

THE GIFT GUIDE

YEAR-LONG, ALL OCCASION GIFT IDEAS!

66-PAGE MEGA VERSION

2015

2014

2013

2012

2011

2010

COMBINED

jazz & blues report

jazz-blues.com

THE GIFT GUIDE

YEAR-LONG, ALL OCCASION GIFT IDEAS!

INDEX

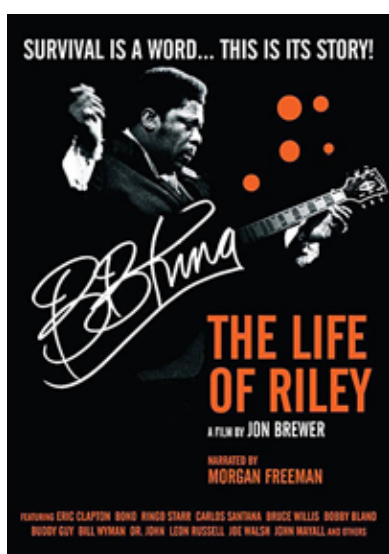
2015 Gift Guide	3
2014 Gift Guide	22
2013 Gift Guide	32
2012 Gift Guide	38
2011 Gift Guide	46
2010 Gift Guide	61



jazz & blues report
jazz-blues.com

2015 GIFT GUIDE

While our annual Gift Guide appears every year at this time, the gift ideas covered are in no way just to be thought of as holiday gifts only. Obviously, these items would be a good gift idea for any occasion year-round, as well as a gift for yourself! We do not include many, if any at all, single CDs in the guide. Most everything contained will be multiple CD sets, DVDs, CD/DVD sets, books and the like. Of course, you can always look through our back issues to see what came out in 2014 (and prior years), but none of us would want to attempt to decide which CDs would be a fitting addition to this guide. As with 2014, the year 2015 was a bit on the lean side as far as reviews go of box sets, books and DVDs - it appears that the days of mass quantities of boxed sets are over - but we do have several to check out. These are in no particular order in terms of importance or release dates. But, throughout these pages you will find plenty of ideas from previous years!



B.B. KING: THE LIFE OF RILEY

A film by John Brewer
EMPEROR MEDIA/MVDVISUAL

"B.B. King: The Life of Riley" is a documentary film by John Brewer that traces the King of the Blues' career from his days growing up as a poor Black in Mississippi to his present iconic musical stature, reflected by the countless awards he has received including the Kennedy Center Honors and the Polar Music Prize (sometimes referred to as the Nobel Prize for music).

The film is narrated by Morgan Freeman and incorporates interview clips from King, childhood acquaintances, music peers, and contemporary rock artists who have been influenced by King's music, particularly his guitar playing. The documentary traces Riley King from his very humble beginnings growing up in a plantation economy to his emergence as a major rhythm and blues artist to the period of crossing over and his current status as a musical icon.

There are interviews with those who knew B.B. when he was growing up along with folks who played a part in his emerging career, including Rufus Thomas, Joe Bihari (who produced so many of B.B.'s greatest recordings for the Modern group of labels) and Robert Lockwood as we

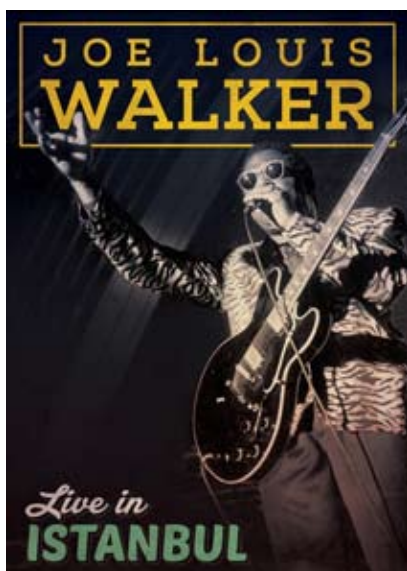
get the picture of the plantation youngster who develops his musical skills, becomes a music personality and becomes a consistent recording star while starting a grind of hundreds of touring dates a year, that he only is starting to slow down from today.

The film takes us from these humble beginnings to his iconic status today, as his crossover from the Chitlin Circuit to the mass market is detailed with discussions of his signing to ABC-Paramount, the recording of "The Thrill Is Gone," the recording of "Live at Cook County Jail," his participation in the legendary concert associated with the Ali-Foreman Rumble in the Jungle, other recording sessions including those with Leon Russell and members of the Crusaders, and his collaborations with Eric Clapton and U2. In addition to appreciations from a various pop-rock luminaries including Clapton, Derek Trucks and Susan Tedeschi, Kenny Wayne Shepard, Carlos Santana, Slash and others, there is a variety of performance clips including some from his appearance on Ralph Gleason's "Jazz Casual" TV show, and some from a recent DVD of a concert at Royal Albert Hall (a concert DVD which I cannot recommend). Also included is a clip of King receiving the Polar Music Award (as mentioned above, the equivalent of a Nobel Prize) from Swedish King Gustav.

There is little, if anything, about King's very successful collaboration with Bobby Bland in the mid-70s (a clip from Soul Train of the two would have been quite enjoyable). Also while some of B.B.'s band members are interviewed, one wishes that they had interviewed Ron Levy who played piano with B.B. in the 1970s (he was with B.B. King in Africa) and who's stories about playing with B.B. would have been enlightening.

Also, in lieu of, or in addition to the rock stars, it would have been illuminating if more performers of color such as his contemporary, Lloyd Price, as well as contemporary guitarists such as Vernon Reid and James Blood Ulmer might have given their insights to B.B. King's legacy. Extras include a portion of the Live at Royal Albert Hall concert and some interviews with some of the rock stars who appear in this documentary. "Life of Riley" is a well put together documentary that the general audience should enjoy.

Ron Weinstock



JOE LOUIS WALKER

Live In Istanbul
MVD VISUAL

MVD Visual has issued a DVD of Joe Louis Walker "Live In Istanbul" from 1995 when he made his first appearance in the Turkish Capital. He was backed by his Boss Talkers who at that time included Tom Rose: rhythm guitar / back-up vocals; Mike Eppley: keyboards / back-up vocals; Tony Saunders: bass and Curtis Nutall: drums / back-up vocals. This writer views Walker's recordings and live performances from this time as favorites of a career that still is going very strong.

The DVD captures JLW in a typical set with his gospel inflected vocals and his strong guitar that brought together a variety of influences from Robert Lockwood and Ike Turner to Elmore James, B.B. King and Earl Hooker. He could handle traditional blues as well as get down and funky and handles such staples of his repertoire of the time as "Can't get You off My Mind," Ike Turner's "You Got To Lose," the smoldering "Bluesifyin'," the topical "Street People," and the closing "Hidden Feelings." There is also an extended showcase for the Boss Talkers "Funkin' Blues."

I'm not sure how much audio or video restoration was used in preparing this DVD for release. The video does have a slightly faded quality, but it and the audio are more than acceptable. And the music seen and heard here is simply first-rate. "Live in Istanbul" brings back memories of seeing Joe Louis Walker & the Boss Talkers at Twist & Shout, Tornado Alley, and The Barns of Wolf Trap. And those are quite good memories.

Ron Weinstock

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

jazz-blues.com



CHICK COREA & BELA FLECK

Two
CONCORD

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

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

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

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

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

Ron Weinstock



COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA

A Very Swingin' Basie Christmas!

CONCORD JAZZ

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

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

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

section of pianist Llew Matthews, drummer Clayton Cameron, bassist Marcus McClaurine, and guitarist Will Matthews. Ellis Marsalis spells Llew Matthews on a couple selections.

Sam Nestico's arrangement of "Jingle Bells," gets the CD rolling and is a solid modern swinging performance with some trumpet fireworks from Bruce Harris. Ellis Marsalis and the rhythm section give a Basie feel while opening "Let It Snow." Marsalis evokes Basie rather than imitates him before the horns join in on Kris Johnson's arrangement (Johnson takes flight on trumpet here with his glides and slurs). Barnhart arranged the jaunty "It's the Holiday Season," which features Johnny Mathis' honeyed voice vocals, showing his vocals have lost little in terms of warmth or his ability to deliver a lyric. Another Nestico arrangement, "Good "Swing" Wenceslas," has the rhythm section engendering a strong Basie feel before the horns join in.

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

Ron Weinstock



PITTSBURGH JAZZ ORCHESTRA

Joyful Jazz

MCG JAZZ

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

to three tracks here, while the late Maureen Budway sings on one.

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

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

Bill Wahl



CLASSIC BLUES ARTWORK FROM THE 1920s - VOL. 13

Blues Images

Some of you may be aware that not too long ago a collector purchased a Paramount 78 of legendary Mississippi blues performer Tommy Johnson for \$37,000. That collector, John Teftuller, already had a copy of that 78, but the one he purchased was in better condition (he did sell the other 78). While Mr. Teftuller is a collector, he is not one who purchases such rare records as trophies. Rather, he gets them mastered using careful techniques for issuance on CDs that he produces

that accompany a calendar of blues advertisements and photos of blues legends that he offers on a yearly basis. Now available is “Classic Blues Artwork From the 1920s - Vol. 13,” (Blues Images), which is subtitled “Special American Epic Edition.”

American Epic is the name of an upcoming PBS television series and for it, a number of rare recordings of blues, country, Cajun, Hawaiian, Native American and other music were remastered employing a most remarkable and costly technology to restore the rare recordings used. This technology is employed for the twenty performances on the accompanying CD. The actual Calendar is handsomely produced with a reproduction of an advertisement or a portrait for each month of the year and the first twelve recordings correspond to a graphic for one of the months. The remaining eight selections include some selections that are the other side of a 78 and two rare sides each by Hattie Hyde and J.D. Short. Each month also includes selected holidays and birth and death dates of important blues artists.

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

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

September’s ad is for Jed Davenport and His Beale Street Jug Band and “Beale Street Breakdown,” a

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

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

some reissues of Skip James and Charlie Patton with a scrambled eggs sound in the background should have little problem enjoying this terrific music.

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

Ron Weinstock



JACO PASTORIUS
JACO: Original Soundtrack
LEGACY

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

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

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

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

Duane Verh

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

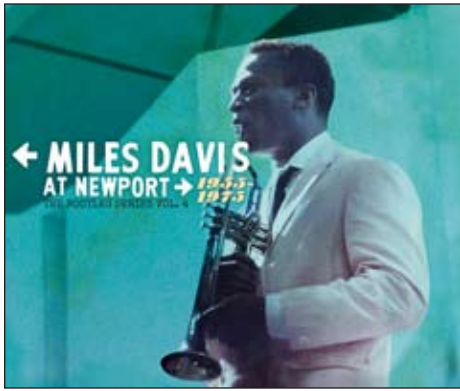
jazz-blues.com

LET'S GO

*Legendary
 Rhythm & Blues
 Cruise*

BLUESIN'

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



MILES DAVIS
At Newport 1955-1975
The Bootleg Series Vol. 4
COLUMBIA LEGACY 4-CD BOX SET

Columbia Legacy's latest installment in their massive decades-long Miles Davis reissue series features Miles in many performances spanning thirty years at the Newport Jazz Festival.

The festival began in 1954 and was produced by George Wein, who also produced or co-produced many other festivals including the Playboy Jazz Festival in L.A. and the Newport Folk Festival, also in Newport Rhode Island. For several years, the NJF was held in New York City but later returned to Newport R.I. and it has been held since at both locations. They have also held "Newport Jazz" events in other countries. George Wein, now 90, is still at the helm.

This release comes 60 years after Miles' first Newport performance in 1955. It was actually just a jam session with Monk, Zoot Sims, Gerry Mulligan, Percy Heath and Connie Kay. But the impromptu session resulted in Miles being signed to Columbia Records, so the description *impromptu* became *legendary*. That session opens the set here with three songs, followed by six more from the '58 festival where Miles had the famous sextet with Coltrane, Cannonball, Bill Evans Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb, which would record the seminal album "Kind Of Blue" the very next year. Two songs, "Round Midnight" and "Now's The Time" on this disc are previously unreleased.

CD 2 jumps ahead to 1966 and 1967 for which Miles would be fronting another famous superband with Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams, filling the entire CD with ten performances (not including the closing themes) including Shorter's "Footprints" and a 10+ minute version of "All Blues." All the cuts on CD2 are previously unreleased.

The third CD opens with Miles fronting yet another band with Shorter, along with Chick Corea, Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette performing three songs "Miles Runs The Voodoo Down," "Sanctuary" and It's About That Time/The Theme." All three cuts have been previously released.

Then he changes direction again with David Liebman on saxes and flute, Pete Cosey and Reggie Lucas on guitars, Michael Henderson on electric bass Al Foster on drums and Miles adding some organ. This is the first

set in this package to be away from Newport Rhode Island as they are performing at Newport In Europe at the Berlin Philharmonic concert hall in 1973. This band performs three songs, including the extended "Turnaroudphrase," "Untitled Original" and "Ife," each clocking in at over ten minutes.

Then two years later a similar unit performs one song, "Mtume," at the '75 Newport Festival in New York's Avery Fisher Hall. This band has the same personnel as the '73 version except that Sam Morrison is on tenor sax rather than Liebman. So there are three different concerts represented on Disc 3 spanning 1969-1975. All the music from '69 has been previously released, while all the music from the '73 and '75 concerts are previously unreleased.

Disc 4 actually goes back a bit in time, which will probably irritate the chronological order people out there, but there was probably not much Legacy could do about that due to the inherent time limits of CDs. This band features Gary Bartz on soprano and alto, Keith Jarrett on electric piano and organ, Michael Handerson on bass, Ndugu Leon Chancler, Don Alias and James Mtume Foreman on percussion.

They play five extended songs and two short versions of "Sanctuary," the shorter of the two closing the CD and this set. In fact there is an over 25-minute version of "Funky Tonk" and versions of "Directions" and "Bitches Brew." This set was performed at the Newport Jazz Festival in Europe, 1971 in Switzerland. All of Disc 4 is previously unreleased music.

The booklet contains all the song and personnel information, with dates, locations and the like. There is also an extensive essay by Ashley Kahn written earlier this year. Kahn is a noted jazz historian, author and educator who has written books on Miles.

In all there is just four minutes shy of 300 here, and about 240 of those minutes are previously unreleased material. That fact might irritate some collectors or completists who would prefer that all the music would be released here for the first time. For those who can tolerate MP3s, they can buy most of the songs they don't have in that format. Currently, there are 13 out of the 40 songs that are available on album only. But who knows... I guess that could change. For everyone else, this is another fine Miles Davis Box Set to savor. You can purchase or get the track and personnel info at www.milesdavis.com, or you can sample tracks and/or purchase the CDs or MP3s at Amazon or i-Tunes.

As far as a gift goes, for someone who *only* likes, say the fifties sextet, or the seventies quintet – there are other Miles boxes on Legacy that would be a better fit. But for those who enjoy all the many facets of Miles Davis – this set would make a fine gift.

Bill Wahl

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

jazz-blues.com



LIZZ WRIGHT
Freedom & Surrender
 CONCORD RECORDS

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

Lizz is known as a jazz singer, but she covers a lot of musical territory. On this album you'll hear jazz, yes – but also R&B, blues, gospel, folk and country as well. To give an example, the album opens with the funky "Freedom," continues with a sultry ballad, "The Game," and then there's a the country flavored, bluesy "The New Game." The program bounces from here, to there, to over here and on until coming to a close with the gospel drenched "Blessed The Brave" and the closing slow waltz ballad "Surrender." But, let's not forget about the duet she does with Gregory Porter, "Right Where You Are." Lizz co-wrote ten of the 13 songs heard here and it's obvious that her songwriting abilities are still very much on track. Although Wright is a master at re-inventing well known covers, she actually only does two covers here. The Bee Gees classic "To Love Somebody" is played at a super slow tempo for a fresh new twist, and Nick Drake's folk nugget "River Man" is hauntingly beautiful between Wright, her guest, German trumpeter Till Bronner, Pete Kuzma's organistics and the others heard on this rendition, and also at a slow tempo.

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

different instruments to some of the tracks.

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

Bill Wahl



CORKY HALE
Have Yourself A Jazzy Little Christmas
 LML MUSIC

Those wanting some jazzy holiday cheer might want to check out Corky Hale's new LML Music release, "Have Yourself A Jazzy Little Christmas." Hale is noted as among the foremost harpists in jazz (as well as a pianist) and on this all-instrumental date she is heard on piano and celeste as well as harp. Joining her are Kirk Smith on bass and Tom Walsh on drums and percussion.

Her harp is showcased on the opening "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town," followed by some nice piano on "Silver Bells," where Walsh's adds simple, but effective percussive effects. "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" There is simple melodic embellishments to many of the songs including "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" where her harp is ably supported and Walsh's brushes is very praiseworthy, while he and Smith take brief solos.

