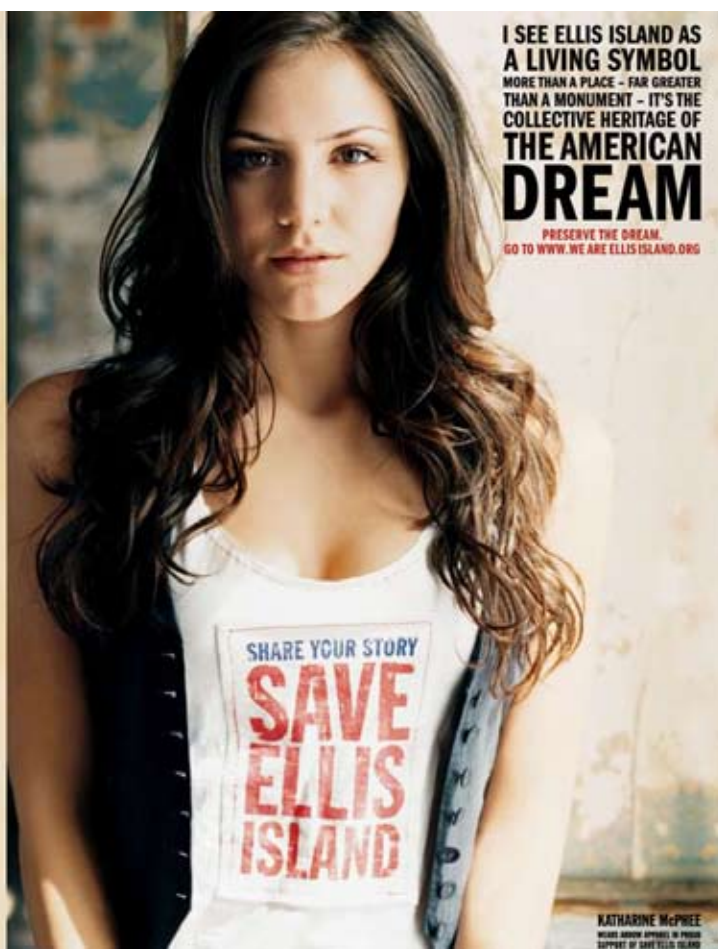
There are so many anecdotes that are provided including being one of three guitarists (Matt Murphy and Wayne Bennett being the others) trying out for Bobby Bland's road band. Buddy actually advised he wasn't the one since he didn't read music and Bennett was selected. One of his favorite guitarists was Earl Hooker and there are a couple of stories about him as well. And there is Buddy's recollection of Stevie Ray Vaughan, who was a close friend as well as meeting another musical hero John Lee Hooker for the first time, and his musical collaboration with Junior Wells.

This was simply a terrific read and anyone interested in contemporary blues, not simply Buddy Guy will enjoy it. This might make a terrific holiday gift by the way.

Ron Weinstock

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THE HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE ON OUR WEBSITE
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