After Leiber and Stoller's lovely "California Christmas" is a peppy Latin-tinged "Dreidel Song." She is back on piano for a lovely solo piano rendition of the Mel Torme and Bob Wells standard, "The Christmas Song," before a wistful "Jingle Bells," played on harp. There is angelic harp playing on "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas." "Silent Night" is a piano trio performance where she crafts one of her most intriguing improvisations.

Smith and Walsh provide a funky groove to support her light touch and imaginative piano for "White Christmas," before she opens with celeste before switching to piano on the closing "Auld Lang Syne." It completes a holiday recording that is diverting and full of charm.

Ron Weinstock

jazz-blues.com



ANAT COHEN

Luminosa
ANZIC RECORDS

While the music of Brazil has always been an inspiration for Anat Cohen, on her new Anzic Records release, "Luminosa" the focus is on the musics of Brazil. Employing clarinet, bass clarinet and tenor saxophone, she is joined by her band of Jason Lindner (one of her co-producers) on keyboards, Joe Martin on bass and Daniel Friedman on drums.

Special guests include percussionist Gilmar Gomes, guitarists Romero Lumbarbo and Gilad Hekselman on two selections, and two selections feature Choro Advenuroso, composed of Vitor Gonçalves on accordion, Cesar Garabini on 7-string guitar and Sergio Krakowski on Pandeino. The selections include compositions by Milton Nascimento, Romero Lumbarbo, K-Ximbinho, Severino Araujo, Edu Lobo & Chico Buarque and Cohen who contributed four originals.

Cohen is one of the foremost clarinetists in contemporary jazz and her singing, lyrical playing contrasts with the dark chords of Lindner on the opening "Lilia" followed by a more playful attack on "Putty Boy Strut," with an intriguing rhythmic underpinning. "Ima" is a lovely ballad with some delicate playing from Cohen and Lindner. Romero Lubambo's acoustic guitar serves to help pace the lively "Bachiao."

More of Cohen's playful side can be heard with her lilting playing on "Happy Song," while a more reflective tone characterizes "Ternura," one of the two choro selections with the accordion of Gonçalves providing a contrast as does Garabina's 7-string guitar. The other choro performance "Espinha De Bacalhau," is a terrific, spirited performance evocative of some classic choro recordings along with some recordings of New Orleans based pianist Tom McDermott, who has also delved into choro, a Brazilian music that has parallels to ragtime and early New Orleans jazz.

Cohen takes up tenor saxophone for her composition, "The Wein Machine," dedicated to the legendary jazz impresario. Her robust playing here completes another recording marked by the mix of Latin accents, lyricism and charm, and marvelous ensemble playing that is sure to delight many.

Ron Weinstock



ELIANE ELIAS

Made In Brazil
CONCORD

It has been almost 35 years since pianist/singer/songwriter Eliane Elias moved from her homeland in Brazil to New York City. She quickly began making waves as the pianist in the jazz fusion powerhouse band Steps Ahead, which included the late, great tenor saxophonist Michael Brecker. After a joint album with Randy Brecker, she began recording solo albums in the mid 80s and has been a prolific recording artist ever since. Most of her albums are on the Blue Note label, but she recently moved over to Concord.

As the title suggests, she went back to her roots and recorded this album in her hometown of Sao Paulo, Brazil. While she took along her husband, bassist Marc Johnson (who has been on most of her albums), she hired some top Brazilian musicians for the session. Johnson plays bass on half of the songs, while Marcelo Mariano plays electric bass on the others.

Also on the album is the multi-Grammy winning Christian vocal group Take 6, appearing for only one track, and their lead vocalist Mark Kibble sings on two others. Brazilian R&B star Ed Motta is on another. Elias and her singer/pianist/daughter Amanda team up for a duet on "Some Enchanted Night," and she pairs up with Marc Johnson for a duet on "A Sorte do Amor."

Seven of the 12 cuts include orchestral arrangements which were later overdubbed at Abbey Road Studios, performed by members of the London Symphonic Orchestra. But they are perfectly done and never detract from the music - note how things cook along just nicely over the strings on "Voce."

From the opening moments of "Brasil," a famous Brazilian 'anthem' from 1939, to the closing moments of "No Tabuleiro da Baiana," we are all treated to a top shelf program of infectious music from Brazil, much of it permeated with a definite sexiness the likes of which I have not heard in an album in quite some time. Eliane Elias shines brightly throughout with her multifaceted piano work, and her always-wonderful vocals, on which she alternates between English & Portuguese. Not only is she at the top of her game here, the musicians she chose for the homecoming recording are right up there with her.

An absolutely outstanding set of music from Eliane Elias and friends. I want to go to Brazil. *Bill Wahl*

Multiple Disc Sets

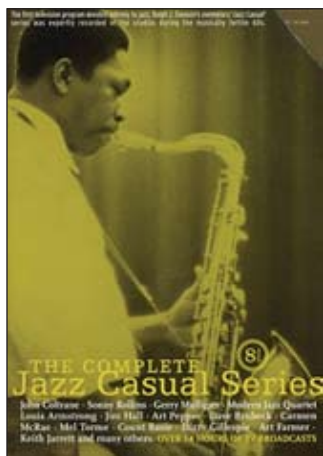


SLIM HARPO Buzzin' the Blues

The Complete Slim Harpo
BEAR FAMILY PRODUCTIONS
5-CD SET GERMAN IMPORT

James Moore, who recorded under the name Slim Harpo, died very young at a time that he was about to cross over to reaching a pop audience. The most commercially successful of the Swamp Blues artists recorded by Jay Miller at his Crowley, Louisiana Studios, Harpo had a number of hits including "I'm a King Bee", "Raining in My Heart" and "I Got Love If You Want It." His influence at the time was reflected by the fact that artists like the Rolling Stones and Johnny Winter covered his songs. The German Bear Family label has issued a 5 CD box set "Buzzin' the Blues - The Complete Slim Harpo" which contains every studio recording of his, including alternate takes as well as some live recordings issued years after his death. In addition to the 5 full CDs with nearly 7 hours of music, there is a large, coffee table size hard cover book by Martin Hawkins with Harpo's biography and a discussion of his music and recordings. The book also contains a full discography of the music and is richly illustrated with many rare photos. I will also add that the alternate takes are presented separately from the issued recordings. Bear Family releases are expensive, but no one (not even Mosaic) does Box Sets better.

Ron Weinstock



THE COMPLETE JAZZ CASUAL SERIES

EFOR FILMS 8-DVD SET

Many of you may be aware of the legendary public TV show Jazz Casual that was hosted by the late music critic Ralph Gleason. Shows from this series featured a number of jazz legends including John Coltrane, Count Basie, Sonny Rollins, Louis Armstrong, Art

Farmer, Jimmy Witherspoon with Ben Webster, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Earl Fatha Hines, Art Pepper, Art Farmer, Charles Lloyd Quartet (with Keith Jarrett and Jack DeJoh-

nette), Joe Sullivan, Mel Torme and others. A number of these performances have been available on VHS tapes and DVD. EFOR Films has issued a box with 8 DVDs containing the complete series of performances mixed with Gleason's cogent interviews of these artists. Also included is a booklet with an overview of the series and the artists included.

Ron Weinstock



VARIOUS

Down Home Blues Classics: Texas 1946-1954 BOULEVARD VINTAGE 4-CD SET UK IMPORT

A four CD European Public Domain reissue of Texas down home blues has just been re-released after being unavailable for several years. This is one of a series of reissues that makes available some terrific 'country' blues from the years following the end of World War II. Included is a booklet from blues scholar Neil Slavin. The first disc is devoted to 25 of the finest early recordings of Lightnin' Hopkins including classics like "Katie Mae," "Short haired Woman," "Let Me Play With Your Poodle," "Tim Moore's Farm," and "One Kind Favor." The other three discs include selections from Frankie Lee Sims, Mercy Dee, Lil' Son Jackson, Clarence Garlow, Texas Alexander, Smokey Hogg and many others. I note that the fabulous 4-disc set devoted to early Chicago postwar blues is also available.

Ron Weinstock



WYNONIE HARRIS

Don't You Want To Rock?

The King & DeLuxe Acetate Series
ACE RECORDS 2-CD SET UK IMPORT

Wynonie Harris, the great blue shouter known as "Mr. Blues," is the subject of a superb double-CD reissue on the English Ace label which the label describes on its website as "23 of the R&B superstar's seminal King sides in best-ever sound, plus an entire CD of alternates, all mastered

from fresh transfers from the original acetates.” These are Harris’ first recordings for the Cincinnati based King Records label and find him backed by Dexter Gordon, Hot Lips Page, Tom Archia and many others with songs that would become classics, including his cover of Roy Brown’s “Good Rockin’ Tonight,” heard with an alternate take and a breakdown take. There are the big band renditions of Louis Prima’s “Oh Babel!” and the Ruth Brown hit “Teardrops From My Eyes,” bawdy numbers like “She Just Won’t Sell No More,” and “I Like My Baby’s Pudding,” and the humor of “Grandma Plays the Numbers.” There is a lavish booklet with session-by-session annotation that comes with this. It is probably this writer’s favorite blues reissue of 2015.

Ron Weinstock



VARIOUS

Dust My Rhythm & Blues: The Flair Records Story **ACE RECORDS 2-CD SET UK IMPORT**

A compilation “Dust My Rhythm & Blues: The Flair Records Story” is one of a series of double CD reissues that the English Ace Records label has issued that survey the Bihari Brothers’ legendary Modern Records label and its subsidiary labels that include Flair, RPM and Kent. Flair was the third subsidiary and in its three years of existence issued some terrific music although it never had a national hit. Originally intended to be the Biharis’ country label, the label shifted direction with Elmore James being the first R&B artist assigned to Flair.

This reissue has a number of choice recordings from the likes of Elmore James (seven sides including “Standing at the Crossroads”); his pianist Little Johnny Jones (with the classic “Dirty By the Dozen (Sweet Little Woman)”); pioneering electric blues guitarist Saunders King; pianist Mercy Dee; Richard Berry (famous for “Louie Louie” with several tracks including “The Big Break”); shouter Saunders King; the doomy West Coast downhome blues of Johnny Fuller, the vocal group The Flairs (whose Cornell Gunter would enjoy fame with The Coasters); Shirley Gunter; Ike Turner (a couple instrumentals including “Cuban Get Away”); and Clarence ‘Bonton’ Garlow doing the rollicking “Route 90.”

The 50 tracks include some alternate takes and some selections that had not previously been issued on CD. If not having complete session information, the wonderfully illustrated booklet accompanying these 50 tracks includes Tony Rounce’s essay with history of the label as well as his discussion of the artists and the recordings.

Ron Weinstock



VARIOUS

The King Jazz Records Story

Storyville Records 5-CD box set - Import

The Danish Storyville Records label has issued a 5 CD box set, “The King Jazz Story” which reissues all of the recordings from this fabled late 1940s label associated with clarinet player and reefer supplier to Louis Armstrong, Mezz Mezzrow.

The aim of Mezzrow and his associates in the label was to present some ‘authentic’ jazz, and most of these recordings based on blues and classic New Orleans jazz featured the great Sidney Bechet on soprano sax along with Sammy Price on piano on many tracks as well. The first CD for example opens with 11 very strong blues and boogie-woogie piano solos by Sammy Price followed by two vocals by Pleasant Joseph backed by Price. Then there are 11 tracks (including alternate takes) by a group of Mezzrow, Bechet, Price, Hot Lips Page, Pops Foster and Sid Catlett with four vocals by Joseph. Interspersed with the music are tracks where Mezzrow discusses the label and the making of some of these recordings.

The remaining four CDs are full of various configurations of Mezzrow-Bechet groups and showcase the genius of Bechet. The songs are presented in the recorded order so one does get several takes of the same songs together so one may wish to use shuffle when listening to the nearly 6 hours of music and short spoken interludes. There are so many outstanding selections including “Perdido Station Stomp,” “The Sheik of Araby,” “Ole Miss,” “Out of the Gallion,” “Tommy’s Blues,” and “The Blues and Freud.”

The booklet accompanying the box contains Chris Albertson’s essay on the label, Mezz and the music contained here and for fans of classic jazz it is a real treat for all of these recordings to be available.

Ron Weinstock

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

jazz-blues.com

Books

By Ron Weinstock



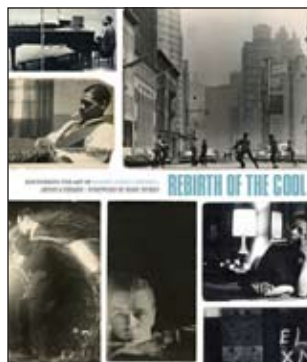
BLUES UNLIMITED Essential Interviews From The Original Blues Magazine Edited by Bill Greensmith, Mike Rowe and Mark Camarigg UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS

A part of the “Music in American Life” series, this new volume contains a number of important interviews from this pioneering publication, which I was a subscriber to (and even made a few modest contributions to over four decades ago). Bill Greensmith and Mike Rowe were important contributors to Blues Unlimited and Mark Camarigg played an important role in the production of this volume. The editors provide an overview of the publication’s history and the various artists whose interviews are reprinted here. They also update and correct some of the interviews here. They note that they have not included some interviews where they were superseded by interviews elsewhere.

Included are interviews with some legendary figures as well as others who likely are not as well known among those who are blues fans today. The volume is split up regionally with the first part (and lengthiest part) devoted to Chicago with interviews of Freddie King, Jimmy Walker, Louis Myers, Red Holloway, Fred Below, and Moody Jones, Floyd Jones and Snooky Pryor. While King and Cotton are the best known of these performers, there is plenty of blues history to be learned here. Most intriguing among the Detroit artists considered is the piece on the great pianist, Big Maceo based on Rowe’s interviews with Maceo’s widow and pianist Boogie Woogie Red.

The lengthiest interview here is with Jimmy Thomas and goes into his lengthy time with Ike Turner starting in St. Louis. Another St. Louis artist interviewed was Fontella Bass, recalling her days with Oliver Sain and recording “Rescue Me.” Arguably the most significant interview with Arthur ‘Big Boy’ Crudup is included. Blues Unlimited played a major role in promoting Houston one-man band, Weldon ‘Juke Boy’ Bonner, so it is not a surprise to find his interview here, and many will find the 1979 interview of Albert Collins of great interest (I know I did). There is also an interview with Jonny Otis (although one wishes they had reprinted the series of interviews Otis did for the publication), Roy Brown, and two pioneering record men, Henry Glover and Ralph Bass.

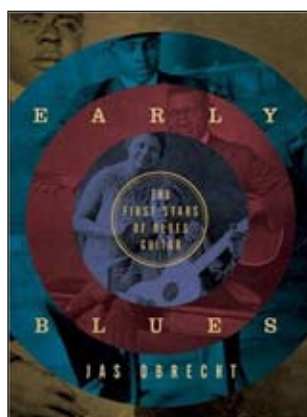
This is an invaluable publication with over 400 pages of blues history source material in a large page format. It is an understatement to state this is a major addition to the blues bookshelf and if you have any serious blues lover on your list, it would make a terrific gift. *Ron Weinstock*



REBIRTH OF THE COOL Discovering the Art of Robert James Campbell By Jessica Ferber POWERHOUSE BOOKS

I should put forth a disclaimer, as I have not yet seen this book, which will be published on December 15, but was a supporter of Jessica Ferber’s Kickstarter campaign to get this done. Robert James Campbell was a photojournalist whose work appeared in the Village Voice and DownBeat among other publications. At the height of his photographic career Campbell captured the likes of John Coltrane, The Modern Jazz Quartet, Philly Joe Jones, Count Basie, Bud Powell, Richie Havens, Chuck Berry, and more. He vigorously documented New York’s jazz era, and its metamorphosis into the beat and folk movements, although later in his life he was wrought by mental demons, financial hardship, and health failure, had to give up his passionate work at what should have been the prime years of his career, having succumbed to his deteriorating body and mind. He died homeless in Vermont in 2002. Jessica Ferber has been curator of Robert James Campbell’s life and photography since her graduation from the University of Vermont in 2002. I have seen several of the images that will be in this book and cannot wait for its publication. Marc Myers, who does the award-winning blog, jazzwax, has written the introduction for this. I am eagerly awaiting receipt of my copy. This is one of the outstanding music photography books of this holiday season.

Ron Weinstock

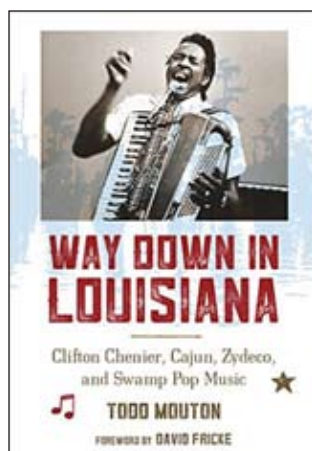


EARLY BLUES The First Stars of Blues Guitar By Jas Obrecht THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNE- SOTA PRESS

Former editor for “Guitar Player” magazine, Jas Obrecht has written for years on blues guitarists. “Early Blues: The First Stars of Blues Guitar” is his most recent volume surveying some important blues guitarists who first recorded the 1920s. Included are portraits of artists including Sylvester Weaver, Papa Charlie Johnson, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Blake, Blind Willie McTell, Blind Willie Johnson, Lonnie Johnson, Mississippi John Hurt and Tampa Red. While the chapters vary in length (with the Lonnie Johnson chapter being the lengthiest), Obrecht writes clearly and concisely to note each person’s significance, and if these portraits of the performers may originally have appeared in “Guitar Player” decades ago, Obrecht has rewritten and updated them to incorporate the latest information about such artists. For example, the chapter on Blind Blake includes discussion of a recently

discovered 78 of his as well as the fact he died in Milwaukee. Also, the chapters on McTell, Johnson and Hurt incorporate information from recently published biographies of these pioneering and influential artists. "Early Blues: The First Stars of Blues Guitar" is highly readable and recommended.

Ron Weinstock

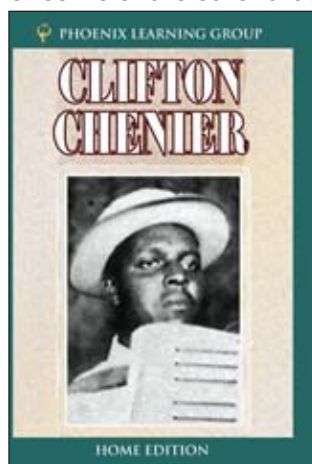


WAY DOWN IN LOUISIANA Clifton Chenier, Cajun, Zydeco and Swamp Pop Music

By Todd Mouton
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA
AT LAFAYETTE

Just released is Todd Mouton's excellent new book on Louisiana Music "Way Down in Louisiana." The book is centered on the great Clifton Chenier, but in addition to Mouton's biography of the great zydeco legend, he weaves in portraits on a number of Louisiana acts including Chenier alumni Buckwheat Zydeco, Sonny Landreth, and Lil, Buck Sinegal along with other acts, many who have been touched in some way by Chenier's influence including BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet, Filé, Steve Riley & the Mamou Playboys, Zachary Richard, Couteau, Lil Band O' Gold, Bonsoir Catin, and Roddie Romero & the Hub City All-Stars. Many of the portraits appear to have been previously published (likely in "OffBeat"), but have been updated from original publication. It is the four chapters devoted to Chenier that make this book essential as Mouton traces his life and his music's evolution along with his many extensive recordings with recollections of Buckwheat Zydeco, Chris Strachwitz, Lil Buck, Landreth, son C.J. Chenier, the late John Hart and others helping flesh out this gentleman by the name of Clifton Chenier, who saxophonist and visual artist Dickie Landry recalled first hearing and thinking it "sounded like surf music from Jupiter." In addition to Mouton's narrative, this book is wonderfully illustrated with photos (many rare) and album covers and includes recommended listening for each chapter. Anybody who has listened to Chenier's music or some of the other artists will love this book.

centered on the great Clifton Chenier, but in addition to Mouton's biography of the great zydeco legend, he weaves in portraits on a number of Louisiana acts including Chenier alumni Buckwheat Zydeco, Sonny Landreth, and Lil, Buck Sinegal along with other acts, many who have been touched in some way by Chenier's influence including BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet, Filé, Steve Riley & the Mamou Playboys, Zachary Richard, Couteau, Lil Band O' Gold, Bonsoir Catin, and Roddie Romero & the Hub City All-Stars. Many of the portraits appear to have been previously published (likely in "OffBeat"), but have been updated from original publication. It is the four chapters devoted to Chenier that make this book essential as Mouton traces his life and his music's evolution along with his many extensive recordings with recollections of Buckwheat Zydeco, Chris Strachwitz, Lil Buck, Landreth, son C.J. Chenier, the late John Hart and others helping flesh out this gentleman by the name of Clifton Chenier, who saxophonist and visual artist Dickie Landry recalled first hearing and thinking it "sounded like surf music from Jupiter." In addition to Mouton's narrative, this book is wonderfully illustrated with photos (many rare) and album covers and includes recommended listening for each chapter. Anybody who has listened to Chenier's music or some of the other artists will love this book.



CLIFTON CHENIER

Clifton Chenier
THE PHOENIX LEARNING
GROUP DVD

Released at the same time as the above book is a documentary DVD produced by Carl Colby, Clifton Chenier (The Phoenix Learning Group) that captures Chenier and the Red Hot Louisiana Band at a dance in Louisiana in the mid-1970s. This video captures Chenier and his brother Cleveland with arguably

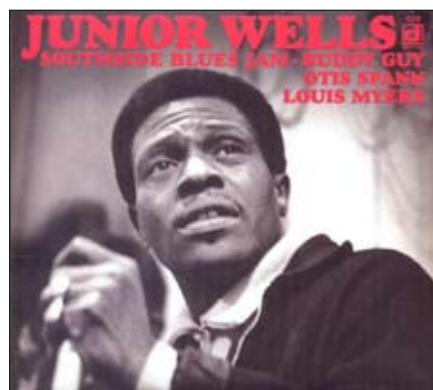
his best band that included Lil Buck, Buckwheat Zydeco on keyboards and the great John Hart on saxophone. Mixed in with performances from a dance at The Kingfish in Baton Rouge is a video from a performance from Jay's Lounge and Cockpit in Cankton, Louisiana, and a brief clip showing a cock fight (some Cajun and zydeco lounges at the time also had a cock pit). This may be unsettling but fortunately brief and the bulk of the video is nothing but some of the best Chenier on video this writer has seen with one of the greatest roots music bands of all time doing 15 songs including some of his most famous numbers such as "Bon Ton Roulet," "Party Down," "Calinda," "Zydeco Est Pas Salé," and "Black Gal," along with covers of Fats Domino's "Hello Josephine" and a stone cold rendition of Lowell Fulson's "Black Nights." This is modestly packaged, but the performance is spellbinding and gives a sense of why Chenier was (and still is) so loved. And the magnificent tenor sax of Blind John Hart is such a bonus.

I was a supporter of the Kickstarter campaign to help get the book published and received the DVD in addition as a premium. Information on this book and the DVD is available on the website, www.waydowninlouisiana.com. Not only is there links to buy the book and DVD, but there is a free downloadable sample and a performance from the DVD.

Ron Weinstock

CDs

Here are some single CDs from 2015 that the writers feel would make good gift material. The very short reviews are running in full, but the longer ones are just excerpts. You can check out samples of the songs at Amazon, or if you want to read the full review you can download the issue we refer to in the excerpt.



JUNIOR WELLS Southside Blues Jam DELMARK

This expanded "Southside Blues Jam" is hand-somely packaged (credit Kate Moss) with a booklet that contains Bob Koester's recollections of the session and Michael Cuscuna's Rolling Stone review of the original LP release and the sound is quite good. This reissue, with its additional tracks, will be welcome to a wide range of blues lovers including those having the original LP. *From Issue 358, page 11.*

Ron Weinstock



GEORGE GEE SWING ORCHESTRA

Swing Makes You Happy!

RONDETTE JAZZ

George Gee has been leading the George Gee Swing Orchestra since 1980, inspired by Count Basie who mentored him. While leading the big little band (9 pieces that sound much bigger) he has had the services of trombonist, composer and arranger David Gibson for five years and the results of their collaboration can be heard on "Swing Makes You Happy!" (Rondette Jazz).

The recording features 19 selections that include 5 Gibson originals, and three transcriptions from Chick Webb's repertoire. Gibson handled all of the arrangements. Gibson's trombone anchors the brass section that includes trumpeters Freddie Hendrix and Andy Gravish. The saxophone section consists of Ed Pazant, Michael Hashim and Tony Lustig on alto, tenor and baritone respectively, while the rhythm section consists of Steve Einerson on piano, upright bassist Marcus McLaurine and Willard Dyson on drums. Vocals are provided by Hilary Gardner and John Dokes.

Listening to this brings back memories of Panama Francis' reincarnation of the Savoy Sultans from the late seventies and early eighties. The music swings hard and is played full throttle with joyous conviction. The rhythm section certainly is stellar and there are plenty of strong solos with Lustig's baritone sax and Hendrix's trumpet among the many pleasures heard throughout. *Excerpt from Issue 258, page 12.*

Ron Weinstock

IGOR PRADO BAND AND DELTA GROOVE ALL STARS

Way Down South

DELTA GROOVE

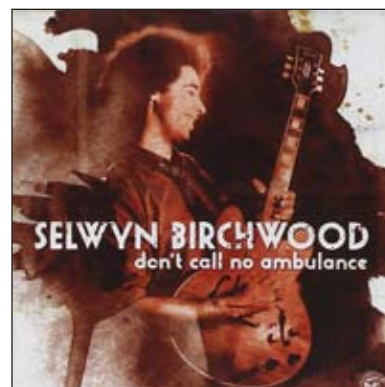
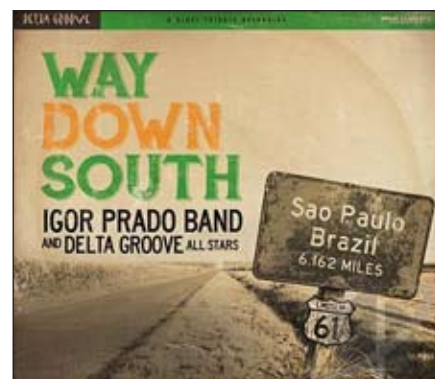
Delta Groove has issued Igor Prado's latest recordings on which he is joined by a group of various American blues performers under the rubric of the Delta Groove All Stars, and is titled "Way Down South." The guests include Kim Wilson, Sugaray Rayford, Rod & Honey Piazza, Mud Morganfield, Lynwood Slim, Mitch Kashmar, Junior Watson, J.J. Jackson, Wallace Coleman and Omar Coleman.

What makes this collection of mostly blues covers is in part the choice of material that is not songs that have been done to death, the strong playing and a definite twist on the songs. There is plenty to delight in with

Sugary Rayford's forceful singing along with the evocation of Ike Turner's whammy bar guitar playing on the opening rendition of Turner's "Matchbox," followed by similar slashing guitar by the leader backing Kim Wilson

on an almost rockabilly treatment of Long John Hunter's "Ride With Me." Mud Morganfield channels his father Muddy Waters on a powerful "She's Got It," while Slim handles a revival of an early Lowell Fulson jump blues "Baby Won't You Jump With Me" with Martin's tenor sax and Ari Borger's piano standing out. *Excerpt from Issue 359, page 18.*

Ron Weinstock



SELWYN BIRCHWOOD

Don't Call No Ambulance

ALLIGATOR RECORDS

Mentored by Sonny Rhodes and winner of the 2013 International Blues Challenge, Selwyn Birchwood impresses with his enthusiasm as well as his talent. This writer had the pleasure of seeing him in Fall of 2013 before he signed with Alligator Records, who have recently issued his first CD for the label titled "Don't Call No Ambulance."

On this album, Birchwood brings his vocals as well as guitar and lap steel with an excellent band comprised of Regi Oliver on saxophones, bass clarinet and flute; Donal 'Huff' Wright on bass and Curtis Nutall on drums. Guest appearances are made by Joe Louis Walker on Slide Guitar, Josh Nelms on Rhythm Guitar, RJ Harman on Harmonica and Dash Dixon on Keyboard.

Selwyn's raspy, gravelly voice have led some to liken him to Tom Waits, a comparison that does surface several places on this recording of originals. He is a fairly solid guitar slinger as displayed on the rocking opener "Addicted," but much of the appeal of "Don't Call No Ambulance" is the interaction between Selwyn and the saxophones of Oliver and the tight backing Wright and Nutall provide. *Excerpt from Issue 359, page 22.*

Ron Weinstock



JACKIE PAYNE
I Saw the Blues
BLUE DOT RECORDS

It has been too long since most of us have heard from Jackie Payne, which is remedied by a new CD on Blue Dot Records titled "I Saw The Blues."

Payne first came into prominence with a recording on Jetstream, which led to his joining the Stax Revue. Moving to the West Coast he was featured with Johnny Otis for 15 years. Then he recorded for JSP before starting a partnership with Steve Edmondson, which led to three more terrific recordings and a Blues Music Award for Soul Blues Album of the year.

Now, nearly a decade later, he returns with this soul blues gem recorded and mixed by Kid Andersen, who also plays as part of backing group that includes guitarist Anthony Paule, keyboardists Lorenzo Farrell and Bob Welsh, harmonica player Aki Kumar, trombonist Ed Early, trumpeter Jeff Lewis, and tenor saxophonists Frankie Ramos, Jack Sanford and Eric Spaulding.

Payne contributed six originals for a terrific urban blues recording with a heavy dose of Texas and Muscle Shoals in its feel. Think about those terrific recordings Payne made with Steve Edmondson, those by Frankie Lee or the stunning Frank Bey-Anthony Paule recordings. Payne was in terrific voice when he made these sides, showing little evidence of having aged since he first recorded decades ago. *Excerpt from Issue 359, page 12.*

Ron Weinstock



VARIOUS
Guitar Heroes
STONY PLAIN

Stony Plain has a release that will certainly enliven the listening of guitar geeks titled "Guitar Heroes." The album brings forth a performance from the Vancouver Island MusicFest by guitar legends James Burton, Albert Lee,

Amos Garrett and Dave Wilcox backed by the keyboards of Jon Greathouse, the bass of Will MacGregor and the drums of James Harrison Smith. Doug Cox, Artistic Director of the Festival discusses in the liner notes how this performance came together which I will leave for your eyes.

James Burton first came to notice on Dale Hawkins' early recordings, including "Susie Q," before hooking up with Rick Nelson and then Elvis Presley. Albert Lee is best known to me as a country picker (an extension of Burton's chicken scratching style) who spent time with Emmy Lou Harris, Eric Clapton and Rodney Crowell. Amos Garrett was with Ian & Sylvia, Maria Muldaur, Paul Butterfield's Better Days and Bonnie Raitt, while Dave Wilcox was also with Ian and Sylvia, Maria Muldaur, Nashville North, and The Ian Tyson (TV) show. This gives a sense of their roots but the music extends here to blues, rockabilly and jazz. *Excerpt from Issue 360, page 22.*

Ron Weinstock



ADAM SCONE
I Scream Scone!
RONDETTTE JAZZ

Those in need of a mainstream organ jazz fix need look no further than Adam Scone's new offering. The NYC-based Hammond B3 pilot serves up a set delightfully predictable in its sense of the sub-genre and abundant in exuberant keyboard play. Scone heads the traditional quartet configuration of Hammond/sax/guitar/drums with various personnel, the other constant cast member being tenor saxophonist Ian Hendrickson-Smith. Scone's solid sense of swing is a constant as well on both easy going and up-tempo blues- "What People Do" and "I Scream Scone", respectively, and in ballad mode- "Willow Weep For Me". While deep exploration can make for exciting music, sets like this one prove there's much to enjoy on familiar ground as well.

Duane Verh



TWIN DANGER
Twin Danger
DECCA/UNIVERSAL
MUSIC CLASSICS

As seductive as this duo's "noir" image is, they quickly prove the real seduction lies in their simultaneously fresh and retro craft.

Vocalist Vanessa Bley and saxophonist

Stewart Matthewman back their individually compelling voices up with considerable savvy as writers and arrangers. Bley, daughter of piano great Paul Bley, convincingly delivers on a chanteuse persona with nimble lyric readings, enhancing them on multiple occasions by smart sounding harmonic multi-tracks.

Matthewman, a key contributor to the sophisticated and highly successful 80's sound of Sade, is a strong and clean toned player who provides a most suitable second voice. His moody retro charts, however, are the ultimate driver of this appealing and inventive set.

Duane Verh



JOHN SCOFIELD
Past Present
IMPULSE

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

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



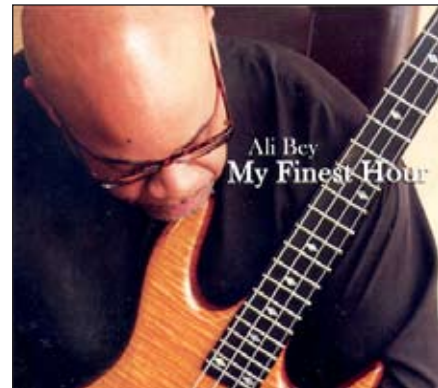
LARA DOWNES
A Billie Holiday Songbook
STEINWAY & SONS

Celebrated classical pianist Ms. Downes brings an expected first-rate technique to this solo program of

iconic songs from Lady Day's "book", but also a lyrical sense that should sit well with jazz listeners.

A professed fan of Holiday since childhood, Downes does transmit an engaging sense of the legendary vocalist's own emotional stance on each song: "Strange Fruit" is appropriately disturbing, "Yesterdays" and "Lover Man" are just as yearning.

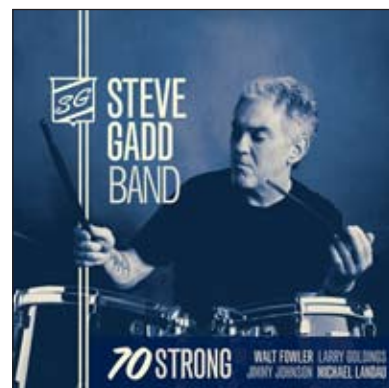
Downes' consistently elegant touch does much to freshen the sound of songs so often played. Her takes on "God Bless The Child", "I'll Be Seeing You" and "Body And Soul" are standouts. *Duane Verh*



ALI BEY
My Finest Hour
SELF-RELEASED

Electric bassist Ali Bey here displays the stylistic range of his tight, versatile trio but the Detroit-bred player/composer's outfit never sheds its core identity- a stripped-down, high-energy fusion outfit. While ballads and gentler moments are by no means out of reach, Bey and partners Larry Andrews (guitar) and Timothy Omar Stroud (drums) show a second-nature sense "in the pocket", maxing out bare-bones grooves.

While powerful drumming is an essential in this format, Stroud's colorations are an additional strength and guitarist Andrews' frequently laid-back presence makes its own particular mark. The leader's own work strikes a nice balance between facility and funk. Standout tracks include "Dam' I Got A Toothache!!", "Joe Cool" and "Ace In The Hole". *Duane Verh*



STEVE GADD BAND
70 Strong
BFM JAZZ

Storied drummer Mr. Gadd celebrates the big Seven-oh with a set stacked with sufficient groove and

mood power to find its way into discerning “smooth” formats while satisfying present-day fusion listeners with a sound possessed a strong group identity and, compositionally speaking, a goodly number of imaginative “heads”.

Gadd’s savvy play is never far from its soulful component and bassist Jimmy Johnson proves a reliable section partner. Multiple-voiced guitarist Michael Landau and keyboardist Larry Goldings and, most particularly, trumpeter Walt Fowler deliver consistently tasty solo work.

As distinctive as the originals that make up the majority of the set, the most compelling track is the band’s er-grabbing workup of Eddie Harris’ classic “Freedom Jazz Dance”. Gadd proves how much push can be found in his brushes on one the disc’s strongest groove pieces. Nice work. *Duane Verh*



BLUE LUNCH
Above The Fold
RIP CAT

Eighth release by Cleveland’s hep cats, Blue Lunch, second on the LA label Rip Cat, finds it a mix of styles sure to please everyone.

Blue Lunch is the kind of band that fails the thesaurus test because the word eclectic falls short in this case and you want to go in search of a better word, which isn’t available. Also of note are the liner notes, done by famed author Harlan Ellison. The notes are so good, they’d make a fine review of ABOVE THE FOLD. With 15 tracks, it seems like the disc has mixed in just as many musical styles into one presentation.

Start with the shuffle of “Ain’t Trying To Kill Nobody,” driven by Bob Frank’s guitar. Peter London’s harp shows up in the next couple cuts, the latter helped along by Mike Sands’ piano during “The Long Game.” “Everybody’s On The Phone” goes the jazzy, swing route as does “No Time Like The Present,” helped along again by Sands’ piano. Everything but the kitchen sink goes into “Seven Times” while guest Evelyn Wright comes in for the call and response of “Where Do You Think It’s Going.”

Add the boogie woogie of the “Lake Erie Cocktail” instrumental to the list of styles along with the swing of “Love No More,” the latter led by Mike Rubin’s trumpet. Andre “Mr. rhythm” William’s “Tossini & Turnini & Burnini All Up Inside” goes Big Band while the traditional gospel “Good News” has a doo-wop flavor to it.

I’ve just scratched the surface of styles included on ABOVE THE FOLD. Eclectic indeed. It’s kind of like the Cleveland weather: if you don’t like it, wait for the next song to go in a different direction. One listen to ABOVE THE FOLD and you will realize these eight guys know the meaning of diddy wah diddy. *Peanuts*



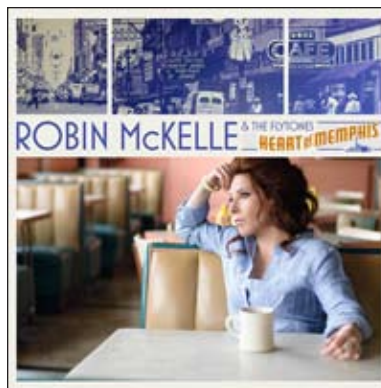
BILL TOMS & HARD RAIN
Deep In The Shadows
TERRAPLANE

Pittsburgh singer/songwriter/guitarist Bill Toms is back with his latest effort (not sure what number at this point, I know this is the third one I’ve reviewed in the Jazz & Blues Report). Eclectic is always the key adjective for Toms, but “Deep In The Shadows” is leaning towards blues and R&B with a touch of gospel added in.

It runs the gauntlet from the boogie woogie of “The Air Feels Like Rain (Paris, 1943)” to the melancholy “Man Who Won The War.” It isn’t all war topics, as the tune I find most interesting is the soulful opener “I Got No Use (For What You’re Selling Me),” which is somewhat reminiscent of the Miracles’ 1968 hit “Special Occasion.” “Sudden” Steve Binsberger’s piano gives “Times Ain’t Nothing Like They Use To Be” its boogie woogie and Phil Brontz throws some mean sax into “Darkest Side Of Town” as Bernie Herr’s drums levels the foundation throughout.

Another good effort by Bill Toms, who is starting to pick up a following in Europe due to his frequent dates in Italy. Now I guess I’ll have to find another word to use instead of eclectic before Tom’s next release shows up.

Peanuts



ROBIN MCKELLE & THE FLYTONES
Heart of Memphis
VIZZTONE

Robin McKelle is on a mission to move away from the jazzy big band grooves of her early discs and to join the ranks of Memphis soul singers like Al Green, Ann Peebles or Carla

Thomas. This disc marks another solid step in that direction with her big, rich voice taking on a southern grittiness that

would leave her upstate New York roots well in the past but for the urban classiness she brings to the party. Much of the disc would fit seamlessly alongside much of the output of Hi Records. There is nothing groundbreaking here and that's the point. Put it on and hear some new old Memphis soul music.

Mark Smith

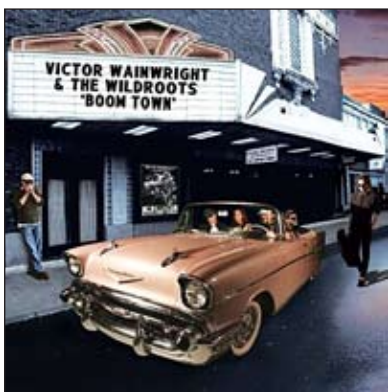


STACY MITCHHART

Live My Life
DR SAM RECORDS

On his 12th disc, Stacy Mitchhart applies his rough hewn voice and sizzling guitar licks to several originals plus smoking covers of the Beatles' "Come Together," Gill Scott-Heron's "Legend In His Own Mind" and Bill Withers' "Better Off Dead." Many of the tracks get added spice compliments of horns and a B3 organs but some take things all the way into little big band territory with jazzy charts and upbeat grooves. Mitchhart sets his normal guitar aside on a number of tracks in favor of 3 and 4 string Cigar Box Guitars, from which he coaxes hard-edged slide blues, and in favor of a ukulele and dobro elsewhere Overall this is a stylistically diverse delight.

Mark Smith



VICTOR WAINWRIGHT & THE WILDROOTS

Boom Town
BLIND PIG

On his new Blind Pig release pianist/vocalist Victor Wainwright proves once again why he's a two time recipient of the Blues Music Award as "Pinetop Perkins Piano Player of the Year" with his command of the 88's. Whether he's laying down energetic boogies, mid-tempo soul, sinewy Little Feat style rockers, or greasy B3 driven rockers he plays with a command that will have you looking at the liner notes to make sure there isn't a second keyboardist

adding to the mix. There hasn't been this much piano in a blues release since Mitch Woods and the Rocket 88s were tearing things up a decade ago. Adding to Wainwright's appeal are his stellar vocals that draw inspiration from his roots in the deep-south with echoes of Omar Dykes, Dr. John and even Jimmy Buffett.

Mark Smith

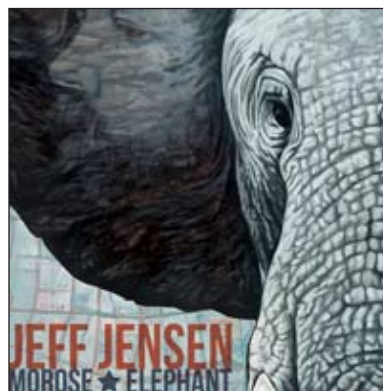


AMY BLACK

The Muscle Shoals Sessions
REUBEN RECORDS

Kicking things off with the Sam Cooke classic Bring It on Home singer-songwriter Amy Black reconnects with her early roots in Muscle Shoals, Alabama where she often visited her grandparents. From there she lays down a set of glorious covers by the likes of the Black Keys, Tighten Up, Bob Dylan, Gotta Serve Somebody, Don Covey, Watch Dog, Arthur Alexander, You Better Move On, Dan Penn/Spooner Oldham, Uptight, Good Man and the traditional You Gotta Move. Along with Ann and Regina McCrary on vocals and a top notch band including Will Kimbrough on guitar, Spooner Oldham on organ and a wailing horn section she infuses these songs with soulful exuberance, R & B grit and plenty of the swampy funk that is the calling card of the Muscle Shoal sound.

Mark Smith



JEFF JENSEN

Morose Elephant
SWINGSUIT RECORDS

Jeff Jensen's first three discs escaped my attention and this one almost met a similar fate. Just as this disc was about to slip to the bottom of my ever growing review pile I noticed that in addition to the normal guitar/bass/drums line-up, it features not only a horn section but a couple of harmonica players along with Victor Wainwright on keys and Reba Russell on vocals.

Knowing the quality of Wainwright's and Russell's own work and their busy schedules I guessed they wouldn't waste their time on a subpar outing. I'm glad to report my guess was right. As revealed over the course of the disc, Jensen is not only a fine guitarist but a decent singer and songwriter as well. As a guitarist, he evokes not only the Doobie Brothers on "Make It" but Steely Dan on the gospel tinged "Going Home," which starts with a jazz funk groove before Jensen unleashes an unholy flurry of notes. The instrumental "Elephant Blue" is a wild journey with everything from gypsy swing to smoking jazz. "I'll Always Be in Love With You" finds Jensen trading leads with the horns much like B.B. King when he's fronting his blues orchestra.

Great stuff!

Mark Smith



J.B. HUTTO & HIS HAWKS

Hawk Squat
DELMARK

The latest classic Delmark blues CD to receive an expanded, deluxe treatment is J.B. Hutto & His Hawks, "Hawk Squat." Hawk Squat is perhaps my favorite J.B. Hutto album and one I have been listening to since it was initially released back in the later sixties. Backing J.B. were Sunnyland Slim on keyboards; Herman Haskell on guitar for one track; Lee Jackson on guitar for six songs (8 tracks); Junior Pettis or Dave Myers on bass; Frank Kirkland on drums; and Maurice McIntyre on saxophone for one session. The original twelve tracks are supplemented by one new song and alternates of four selections (one song has two alternates).

In addition to the previously unissued material, Bob Koester provides new notes that supplement the original liner notes in the accompanying booklet. There are also a number of previously unissued photos from Turner's, then J.B. Hutto's home base, and the recording sessions in the booklet. The original recording was selected for the Blues Hall of Fame in 2013, and the music still resonates here over forty-five years after first listening to "Hawk Squat." J.B. Hutto's music was direct and full of passion. He was not fancy, just full of spirit of heart. Needless to say, this reissue of "Hawk Squat" is highly recommended. *Excerpt from Issue 361, page 13.*

Ron Weinstock

jazz-blues.com



FRANK VIGNOLA & VINNY RANIOLO

Swing Zing
FV-15

From the opening delightful elegance of "Cheek to Cheek" to the lovely rendering of "Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans" and the closing medley of "Peg O My Heart"/"I'm Confessin'," listeners are treated to the mix of lyricism and dazzling improvisational take-offs that prove that jaw-dropping technique matched with musical taste and intelligence that can make for compelling performances that can move the heart and lift one's spirits. "Swing Zing" is simply wonderful. *Excerpt from Issue 361, page 16. Ron Weinstock*



CÉSAR OROZCO
No Limits For Tumbao
ALFI RECORDS

The music of Cuban/Venezuelan pianist, composer, music producer, and arranger César Orozco involves an original fusion between Venezuelan and Cuban traditional music with jazz.

In his notes to his new CD "No Limits For Tumbao" (Alfi Records), he states that 'Tumbao' is for Latin music what the swing is for Jazz. On the present recording his piano and keyboards are supported by Rodner Padilla on electric bass, Francisco Vielma on percussion, and Euro Zambrano on drums with appearances by Paquito D'Rivera, Yosvany Terry, Pedrito Martinez, Gary Thomas and others.

As might be expected, this is music of great spirit and depth, full of exhilaration and beauty. The opening title track showcases the leader's marvelous piano (both acoustic and electric), soprano saxophone from Terry, and the crackling percussion. *Excerpt from issue 362, page 11.*

Ron Weinstock



**CHARLIE HADEN/
GONZALO RUBALCABA**
Tokyo Adagio
IMPULSE!

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

Haden and Rubalcaba had met in Havana in 1986 where his group played on a Havana Jazz Plaza Festival on the same night as Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra, and Haden quickly became a major supporter of the pianist, urging Bruce Lundvall of Blue Note Records to sign him. He joined Haden, along with drummer Paul Motian at the 1989 Montreal Jazz Festival, and the music was issued as part of Haden's "The Montreal Tapes" series. They would collaborate in concert and on recordings a number of more times, including the six songs (sequenced by Haden) the pair performed over four nights in Tokyo that are presented here. *Excerpt from issue 363, page 15.*

Ron Weinstock



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Keep On Keepin' On
VARÈSE SARABANDE RECORDS

"Keep On Keepin' On" is a remarkable documentary about the late Clark Terry and his relationship with a young blind pianist, Justin Kauflin. The documentary

captures Terry, who was suffering severe health issues related to diabetes, and young Kauflin in several different episodes interspersed with clips of Terry from throughout his legendary musical career. Also caught are some moments with the late Quincy Jones, who Terry mentored when Jones was a teenager and who takes Justin on the road with him towards the film's end. Interspersed are clips of Terry playing with Duke Ellington, Oscar Peterson, and various big bands along with Justin performing at the Monk competition and later being featured with Quincy Jones in Europe where he performs his composition dedicated to Terry, "For Clark." *Excerpt from Issue 361, page 14. This was a review of the Sountrack.*

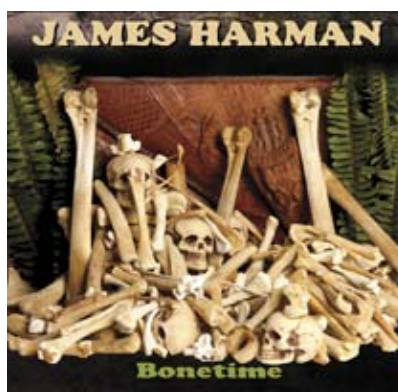
Ron Weinstock



THE TEXAS HORNS
Blues Gotta Holda Me
VIZZTONE

The Texas Horns are Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff on tenor sax, harmonica and vocals, John Mills on baritone and tenor sax and Adalberto Gomez on trumpet and Flugelhorn. They are joined on this fun set by Marcia Ball, WC Clark, Nick Connolly, Anson Funderburgh and Johnny Nicholas. A couple of originals and lots of fun covers all with a funky, horn-driven, R & B twist.

Mark Smith



JAMES HARMAN
Bonetime
ELECTRO FI

It's been years since harmonica wizard James Harman has dropped a new disc. This one features everyone who is anyone on the West Coast scene- Gene Taylor, Junior Watson, Kirk Fletcher, Jeff Turmes, Kid Ramos and a host of others laying down the groove for his iconic stories of off-kilter characters all fueled by his still awesome chops on harmonica.

Mark Smith

2014 GIFT GUIDE

While our annual Gift Guide appears every year at this time, the gift ideas covered are in no way just to be thought of as holiday gifts only. Obviously, these items would be a good gift idea for any occasion year-round, as well as a gift for yourself! We do not include many, if any at all, single CDs in the guide. Most everything contained will be multiple CD sets, DVDs, CD/DVD sets, books and the like. Of course, you can always look through our back issues to see what came out in 2014 (and prior years), but none of us would want to attempt to decide which CDs would be a fitting addition to this guide. The year 2014 was a bit on the lean side as far as reviews go of box sets, books and DVDs, but we do have several to check out. These are in no particular order in terms of importance or release dates. But, throughout these pages you will find plenty of ideas from previous years!



SACKVILLE ALL STARS

Sackville All Star Christmas Record
SACKVILLE / DELMARK

For those looking for some holiday jazz, Delmark has re-released a 1986 Sackville album, *The Sackville All Star Christmas Record*. The recording presents soprano saxophonist Jim Galloway, pianist Ralph Sutton, bassist Milt Hinton and drummer Gus Johnson for a swinging cross mix of traditional Christmas Carols, popular Christmas tunes, spirituals and songs from the jazz repertoire with references to Christmas in the lyrics.

Galloway's sometimes playful, and other times reflective, soprano is an extension of Sidney Bechet, and his disciples such as Bob Wilbur and Kenny Davern, backed by a superb rhythm section.

As John Norris noted in the 1986 liner notes, Christmas songs also have always been part of popular music where they are part of the annual social celebration of the holidays. This certainly is reflected in the swinging rendition of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" with a playful solo from Galloway along with some two-handed piano from Sutton.

Sutton is more sedate on the hymn "We Three Kings" as is Galloway with a light touch by Hinton and Johnson. Galloway exhibits a bit more vibrato with Sutton displaying a light barrelhouse touch on the rendition of "At the Christmas Ball," a 1925 Bessie Smith recording on which Hinton solos.

Other delights include a buoyant "Winter Won-

derland," Sutton's rollicking piano on "Go Tell It On the Mountain" and his stride opening for "Santa Claus Came in the Spring," with Galloway playful on the latter number, and a light Latin rhythm employed for "Let It Snow," with perhaps Galloway finest solo here. A highly energetic rendition of "Old Time Religion" concludes a thoroughly captivating recording of holiday swing.

Ron Weinstock



DAVE KOZ & FRIENDS

The 25th of December
CONCORD

Saxophonist Dave Koz has been in the top echelon of the contemporary jazz world for many years, and he has also become known for releasing a Christmas album pretty much every year, along with a rather large tour to support it. It might seem odd that a Jewish guy has an affinity for Christmas music, but such is the case.

Where this one differs from other contemporary jazz holiday releases is that it is not loaded with stars from the same genre. Yes, Kenny G. is on one track, but it has some punch and it swings! The guests here who mostly offer the vocals come from several different musical worlds.

The album is a mix of many styles, offering straight jazz, contemporary jazz, R&B, pop oriented fare, some tracks with lush strings, etc. It kicks off with Dave Koz and his band with strings playing "The First Noel," which is followed by "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year," featuring the legendary Johnny Mathis. The remaining

tracks also feature a guest for each, including Gloria Estefan, Richard Marx, Eric Benet, Heather Headley, BeBe Winans, Jonathan Butler and Fantasia. A definite highlight here is the version of "I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm, featuring India Arie and Trombone Shorty. The disc closes with the Beatles "All You Need Is Love," featuring Koz with all the guests contributing, including Stevie Wonder on both harmonica and adding his vocal as well.

A very nice release from Koz, as he offers some well-known Christmas fare, along with some other tracks which are certainly suitable for this or any other season. Happy Holidays.

Bill Wahl



BOB MARLEY
Uprising Live
EAGLE VISION DVD

Bob Marley was, and is, the undisputed King of Reggae, and the news of a previously unreleased Marley concert a while back was big news. And released it was – on November 24 – just a month before Christmas.

Marley, who died at the young age of 36 from the spread of melanoma, left us with a rather small but wonderful collection of audio recordings, but video footage from his live concerts is quite rare. I had the pleasure of seeing him perform live, but had not seen any video performances until now on "Uprising Live."

Uprising was the final tour for Marley, as he left us in May 1981. This concert was filmed in early summer 1980, just a year before he passed, in Westfalenhalle Dortmund as part of the German Television series Rockpalast. I have seen a couple of Rockpalast videos before, such as UB40's early video from their strictly reggae years before they went commercial on us. I remember the video quality being quite bad.

This Marley video seems much better. While it does have some spots that are way too dark, and others where the colors glow too much and kind of blend together due to the stage lights, the closer shots of Marley singing and playing are actually quite good – and that is what we are watching it for.

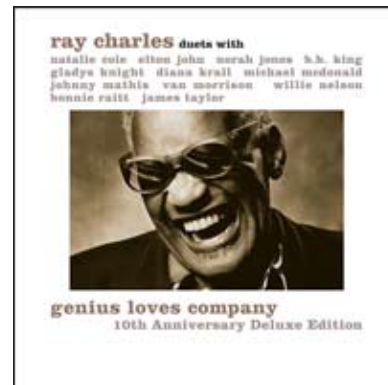
While the focus of the video is on Marley rather than his band, there are many shots of members of the Wailers, his seven-piece band.

The set opens with four songs from Marley's backup vocalists, who called themselves the I Threes. Then Bob hits the stage and delivers a program of 19 songs. Some are from the "Uprising" album, which the tour was in support of, such as "Redemption Song," "Could You Be Loved" and "Coming In From The Cold," but the others included many of the songs his fans then and now know and love – such as "I Shot The Sheriff," "Exodus," "Jamming," "Get Up, Stand Up," "Lively Up Yourself," "Coming In From The Cold," "Is This Love," "No Woman, No Cry" and more.

Incidentally, the three members of his backup vocals group went on to become well-known and successful reggae artists in their own right – Marley's wife Rita Marley, Marcia Griffiths and Judy Mowatt – all with albums in their own names.

This DVD was restored for release under the supervision of his daughter and son, Cedella and Ziggy. I would have to think that all Bob Marley fans, and reggae fans in general, will enjoy Uprising Live, whether it be a personal purchase or received as a gift.

Bill Wahl



RAY CHARLES
Genius Loves Company
10th Anniversary Deluxe Edition
CONCORD RECORDS

It is hard to believe that 10 years has gone by since the passing of Ray Charles (1930-2004) and his "Genius Loves Company" release. The 2004 CD was released as a single disc, and it has been re-released by Concord/Hear Music in three different versions. The one I have in hand is a 2-CD set - one disc being the audio CD, and the other a DVD titled "The Making Of Genius Loves Company, a music and documentary companion which pretty much delivers what its title suggests.

The final album for Ray Charles paired him in duets with several singers between June 2003 and March 2004. In Ray's own words "I've recorded with so many amazing musicians in my career, but never on a duets album all my own. I thought it was time to have some of the friends that I love and the artists that I admire come into my studio and sing with me live." The result

of that thought is this intimate 14 song album, most all of which was produced by either Phil Ramone or John Burk and mixed by Al Schmitt. Most of the cuts were recorded at RPM Studios in Los Angeles and they all fit together perfectly well.

You'll hear Ray with Norah Jones, James Taylor, Diana Krall, Elton John, Natalie Cole, Bonnie Raitt, Willie Nelson, Michael McDonald, B.B. King, Gladys Knight, Johnny Mathis and Van Morrison. Those were the artists he was featured with on the original issue. This new issue includes two bonus tracks - Ray's own "Mary Ann," performed with Poncho Sanchez, and a collaboration with the a cappella jazz group Take 6 for a version of "Unchain My Heart." Three of the songs were written by the artist Ray performs with - James Taylor's "Sweet Potato Pie," Elton John's "Sorry Seems to be the Hardest Word," and Van Morrison's "Crazy Love."

I'd have to say that every song is an absolute standout here, and this album should please anyone who likes good music-period. The included DVD offers live clips and statements from some of the artists he performs with, as well as some of those involved with the production of the album. I remember seeing it back when the album was first issued, but back then it was a promotional DVD the record company sent out. As mentioned above, it is now included as a companion to the CD. This CD/DVD Deluxe Edition was released September 30, 2014; a three disc Limited Collector's Edition Box Set (with the movie Ray) will be released November 11 and the Two-LP Vinyl Edition is due out December 9. All three versions will be released in time for the holidays...of course!

Bill Wahl



CHICK COREA

Trilogy
CONCORD JAZZ

Chick Corea continues to dazzle audiences with his performances and recordings. "Trilogy" (Concord Jazz) is a three-disc release that documents two tours by a remarkable trio of Corea, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Brian Blade, with guest appearances from Jorge Pardo on flute, Niño Josele on acoustic guitar and Gayle Moran Corea on vocals.

17 performances with nearly 3 and a half hours of music span the three discs and it is an understatement that these selections from 10 concerts provide

an overview of Corea's continued remarkable music as the three explore standards such as "This Song Is You" and "How Deep Is The Ocean", a couple of Thelonious Monk classics, "Work" and "Blue Monk" as well as some of Corea's compositions including "Spain" and "Armando's Rhumba."

This is a stellar trio with Corea blending his crisp, robust attack with a hint of romanticism. The influence of Bill Evans is perhaps most evident in the trio's renditions of standards (and Corea has recorded an Evans tribute with Eddie Gomez and the late Paul Motian) but his own Iberian touches and romanticism is evident throughout on these remarkable performances. Christopher McBride may be the busiest contemporary bassist, and he provides an anchor for Corea and the playing of Blades who complements Corea's lead with his dynamic playing and rhythmic accents.

Corea's "Fingerprints" certainly has some dazzling piano before Blade takes an explosive solo. It is followed a lovely "My Foolish Heart," on which Josele's flamenco-rooted guitar and Pardo's flute were at the forefront early before Corea and company closed out the track. Josele introduces the theme for "Spain" before Corea (with McBride playing arco and Blade playing small instruments) enters at a lazy pace and the two set the atmosphere enhanced by Pardo's flute before the tempo accelerates with some compelling playing from Corea and all. Corea, Josele, Pardo and McBride are showcased here before a riveting exchange between Corea and Blade. Listening one wants to dance and imagine how difficult it was for those at this Madrid concert to sit still, although the audience joyfully vocalizes in exchanging fours with Corea's piano.

There are other remarkable moments including a marvelous interpretation of "Blue Monk;" a stirring "Armando's Rhumba," and the remarkable "Piano Sonata: The Moon" with exquisite arco work from McBride along with Corea's crisp playing.

Chick Corea has been remarkably productive in a variety of settings over several decades including these past few years. "Trilogy," as well as other recent recordings, displays his continued combination of intelligence, imagination, technique and passion. The brilliance certainly continues to shine here.

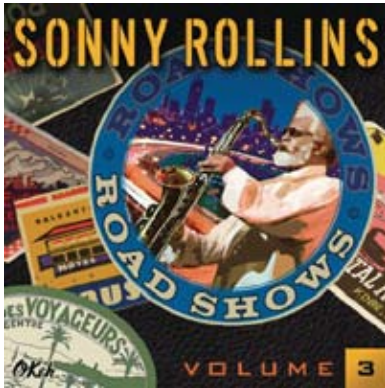
Ron Weinstock

LIVE BLUES ON THE HIGH SEAS



Read The Review
www.jazz-blues.com

click the Notable' button



SONNY ROLLINS
Road Shows volume 3
OKEH/SONY MASTERWORKS

The legendary Okeh label, which released some of the early sides by Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, has been recently revived by Sony Masterworks. Tenor sax titan Sonny Rollins, who just turned 84 on September 7, has worked out a deal with Okeh /Sony to issue his newest release for his company, Doxy Records. "Road Shows Volume 3" is the latest installment of live Sonny Rollins music, and a most welcome release it is.

This album features six songs, which were recorded over five concerts – one each in 2001, 2006, 2007 and 2009, and two from 2012. Four songs were recorded over three concerts in France, one in Japan, and one in St. Louis. In spite of the different venues and years, sound-wise the songs have been presented in such a way that they sound like they belong together, which is a good feat given the 11-year time span involved. Sonny has always disliked recording in a studio, and he and his cohorts are in fine form throughout this very live set as he delivers four originals and three standards.

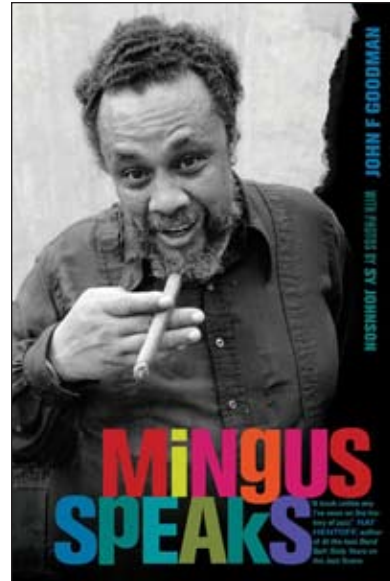
One of the standards, "Why Was I Born," Runs almost 24-minutes, and one of his own famous calypsos, "Don't Stop The Carnival," has the French crowd so fired up they are clapping in time throughout. Check out "Solo Sonny," which is just Rollins and his tenor running through quotes of a slew of familiar songs before the band joins in for just the closing. These are just a couple of the highlights in store.

While there are some small variations in personnel over the program, the constants are Clifton Anderson/ trombone and Bob Cranshaw/bass. Some of the others on various tracks are Stephen Scott/piano, Bobby Broom or Peter Bernstein/guitar and the drums are manned by either Kobie Watkins, Victor Lewis, Perry Wilson or Steve Jordan.

All Sonny Rollins fans should enjoy this set, and newer fans should as well. This is definitely an album to check out, and look into Volumes 1 & 2 while you are at it as well.

Bill Wahl

jazz-blues.com



MINGUS SPEAKS

John F Goodman

Photos by Sy Johnson

2013: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

Charles Mingus was one of the singular figures of jazz from the fifties through the seventies. As a bassist, composer, and bandleader, he was a formidable figure and person who left behind some of the most memorable compositions and recordings. He was thoughtful, intense, blunt, outspoken, humorous and, sometimes, volatile. John F Goodman was a writer for Playboy who did a number of jazz features for that publication who reviewed Mingus' 1972 comeback concert and got intimate with him and some of his musical associates.

Goodman interviewed Mingus a number of times and the conversations on a variety of topics are what this book is centered around, including the comeback concert, jazz and his own music, his dealings with musicians and club owners, his personal troubles, the publication of his book "Beneath the Underdog," his relationships with women and his viewpoints on issues of race. Goodman supplements these with interviews and commentary from Mingus' associates including arranger Sy Johnson (also an accomplished photographer whose photos illustrate the book), Sue Mingus, Teo Macero, George Wein, Max Gordon (Gordon's recollection of dealing with Mingus include when Mingus tore off the Village Vanguard's front door and punched Jimmy Knepper), Paul Jeffrey, Sue Mingus, and Bobby Jones.

We get discussions relating to the recording of artists and Mingus' preparations for major concerts and the chaos relating to some of them. For example Johnson notes that somewhat chaotic preparation for the comeback concert at Carnegie Hall, as Mingus would be continuing to revise the charts up until the performance. He was not a fan of the avant-garde artists like Ornette Coleman (and Bradford Marsalis

made similar comments) asserting they could not play straight stuff. He expressed a similar antipathy to fusion and rock music, being particularly outraged by the declining visibility of jazz on the radio. The interviews and commentary round out and provide context for the conversations presented.

"Mingus Speaks" is an invaluable addition to the literature on Charles Mingus as well as jazz literature in general. Goodman's assembly of this material helps flesh out this larger than life jazz legend and provides insights into his working methods and his life to supplement "Beneath the Underdog" and Gene Santoro's Mingus biography, "Myself When I Am Real."

Ron Weinstock



RUTHIE FOSTER

Promise of a Brand New Day
BLUE CORN MUSIC

Ruthie Foster is one of the most thrilling singers in American vernacular music today. A singer and songwriter with roots in gospel and classic R&B, she has also been embraced by roots and blues audiences for her stirring performances. For her most recent recording "Promise of a Brand New Day" (Blue Corn Music), she recruited Meshell Ndegeocello to produce it (as well as contribute bass). Ndegeocello observed that she "wanted this album to highlight Ruthie's voice and also communicate her vibe, give a fuller picture of her artistry and ability. She really trusted me with the music and I think we've made something that complements and holds its own alongside the power of her voice."

Ndegeocello played bass and enlisted her regular guitarist, Chris Bruce (Sheryl Crow), and keyboardist Jebin Bruni (Aimee Mann), plus drummer Ivan Edwards and backing vocalist Nayanna Holley. Foster did request two special guests: guitarist Doyle Bramhall II and singer Toshi Reagon. "Promise of a Brand New Day" includes seven songs written or co-written by Foster, most of them "songs with messages—because that's important to what I do," she explains. "Maybe that's from growing up with people like Mavis [Staples] and a lot of strong women who have come before me, who are great singers but also have a message." Furthermore the other songs themselves are also very strong in this same manner.

"Singing the Blues" is a strong R&B performance

about fine a new home and song and to get through it she keeps singing the blues which never gets old, while "Let Me Know" which features Doyle Bramhall II's guitar, has a gospel-inflected vocal set against a steady rocking groove which contrasts with the country soul feel of "My Kinda Lover."

"The Ghetto" was originally recorded by The Staples Singers with its evocative lyrics that bring inner city life alive while the late Willie King's "Second Coming" is a folk-blues protest song noting that they could kill Ruthie's body but not kill her mind, like they could kill John Brown but not his mind. With the simple acoustic guitar backing and spare organ accompaniment it is a powerful performance.

Other remarkable songs include a collaboration with Stax legend William Bell, "It Might Not Be Right," about gay love where she notes that it might not be right for some folk, but it is all right for this girl. Other songs include the ballad "Learning to Fly," with its memorable line "Everybody knows that a seed must die so a flower must grow," sung with the warmth and genuineness that marks Foster's singing throughout. After the moving a cappella "Brand New Day" comes "Complicated Love," a bittersweet song of dealing with difficult times in a relationship.

It has been said that some singers could make reciting the phone book sound good. Ruthie Foster makes one want to recite it with her. "Promise of a Brand New Day" is simply the latest marvelous chapter in her body of recordings.

Ron Weinstock



THE COOKERS

Time and Time Again
MOTEMA MUSIC

Of course it is simplistic to describe The Cookers as a band of Hard Bop All Stars, but certainly the music here has its roots in the over 250 years of aggregate experience its members have. With one exception, Donald Harrison replacing Craig Handy on alto sax, the group's line-up remains the same with Billy Harper on tenor sax, Dr. Eddie Henderson and David Weiss on trumpet; George Cables on piano, Cecil McBee on bass and Billy Hart on drums.

The members of The Cookers have experienced playing with some of the greatest jazz artists of the past half century, including Art Pepper, Dexter Gordon, Lee Morgan, Herbie Hancock, Charles Lloyd, Max Roach,

and Art Blakey.

Additionally, every member is a leader of their own right as well as being notable composers and players.

Motema Music has issued their fourth CD, "Time and Time Again," and the album brings forth some vintage compositions such as Billy Harper's "Sir Galahad," which was from his 1973 debut album "Capra Black," while Cecil McBee contributes two new compositions. Others are from the pens of Cables, Weiss and Hart for a program of music whose vitality is convincing proof that the band's name is deserved on the basis of the nine performances heard here

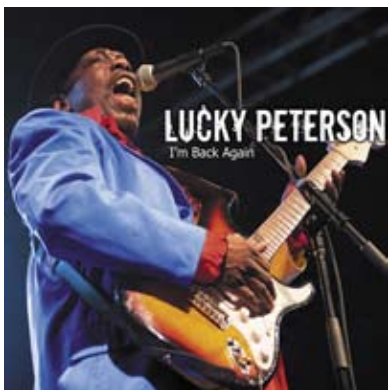
The tone is set with the opening "Sir Galahad," which opens with some very robust playing from Hart, followed by Weiss, Harrison and Cables. McBee's original blues "Slippin' and Slidin'" provides a chance for the members to show the continual relevance of the blues with Harper, Weiss and McBee showcased with fine work.

Cables' "Double Or Nothing" is another burner with Harrison and Weiss shining before Hart explodes in his solo. It is followed by Cables' tribute to the late Mulgrew Miller, "Farewell Mulgrew" with Weiss' providing the horns arrangement whose ensemble playing sets the atmosphere for Cables' playing being stately and moving. Harper again displays just how riveting a tenor saxophonist he is on Weiss' "Three Fall," followed by the composer's hot trumpet and terrific support from the rhythm section.

The title track, a Harper original, is built upon a bass ostinato from McBee and includes more stirring playing from Harper, Henderson and Cables along with the superb rhythm section.

The mix of strong compositions, solid ensemble playing and the superb rhythm section, along with the mix of technical mastery, passion, imagination and inventiveness make "Time and Time Again" another outstanding recording by The Cookers.

Ron Weinstock



LUCKY PETERSON

I'm Back Again

BLUES BOULEVARD DVD/CD SET

Blues Boulevard's new Lucky Peterson album "I'm Back" is a release of the music from the excellent DVD/CD set on BlackbirdMusic/ Soulfood by The Lucky Peterson Band Featuring Tamara Peterson "Live At The

55 Arts Club." The eleven performances on this release are available on the DVDs and the CDs of the earlier set, but are limited to those that featured Lucky, and not the others which featured Tamara. Lucky's backing band included Shawn Kellerman on guitar, Tim Waites on bass and Raul Valdes on drums. It is a hard-rocking, tight band that did a fine job supporting Lucky (heard on organ as well as guitar).

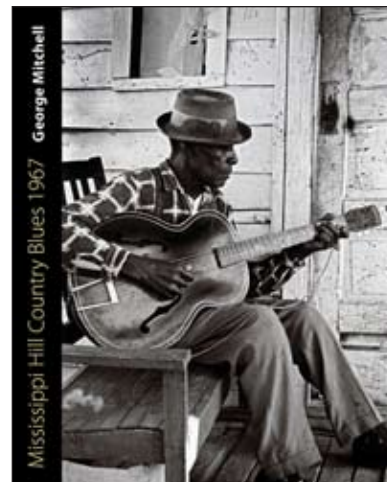
I wrote, reviewing the DVD/CD set, "The material ranges from Lucky's reworking of blues classics such as "You Shook Me," "I'm Ready," and "Who's Been Talking," along with Johnny 'Guitar' Watson's "Ta' Ta' You." He takes out the slide for "Dust My Broom," while getting really greasy on the B-3 on "I'm Back Again," as well as Rico McFarland's "Giving Me The Blues."

Listening to these performances again, my views haven't changed.

Those having "Live At The 55 Arts Club" will have no reason to buy this fine reissue, but others may want to get this strong sampling of Lucky Peterson (and his excellent band) today.

Ron Weinstock

book



GEORGE MITCHELL

Mississippi Hill Country Blues 1967 UNIVERSITY PRESS OF MISSISSIPPI

In the Summer of 1967, George Mitchell made a trip to Mississippi looking for unrecorded blues singers. The trip was an historic one that indicated that there were a number of down home blues artists of considerable talent still performing older styles of blues at a very high level.

These were not the first recordings Mitchell had made, but in providing the initial recordings of R.L. Burnside as well as rediscovering Joe Calicott, who had recorded over 45 years earlier, Mitchell's recordings were revelatory. Arhoolie issued two albums from these recordings under the title of "Mississippi Delta Blues," although the recordings of R.L. Burnside and others might be better known as Mississippi Hill Country Blues, the rubric the music of Burnside, Junior Kimbrough, Jesse Mae Hemphill and others are known today. The

trip also was the source for Mitchell's book "Blow My Blues Away."

In addition to documenting the music, through his camera Mitchell photographed these performers at home and with members of their family and community. The University Press of Mississippi has just published a terrific new book by Mitchell, "Mississippi Hill Country Blues 1967," which reproduces many wonderful photographs that Mitchell took along with his recollections from that trip and interviews with a number of the performers he met, including Mississippi Fred McDowell, Rosa Lee Hill and Otha Turner.

The pictures and words help us enter a world of house parties and picnics as we can imagine Johnny Woods on harmonica joining with Mississippi Fred McDowell, and, as Mitchell recalls, one is amazed by the fact they had not seen each other in 8 years at that time.

Then there is his story of recording Calicott, who had made a few 78s with Garfield Acres, and one under his own name and a trip to one of the Hill Country picnics in a chapter titled "Ain't No Picnic If You Ain't Got No Drums." We see R.L. Burnside playing guitar with a son or sons standing behind him. There are images of Joe Calicott playing his guitar on a porch and Fred McDowell reaching over Otha Turner to play the guitar several pictures of Rosa Lee Hill show the joy she had despite her poverty.

An interview with Otha Turner provides a backdrop on the Fife and Drum band traditions, but Turner himself turns out to be a fair guitarist. Turner is not the only one representative of this tradition as several images are of Napoleon Strickland who was fairly renown as a fife player.

There are interviews with Jesse Mae Hemphill (Brooks), Rosa Lee Hill and Ada Mae Anderson, all of who are related to the great Sid Hemphill, who Alan Lomax recorded for the Library of Congress in the early 1940s. In addition to providing insight to their lives and the conditions they lived under, they also provided information on this great Hill Country musician.

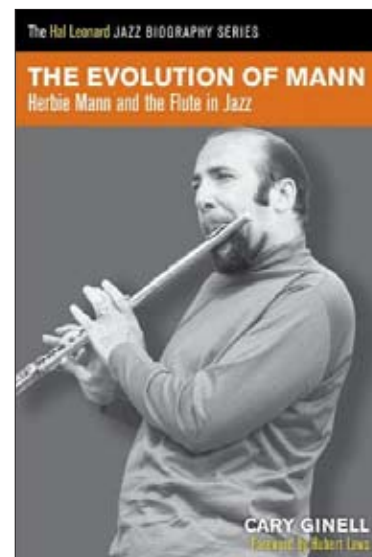
Jesse Mae Hemphill is the best known of the three with her marvelous recordings, but like Mitchell himself, one is particularly taken with Rosa Lee Hill who, as Mitchell says, could stand as an inspiration for all. Being as poor as anyone could be and being in the middle of nowhere... "That someone that poor could be that spirited and that full of life. ..." Mitchell describes her as one of his favorite people and "Mississippi Hill Country Blues 1967" is dedicated to her.

There are brief biographies presented after the main body of this book, which includes brief descriptions of what happened to the subjects after 1967 and a brief consideration of the legacy of these artists. Even if viewed solely as a coffee table book of blues photography, this book would certainly be easy to recommend.

Inclusion of Mitchell's recollections and interviews which help us understand the world of these performers, make this one of those books that is essential for blues lovers.

Ron Weinstock

book



THE EVOLUTION OF MANN: HERBIE MANN AND THE FLUTE IN JAZZ

Cary Ginell

2014: HAL LEONARD BOOKS

Cary Ginell's "The Evolution of Mann: Herbie Mann and the Flute In Jazz" is the latest in the Hal Leonard Jazz Biography series, joining Ginell's previous biographies of Cannonball Adderley and Billy Eckstine in this series. It shares some of the same qualities with Ginell's prior books with its readable and accessible account of the subject's career and music. This is not an academic biography with detailed footnotes and detailed musicological analysis of Herbie Mann's music. There are no footnotes or end notes, but Ginell lists his sources including books, periodicals and his interviews with Mann and associates. A selected discography is also provided.

Ginell here, like his prior jazz biographies, does a clear and concise overview of Mann's life and musical career. I am going to summarize mann's life, but Ginell provides the details as well as his musical biography. Herbie Mann was the first jazz artist to specialize on the flute (of course there were jazz flautists before him) and Ginell reconstructs the musical journey from a saxophonist to a flautist, a journey that included an album with Frank Wess.

Herbie Mann was a fascinating individual who wanted to be to the flute what Benny Goodman was to the clarinet, yet later in his life he would observe he was the Kenny G of the Seventies. He was a musician and leader who was an innovator and led groups that included musicians that themselves would become significant and innovative players. He explored currents of what is today known as world music

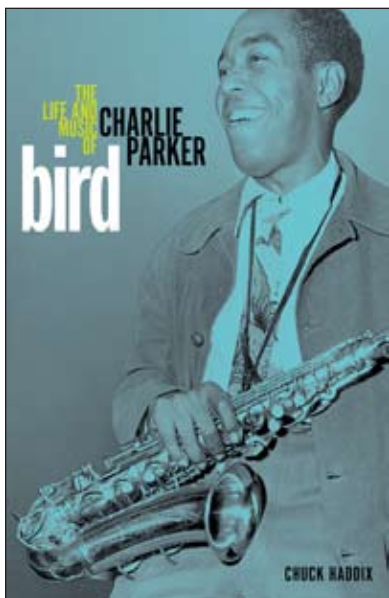
Mann was the first American jazz artist to go to Brazil and record bossa nova with Brazilian artists, yet his pioneering role is forgotten because the Charlie Byrd-Stan Getz collaboration was issued earlier because his record company help up his release. he would extended

works incorporating African and other elements in his music. He exhibited a musical curiosity and after a couple years would follow a new musical path. Some of these led to considerable commercial success while increasingly being scorned by critics. He would be selected numerous times by DownBeat readers on the flute, while receiving far less votes from the DownBeat critic's poll.

Ginell traces Mann's recordings, describes the music and observes both the critical reaction as well as the commercial outcome. He is sympathetic to Mann's body of recordings, but is critical of those that merit it. To this reader, he has provided a nuanced and balanced examination of Herbie Mann's musical legacy, and has had me turn my ear to some of Mann's recorded legacy. This is another welcome addition to the jazz literature.

Ron Weinstock

book



BIRD: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF CHARLIE PARKER

Chuck Haddix

2013: UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS

Chuck Haddix, coauthor of "Kansas City Jazz: From Ragtime to Bebop" has authored a new Charlie Parker biography, "Bird: The Life and Music of Charlie Parker" that is part of the University of Illinois Press Music in American Life. It was published at the same time as Stanley Crouch's "K.C. Lightning," the first of Crouch's two-volume biography of Parker to which it will inevitably be compared.

I was provided a prepublication e-file of the manuscript and have not seen the actual published book, but I have little reason to believe that there were significant changes from what I read. My pre-publication draft had the text but lacked the illustrations as well as the books index, but did include the endnotes and the author's sources. It should be known that Crouch's book is based on a variety

of interviews he conducted in contrast to Haddix who has certainly combed through a wide variety of newspapers, published interviews and the like. But while Haddix relies on Anita Dixon's interview with Parker's first wife, Rebecca Ruffin, Crouch interviewed her extensively as well as a number of individuals that were part and parcel of the Kansas City scene Parker was part of such as Jo Jones, the legendary Count Basie drummer and among the sources for uncovering the influence of saxophonist Chu Berry on Parker.

Haddix's biography does a good, concise job of providing much of the essential facts of Parker's life, much of which was new to this reader (I purchased Crouch's book after I had finished this). His family background is presented including his being born in Kansas City, Kansas before moving across state lines, the split-up of his parents, his marriage to Rebecca Ruffins, his apprenticeship into the musical life and his early musical experiences including recounting the legendary jam session when Jo Jones stopped his playing by tossing a cymbal. His apprenticeship included playing in the Ozarks and a wintertime auto accident that led to some very severe injuries. According to Haddix (and based on Anita Dixon's interview), Parker was introduced to heroin after this accident as a painkiller. Crouch differs on this, stating that it was morphine that he was introduced to at this time and heroin was later.

Chronicling Bird's musical life as well as his family situation (including the explosive break-up of his marriage to Rebecca), he does provide a dry, factual biography of his life. And that is the focus which the publicity for this biography touches on. "This portrait reveals the troubled man behind the music, illustrating how his addictions and struggles with mental health affected his life and career." If other biographies focus on the music, Haddix never makes the music come alive. He may tell us the facts of the "Lover Man" recording for Dial and his subsequent breakdown or how the legendary concerts in Montreal and Toronto took place, and he does go into detail some of the other significant concerts and one-nighters such as the legendary performance at Chicago's Pershing Ballroom with the Freeman Brothers and others.

The strength of this book is its assemblage of a lot of new facts and well known ones to provide the contours of Parker's life. Its failure to more fully deal with Parker's music however qualifies the recommendation I have for this very useful volume.

Ron Weinstock

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

jazz-blues.com



FRED ASTAIRE

The Early Years At RKO

SONY MASTERWORKS

Sony Masterworks, in conjunction with Turner Classic Movies, has issued a double CD by the legendary Fred Astaire "The Early Years At RKO."

Astaire was the star of the month on Turner Classic Movies for December 2013 and is known for the classic movies he starred in along with Ginger Rogers for RKO including "Top Hat," "Swing Time" and "Shall We Dance."

Backed by orchestras led by the esteemed conductors Leo Reisman, Ray Noble, and Astaire's friend Johnny Green, Astaire introduced the world to many of the cornerstones of what we call today "The American Songbook."

Among the songs heard here, written some of American's greatest songwriters and composers including Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern and George and Ira Gershwin, are "Night And Day," "Cheek To Cheek," "The Way You Look Tonight," "They All Laughed," "They Can't Take That Away From Me" and "Nice Work If You Can Get It."

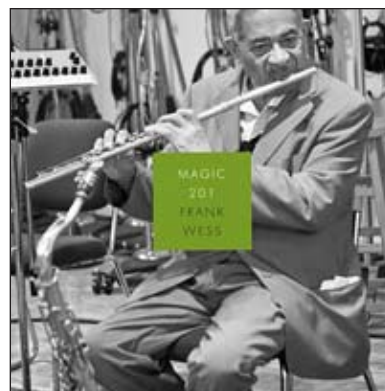
In his liner notes, Michael Feinstein observes that Astaire is "considered by many to be the most sublime popular singer and dancer of any generation." These were recorded around the time of the films these appeared in and Astaire's vocals seem as effortless as his stunning dancing, coveting a fair amount of his sophisticated charm.

The orchestrations are sublime with very skillful use of strings along with some muted trumpet obligatos, some doses of stride piano and some showcase his dancing (for example "Let Yourself Go").

As Michael Feinstein notes, Fred Astaire was a favorite singer for songwriters such as Berlin and Gershwin, although he hated his voice. Yet listening to the controlled exuberance as he sings about going out on the town in "Top Hat, White Tie and Tails," as well as the humor of sailors who looked to see the world, but instead sings that "We Saw the Sea."

Fred Astaire's performances on "The Early Years At RKO" still enchant over 75 years after when they first were recorded, and help us realize that even apart from his movies, he was a superb interpreter of songs.

Ron Weinstock



FRANK WESS

Magic 201

IPO RECORDINGS

Jazz master, Saxophonist and flutist Frank Wess, was one of a number of jazz giants who passed away in 2013. From the same sessions that produced the marvelous "Magic 101" comes the follow-up "Magic 201" on IPO Recordings. The Washington DC native came to general notice during his tenure with Count Basie, but was one of the earliest jazz players to make a strong impression playing flute in addition to the tenor saxophone. Returning from the prior album are pianist Kenny Barron and drummer Winard Harper. On this recording they are joined by guitarist Russell Malone and bassist Rufus Reid for more ballads and blues.

As on the prior recording Wess exhibits a warmth and tenderness in his playing that evokes the other great tenor balladeers, most notably Ben Webster. Things get off to a terrific start on "It Could Happen To You" with Barron taking a lovely solo along with Reid while Harper keeps the pulse steady. "A Cottage For Sale" opens as a duet with Malone before the full band joins in and Malone's guitar solo (followed by Barron) complements Wess' own lovely feathery playing. Sir Roland Hanna's "After Paris" has more romanticism with nice playing by Barron under Wess' sax, which is followed by Wess on flute for a lovely solo rendition of the Bergman and Legrand classic "The Summer Knows."

Other musical delights include the duet with Barron on "Embraceable You," with Barron's playing matching Wess for its tuneful joy. As Chris Vandercook observes in the notes, "On ballads, especially, the lyrics hover just out of reach; if Frank Wess plays a song you know, you'll hear every word."

Malone kicks off Wess' gently rocking "Blues For Ruby," with some single note runs and even quotes Billy Butler's classic 'Honky Tonk' solo before Wess takes us into the late hours with some down home cooking, followed by a nice Malone solo and some restrained playing from Barron. Wess' ballad, "If You Can't Call, Don't Come," also conveys a morose, late night feel.

The recording closes with a rendition of the Chaplin-Cahn standard, "If It's The Last Thing I Do," that starts as a brief duet with Reid before the whole band joins in. Reid takes a solo on this one with Malone and Barron lightly comping in support with the leader taking this

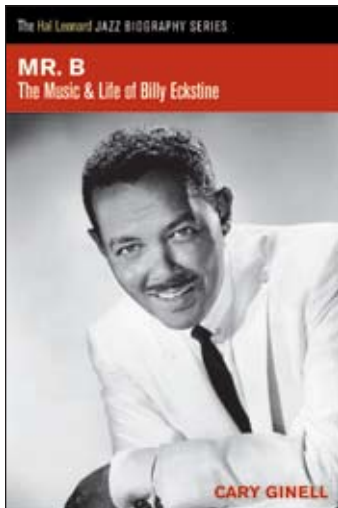
recording out with more marvelous sax.

This additional installment of the late Frank Wess' final recording session is a reminder of the void his passing has left us. One will rarely hear an album of blues and ballads played today with the feeling, warmth and tone that Frank Wess played with. Frank Wess left us with musical magic.

This is being released on February 11, 2014.

Ron Weinstock

book



MR. B.: THE MUSIC AND LIFE OF BILLY ECKSTINE

by Cary Ginell

2013: HAL LEONARD BOOKS

Cary Ginell, author of a recent biography of Cannonball Adderly, has a new book as part of the Hal Leonard Jazz Biography Series, **Mr. B.: The Music and Life of Billy Eckstine**. Like his biography of Adderly, this is intended to be a concise and accessible biography. I found this, like the Adderly book, a brisk and well done read. In researching Eckstine's life, Ginell mined print source sews reports, interviews and like from like the Pittsburgh Courier, DownBeat, Metronome and other sources along with interviews with those that knew him well. Ginell provides a chronicle of Mr. B's life from growing up in Pittsburgh, going to school, his early days as a performer, changing the spelling of his last name from Eckstein to Eckstine, joining the Earl Hines Orchestra and later after that band disbanded his formation of the legendary bebop big band, his days as one of America's most popular singers and more.

His lengthy recording career is recounted as well from the big band days to his substantial legacy as a singer of classic pop songs. Ginell recounts his successes and triumphs as well as frustrations and the obstacles of racism that limited and frustrated some of his ambitions. It was ironic that with Earl Hines he had two major hits, *Jelly, Jelly* and *Stormy Monday Blues* (a very different song than the T-Bone Walker song), as he generally resisted singing blues, in great part because record companies at the time generally limited most Black recording and artists to blues.

Ginell details his recording career and goes in detail about his time with Savoy, with whom his big band made so many legendary recordings, and then his signing with MGM. He had signed with MGM as a single with the hope of also having a career in films, but a factor that the Studios provided a lack of suitable (that is non-stereotypical) roles for Blacks led to his hopes and ambitions being dashed. Racism was also a factor in the decline of his status as one of America's leading popular vocalists who at a time had a status on the level of Frank Sinatra.

Ginell recounts the unintended consequence of the 1950 publication in **Life Magazine** of a pictorial on Eckstine that included an innocent looking picture (included in the pictures and illustrations incorporated in this biography) of Mr. B with admiring white teenage girls after a show. The reaction to this included a letter from a Georgian saying he was disgusted with **Life** for printing these pictures, and that was a printable response. As Ginell observes, this photo with an indication of racial tolerance was much "too early to do anything but alienate the still regressive and prejudiced American society." It did not open doors and in fact shut doors for Eckstine with Ginell quoting Tony Bennett and Dr. Billy Taylor.

Mr. B continued to be a significant recording artist and performing through the fifties and sixties and Ginell traces his sessions for MGM, and then Mercury and Roulette with whom he made some of his greatest recordings. And he went from headlining the Paramount in New York in the forties to becoming a major attraction on the night club circuit such as New York's Copacabana and Las Vegas as well as the Catskills and Pocono Mountains. His active involvement with the Civil Rights Movement is also recounted.

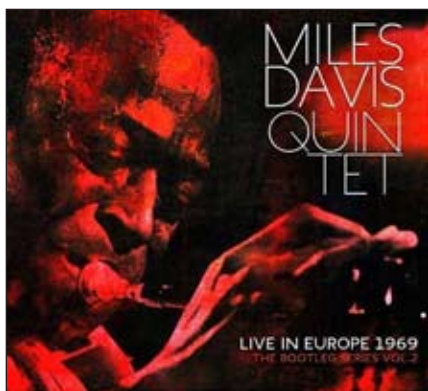
Ginell also details Eckstine's various aspects of his domestic life, including his divorces. His children's recollections of growing up with his as their dad also provide perspective on his life. He had some financial issues including apparently some tax debts although Ginell does not explain the reason underlying these debts. The IRS did seize and sell property to pay off a quarter million dollar debt in 1986.

Billy Eckstine was a trailblazer as well as a great artist. Ginell observes that he was "popular music's first romantic African American icon," his legacy was obscured because while he had many hits, he lacked an iconic recording like Sinatra's *My Way* or Bing Crosby's *White Christmas*. He made his mark in live performances, of which few were documented on a recording and a substantial body of his recording career remains un-reissued. Be he deserves better. He struggled to be treated as the equal of white entertainers, which "showed a resiliency, sense of purpose and defiance that is as essential to the American experience as the efforts of Jackie Robinson, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. The possessor of one of the most glorious voices in history does not deserve his anonymity." 2014 will be the centennial of his birth and it is time to reassess his talent and career "as one of the most important and essential bodies of work of the twentieth century." Gary Ginell's **Mr. B.: The Music and Life of Billy Eckstine**, makes a strong case for this re-assessment and is an important addition to jazz literature.

Ron Weinstock

2013 GIFT GUIDE

While our annual Gift Guide appears every year at this time, the gift ideas covered are in no way just to be thought of as holiday gifts only. Obviously, these items would be a good gift idea for any occasion year-round, as well as a gift for yourself! We do not include many, if any at all, single CDs in the guide. Most everything contained will be multiple CD sets, DVDs, CD/DVD sets, books and the like. Of course, you can always look through our back issues to see what came out in 2013 (and prior years), but none of us would want to attempt to decide which CDs would be a fitting addition to this guide.



MILES DAVIS QUINTET **Live In Europe 1969** **The Bootleg Series Vol. 2** **COLUMBIA/LEGACY**

The transition from the “classic” Miles of the 60s to the “electric” Miles of the 70s, chronicled in part on the first “Bootleg” volume, continues on this new four disc (3 CD/1 DVD) set. Replacing the Herbie Hancock / Ron Carter / Tony Williams rhythm section that played alongside Miles and saxophonist Wayne Shorter on the 1965-68 sessions that comprised Volume One is the high energy grouping of Chick Corea, Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette. These players would, of course, figure largely in Miles’ amplified lineups yet to come and Corea’s emphasis here on electric piano, in particular, strongly hints at Miles’ forthcoming transition.

The set lists from the three European concerts chronicled here, in retrospect, further reveal this transitory period as compositions that would appear on future sessions: “Bitches Brew”, “It’s About That Time”, “Miles Runs The Voodoo Down” coexist with established pieces such as “Directions”, “Milestones” and “Footprints”.

The “free” nature of Shorter’s play on Volume One is resumed here, as he finds kindred company in this young, fiery natured rhythm section and Corea appears to take great advantage of the latitude the bandleader offers. And Miles, as expected, always defines the atmosphere, regardless of his latitudinal largesse. Volume Two makes for a valuable time capsule in the journey of jazz’s true masters.

Duane Verh

CATFISH & COTTON: DRIVING DOWN THE BLUES HIGHWAY

Luc & Marc Bohms

184 PAGES • SELF PUBLISHED • 2012

“Catfish & Cotton: Driving Down The Blues Highway” by brothers Luc & Marc Bohms is the self-published, wonderfully illustrated account of their journey to the heart of the delta blues culture through their experiences visiting Delta landmarks and their interviewing artists, merchants, scholars and others involved in the Delta Blues scene today.

The Bohms brothers, both blues musicians from Belgium, made this Trans-Atlantic trek to the area that is the heart of the music that has so engrossed them as they (among other things) spent two days in Clarksdale; went to Hopson’s Plantation where Jon Gindick conducts a harmonica camp; visited the grave of Sonny Boy Williamson II; stayed at the Riverside Hotel; spent nights at the juke joint, “Red’s Lounge”; visited the Delta Blues Museum and Cat Head and had a beer at the Ground Zero Club; Helena, Arkansas; Memphis and Beale Street; Oxford, Mississippi; Leland Mississippi; and Avalon Mississippi.

The brothers interviewed Jon Gindick, who has become well known for his harmonica instructional material to describe the camp he holds; Frank ‘Rat’ Ratliff, owner of the Riverside Hotel which was a hospital prior to becoming a hotel; Roger Stolle, who operates Cat Head, a store of folk art as well as a record label, Broke & Hungry; Heidi Hockenauer, MC of the Delta Family Gospel Festival held in Helena; Blind Mississippi Morris, blues harmonica player and singer; Laurie Montalnar, staff member of the Memphis Rock’n’Soul Museum; ‘Sunshine’ Sonny Payne, longtime host of the King Biscuit Time Radio Show; Cristen Craven Barnard, painter and mural artist; Adam Gussow, harmonica player and educator; Bill Abel, guitar builder and player; Randy Magee of the Highway 61 Museum; Eddie Cusic, Delta blues musician; Super Chikan, blues musician and others.

I was particularly pleased to see the interview of Cusic, who I myself interviewed in 1991 when I saw him at the Smithsonian FolkLife Festival and was such a strong performer of classic Delta blues. This book is

wonderfully illustrated by the brothers' photography of various blues landmarks, persons and some performance shops. Illustrations and inserts give information on towns and cities, landmarks including Hopson's Plantation; the Riverside Hotel, Cherry Street in Helena; Sonny Boy Williamson II's grave; the Homemade Jamz Band and more.

I was particularly moved by pictures of Pat Thomas, including one of him holding a guitar and singing while sitting in front of the grave of his father, James 'Son' Thomas. And they weave their narrative in which the interviews and other materials are placed.

The layout of all this material is quite attractive and reading is enhanced by the layout and use of 4-column text where text is printed. It will be valuable as a guidebook for places one might wish to visit when one travels in the Delta as well as a document of the music today and the community in which it persists and thrives in. It is a marvelous book that will appeal to anybody with an interest in the blues and the land from which it sprung.

I became aware of this book from participation in The Real Blues Forum, a Facebook Group in which Marc participates. The link for this book is www.catfish-and-cotton.com, which will take you the brothers store on lulu.com, the website that allows books to be self-published.

The brother's store link is <http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/infoatcatfishandcottondotcom> and can choose from a standard Black and White Edition, or the more expensive Deluxe Edition, which is published in color. It is a 184 page, perfect bound book, 9 inches wide by 7 inches tall.

Ron Weinstock



THE LUCKY PETERSON BAND

FEAT. TAMARA PETERSON

Live At The 55 Arts Club Berlin
SOULFOOD 3 DVD/ 2 CD SET

Lucky Peterson, if not for problems most likely arising from drug usage, would be among the leading acts in the blues and funk world. Despite producing a number of albums for Verve/Gitanes and Blue Thumb that are among the finest contemporary blues (as opposed to blues-rock) recordings of the past couple decades, his star has not burned as brightly as his talent may have warranted in the United States. Reports

are that he apparently has put his house in order with the help of his wife Tamara and is busy performing again.

A real pleasant surprise is this new 5 disc set on BlackbirdMusic/Soulfood by The Lucky Peterson Band Feat. Tamara Peterson "Live At The 55 Arts Club." Recorded at the Berlin, Germany venue, this is a 3 DVD/ 2 CD package with 2 DVDs capturing Lucky's 2 full sets with Tamara joining midway through the performances with a third DVD providing guitarist Shawn Kellerman's opening numbers for the two sets along with some behind the scenes of Lucky and band, a brief clip of a song rehearsal and an interview with Lucky and Tamara. The music of the 2 DVDs of Lucky and Tamara in performance is also on the two CDs in this set.

Lucky's Band includes the afore-mentioned Shawn Kellerman on guitar, Tim Waites on bass and Raul Valdes on drums. It's a hard-rocking, tight band which does a terrific job backing Lucky and Tamara, with Lucky playing both the Hammond B-3 and some guitar, with Kellerman, when featured on guitar, adding his own blistering attack. Lucky is in good voice and his wife Tamara (who went to High School in Houston with Roy Hargrove, Erykah Badu and Norah Jones) is a terrific singer.

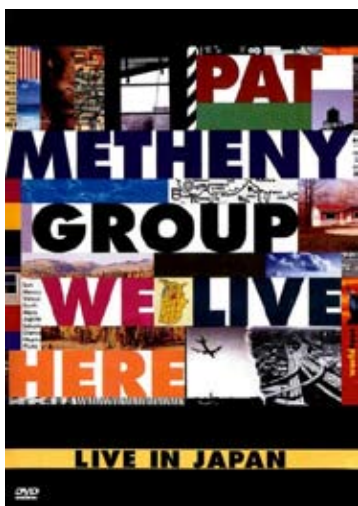
The material ranges from Lucky's reworking of blues classics such as "You Shook Me," "I'm Ready" and "Who's Been Talking," along with Johnny 'Guitar' Watson's "Ta' Ta' You." He takes out the slide for "Dust My Broom," while getting really greasy on the B-3 on "I'm Back Again," as well as Rico McFarland's "Giving me The Blues." Tamara shows how expressive a singer she is on the cover of Prince's "Kiss," along with originals like "I Don't Like You But I Love You" and "Last Night You Left." She is a powerful, yet nuanced singer who certainly complements Lucky.

I found the video nicely done and capturing the performing personalities of Lucky and his band quite well. I was amused to see how fierce Kellerman appears backing lucky as I knew the Canadian Kellerman when he was playing with harmonica player, Jordan Patterson in the Washington DC area in the nineties. He has spent time with Bobby Rush as well and his fiery playing may be in the rock vein at times, but he never gets boring or overbearing.

In the bonus disc Lucky talks about how he thinks that this particular group may be the one to take him to the next level. Based on the performances here on "Live At The 55 Arts Club" and given the stability that Tamara and their faith have apparently given him, one should not be surprised if he doesn't take it to the next level. There is some terrific music to be seen and heard here.

Ron Weinstock

jazz-blues.com



PAT METHENY GROUP
We Live Here: Live In Japan
 EAGLE VISION DVD

Eagle Vision has just released a Pat Metheny Group DVD, which actually dates back to the mid 90s. Titled "We Live Here: Live in Japan," this video was originally released on Geffen Records and has been out-of-print for some time now. So I am going to do something a bit different here, and rerun a review I did in 1995 of the CD studio recording "We Live Here," and then I'll be back to give some insight into the DVD version.

'The latest offering from the Pat Metheny Group might be just what many of their longtime fans are hoping for. Pat's previous Geffen album, "Secret Story," was certainly a first class effort. It was, however, a major production, with numerous guests appearing on the various tracks. This disc reverts back to the "group" focus, and also again includes pianist Lyle Mays, who was missing from "Secret Story" and the live tour supporting it.

'While I feared that the music would be stuck in the almost "new age" vein of some of the Metheny's recent efforts, this is probably the most varied and enjoyable album we've heard from him in some time. Except for Mays' Episode D'Azur, all the compositions were co-written by Metheny And Mays. Lyle's writing and playing styles are both important and necessary ingredients for the bright, extremely uplifting sound associated with The Pat Metheny Group dating way back to their first ECM albums in the late Seventies. Also on hand are bassist Steve Rodby, who joined the group around 1981 and drummer Paul Wertico, who was added a couple of years later. More recent additions are David Blamires/vocals, Mark Ledford/vocals, whistling, flugelhorn and trumpet and Luis Conte/percussion.

'This album may often remind you more of the ECM sides than their previous Geffen output. The dreamlike "To The End Of The World," in fact, is very reminiscent stylistically of "Are You Going With Me?" from that era. Metheny has been incorporating wordless vocals into his music for over a decade now, and there's no change here in that respect. But, as the album goes on, it becomes more jazzy in nature and the vocals almost disappear - most notably "Episode D'Azur," "Red Sky" and "Stranger In

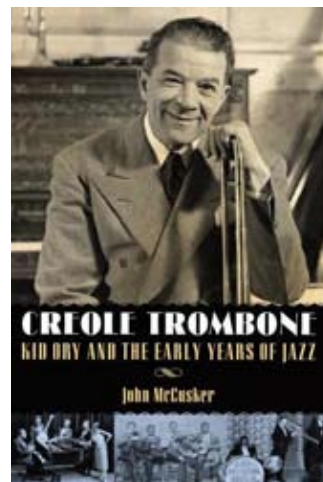
Town." On the album's early tunes, you'll hear some quite successful blends of acoustic and programmed drumming in tandem. Metheny is heard on both straight guitar and guitar synthesizers throughout. In short, this is a top shelf album from the Pat Metheny Group. It should be noted that its success is due not only to the marvelous playing by the band's members, but also to the diversity which is presented in a gradual fashion which is totally congruous with most every listener's senses.'

OK - I am back. Got a chance there to smoke a cigar! I remember seeing this concert in the VHS version back when Geffen released it. I remember it being very well done back then, and it looks just fine some 20 years later. The band members are the same as in the old CD review above.

The music is excellent throughout, as is the sound quality. The video looks quite good, and although the heavy blue and red lighting on much of it was probably better suited years ago - let's face it - this was done years ago - many years ago. I do remember one complaint I had on the previous viewing that bugged the hell out of me. There were interviews between the songs that destroyed the concert atmosphere. But this new DVD version has a way around it and I love it - right at the beginning you have the option to play "music selections only."

As with every Metheny concert I have ever been to, only a handful of the songs from their most recent album are included as they have such a vast repertoire to cover. In addition to the best 5 or 6 songs from the album, "We Live Here," they cover such previous goodies as "Have You Heard," "First Circle" and "This Is Not America" among the 13 selections. This is a fine DVD and it is great to have a lost gem from the past resurface again

Bill Wahl



**CREOLE TROMBONE: KID ORY AND
 THE EARLY YEARS OF JAZZ**

John McCusker
 UNIVERSITY PRESS OF MISSISSIPPI
 2012: JACKSON MS

Ed 'Kid' Ory was a pioneering New Orleans musician who was associated with some of the most important artists of the new jazz music of the early part

of the 20th Century, including Buddy Bolden, King Oliver and Louis Armstrong. Leading the Creole Jazz Band in California he made one of the earliest (if not earliest) recordings by a Creole New Orleans Jazz Band. He was an important component of some of Louis Armstrong's most important small group recordings of the twenties, and also some of King Oliver's Chicago sessions.

In writing Ory's story, McCusker was given access to Ory's unpublished autobiography that was narrated in 1950 to Barbara GaNung, at the time his mistress and later his wife. This is combined with his research into statistical, sacramental and public records. He weaves his story in the context of a Creole, born 25 miles upriver from New Orleans, at a time when the racist southern white assault on the rights of non-whites occurred. Louisiana was the state whose law requiring separate accommodations was upheld in the infamous case of "Plessy v Ferguson."

McCusker traces Ory's early musical experiences growing up in a world where a racist caste system was imposed and all persons of color were disenfranchised. Ory first acquired a banjo when he was 14, and as a child became familiar with Creole folk songs, which he would perform later in his life. Brass bands of St. John Parish, where he grew up, piqued Ory's curiosity and itinerant music teachers would come from New Orleans and offer musical instruction, with a James Brown Humphrey (father of grandsons Willie and Percy themselves noted jazzmen). Humphrey led the Onward Brass Band in LaPlace, and taught children and young adults on the plantations and remote communities. Humphrey would also rehearse bands from the students he including the Pickwick Brass Band that Ory played in. McCusker's narrative also discusses the traveling musicians and bands and the social functions that music would be heard at.

Ory displayed an entrepreneurial spirit in addition to a musical one. He acquired a beat up valve trombone and later changed to the more modern slide trombone. Moving to New Orleans, he met Buddy Bolden, who left a definite impression on Ory. Bolden's musical innovation, as detailed by McCusker, was playing the blues for dances and such songs as "Make Me a Pallet On the Floor" and "Funky Butt" were sensations. While not able to accept Bolden's offer to play trombone, but watching Bolden play, as well as the competing John Robichaux, he was able to have his own idea on how a band might sound.

After Bolden's passing, Ory started leading bands in St. John Parish, sometimes playing in New Orleans. In 1910 he finally moved to New Orleans, first living with family members. Here Ory and his band would play at the dance halls, country dances and picnics, and would enter cutting contests with other bands (such as that of Freddie Keppard) and an association with other individuals who would become major figures in early jazz such as Johnny Dodds, and he had an early encounter with young Louis Armstrong who would sit in with Ory's Band at a picnic. Later

the arrival of King Oliver (replacing Mutt Carey) would solidify Ory's Band as the leading band in New Orleans and they would become known as the Ory-Oliver Band. When Oliver left for Chicago, Armstrong replaced him.

Not simply a successful bandleader and musician, Ory was astute as a businessman and successful in sponsoring dances. When a former benefactor started sponsoring dances with him, Ory became dissatisfied with their deal and started sponsoring dances on his own. This led to police raids and probable threats on his life that led him to leave for California in August 1919 where he would be until 1925. Armstrong and Dodds were supposed to have joined Ory, but they didn't so some of his former band members were recruited. His band became a leading band in Los Angeles and he met the Spike Brothers, with whom, in 1922, he would make some of the earliest jazz recordings by African-American musicians, including the original recording of "Ory's Creole Trombone," which later would be recorded by Louis Armstrong. McCusker spends considerable space discussing the session, its importance and the music. These recordings are available on, "Cabaret Echoes: New Orleans Jazzers at Work, 1918-1927" on the Off the Record label.

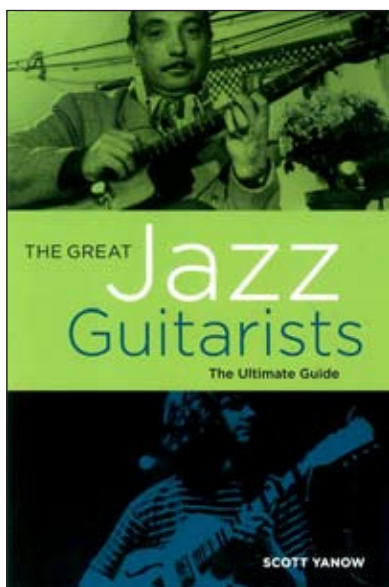
Musically things cooled off, so in 1925 Ory moved to Chicago, settling in the Windy City and becoming a sideman on some of the most famous recordings of the twenties, starting with Louis Armstrong's Hot Five recordings. Ory's recollections of making the recordings are included along with McCusker's discussion of some of the recordings and Ory's role on them. Ory would join and tour with King Oliver's The Dixie Syncopators until 1927. McCusker also details Ory's relationship with Jelly Roll Morton, with whom Ory recorded as a member of the Red Hot Peppers for some important recordings such as "Black Bottom Stomp," but did not participate on later Morton recordings. He also recorded in Chicago with Luis Russell, Irene Scruggs and Butterbeans and Susie with his final recordings of the 1920s being with Johnny Dodds' Chicago Footwarmers.

Before the end of the decade, he followed his wife back to California. He would struggle playing music until in 1933 at the age of 46 he quit and took a job as a janitor with the Santa Fe Railroad. He didn't totally quit music and by September 1942 was playing in Barney Bigard's band that included Charles Mingus on bass. Bigard, as detailed by McCusker, helped Ory get paid royalties for Ory's tune "Muskrat Ramble. In 1944, Orson Welles hired Ory to lead a band for his radio show and with this visibility Ory's Band recorded for several labels. There are also details about his relationship with his second wife, a white woman, Barbara GaNung. She is depicted as a manipulative and controlling woman who was abusive to Ory, leading him to deny his African-American background and cut him off from many of his old friends and bandmates. This chapter, on his post Chicago years, is somewhat summarily presented in relation to the main body of

the book.

In addition to this detailed narrative of Ory's life, McCusker has included a couple of short excerpts from Ory's "Autobiography," a selected Discography of Ory's recordings, and the music for four "lost" compositions by Ory. There are also some rare photographs and label shots included, nearly 30 pages of endnotes and an index. "Creole Trombone" is an invaluable look at a gentleman who played a substantial role in the development of jazz as well as the times and social context in which he lived. It is a significant addition to the jazz literature.

Ron Weinstock



THE GREAT JAZZ GUITARISTS - THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

Scott Yanow
BACKBEAT BOOKS

Scott Yanow, who has possibly reviewed more recordings than any other individual, has a new guide to a segment of jazz that by its nature should appeal to more than simple jazz aficionados.

Backbeat Books has just released "The Great Jazz Guitarists - The Ultimate Guide," which focuses on 342 great guitarists, many of whom are still living, along with brief chapters on 1) 44 Historic Guitarists 2) 175 Other guitarists On the Scene and 3) They Also Played Jazz Guitar (discussing 36 other individuals who are known primarily for playing other instruments). There is also a selected list of Jazz Guitarists on DVD (and some tapes not yet released on DVD) and a brief list of other books on jazz guitarists.

The book also contains a brief history of the guitar in jazz as an introduction.

The coverage is pretty broad touching on many I had never heard before in a variety of styles and places of origin. Still, there are several omissions I observed on quick perusal.

Mickey Baker, whose pioneering instructional books on jazz guitar are still used today and made countless recordings as a session man and a leader (he is best known for being the Mickey of Mickey and Sylvia), isn't

even mentioned in "They Also Played Jazz Guitar." In a communication with me, Mr. Yanow did mention he omitted Baker because he primarily was a blues player, although there are clips of him with Coleman Hawkins on the Internet that show off his jazz credentials.

Other omissions include Mel Brown, who recorded several albums on Impulse before becoming Bobby Bland's guitarist, the versatile Calvin Keys and the brilliant Ronnie Earl (he is mentioned in an entry on Duke Robillard).

They do not even have a short entry in the "Other Guitarists" section such as accorded Bill Jennings and Calvin Newborn. Undoubtedly other readers will find other players they believe should have been included or given more prominence. Such omissions, of course, are inevitable in a publication of this nature.

I noticed one factual error while reading the entry on Everett Barksdale that repeats the erroneous allmusic.com assertion that Barksdale played guitar on Mickey and Sylvia's "Love Is Strange." Yanow's repeating this shows how erroneous information gets repeated and accepted as true. It also shows the difficulty authors like Yanow face in putting together books like this in this age of Wikipedia and the Internet. In any event, it is a small "erroneous" background fact in the Barksdale entry.

These criticisms should not minimize the substantial merits of this guide. The entries contain biographical overviews that include influences, major musical associations and achievements. What is helpful is that a number of the individuals discussed answered a questionnaire relating to personal information, and the quotes from these are quite valuable.

Yanow is quite lucid, whether writing about well known names like Wes Montgomery, Django Reinhardt, Jim Hall, Pat Metheny, Joe Pass, Bucky Pizzarelli, Charlie Christian, Bill Frisell and Grant Green along with lesser known names such as Duck Baker, Bill Harris (of The Clovers who recorded perhaps the first jazz solo guitar album), Jamie Rosenn and Izzi Rozen. Traditionalists like Chris Flory find their place along with avant-garde stylists like Elliot Sharp.

Along with the overview, there are recommended recordings, and in some cases (out-of-print) recordings, to seek out. Yanow also provides websites for artists where applicable. If an updated edition comes out in the future, this is one area the guide could be improved in. For a number of artists he lists a number of recordings and it would really be helpful if he separated out one or two specific recordings to highlight for that particular guitarist.

This is a very useful addition to the jazz literature with particular interest to guitarists and fans of guitar music. I have used Yanow's recommendations to purchase a couple of recordings.

Ron Weinstock

jazz-blues.com



CARLOS SANTANA & JOHN McLAUGHLIN

Santana & McLaughlin
Live at Montreux 2011
EAGLE VISION DVD

Back in 1973, Carlos Santana and John McLaughlin released an album titled "Love, Devotion, Surrender," which highlighted the spiritual sides of the two incredible guitarists. The music was far from the new age style you might hear in yoga studios or places where spiritual music is played. It was a mixture of high energy and lighter, meditative styles; and sometimes both were heard within one song.

Over 35 years later, Santana and McLaughlin revisited that album at the 2011 Montreux Jazz Festival. Among the 15 songs on this concert DVD, you will hear all but one of the five tracks heard on the 1973 album, and obviously much, much more. What were probably the three best songs on the album are here, "A Love Supreme," "Naima" and "Let Us Go Into The House of the Lord" – the first two written by John Coltrane and the third a traditional religious song recorded in 1970 by Pharoah Sanders, and many others through the years with differing arrangements.

As I believe was the case with the 1973 LP, both the guitarists have members of their regular bands on hand here. Santana brought along master jazz drummer Cindy Blackman, who has now added -Santana to her name, as the two were married in 2010; along with longtime conga player/percussionist Paul Rekow, David K. Mathews on keyboards, vocalists Tony Lindsay & Andy Vargas, and bassist Benny Rietveld. McLaughlin's clan included monster fusion drummer Dennis Chambers and bassist Etienne M'Bappe.

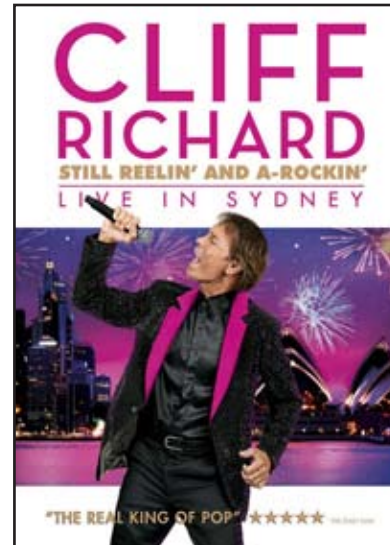
You'll see all the members of both bands playing together on the first track, and a few times down the road. It is pretty wild to say the least; and you might think that these two powerful, high profile drummers would get in each other's way, wouldn't you? But they don't ...not at all. But, for most of the songs you will see just one of the drummers and one bass player. And they all do a great job.

There are many highlights, and the five songs listed above are a part of them. Some others are the version of the Pharoah Sanders / Leon Thomas '70s classic "The Creator

Has A Master Plan," a song I have not heard in years. There are two blues performances here – "Downstairs," written by Elvin Jones and recorded by Kenny Burrell, and the closer, "Shake It Up And Go," written by John Lee Hooker and presented as a tribute to the late, great bluesman. Montreux founder/director Claude Nobs comes on to join the band, playing harmonica, and he is quite good! Nobs passed away in January 2013 at the age of 76.

In closing I can say that this DVD will be a certain pleaser for anyone who likes either, or most certainly both, these two guitar masters. It should be a winner for anyone who likes guitar, period. A good choice...for any occasion.

Bill Wahl



CLIFF RICHARD
Still Reelin' and a Rockin'
Live in Sydney
EAGLE VISION DVD

Since everyone is not a fan of the music forms we generally cover, we always stray a bit from the jazz & blues stuff when it gets to the gift guide time. This year though, we have not come across many items in other genres. But this Cliff Richard DVD came by just before putting this baby together, so here is a brief mention.

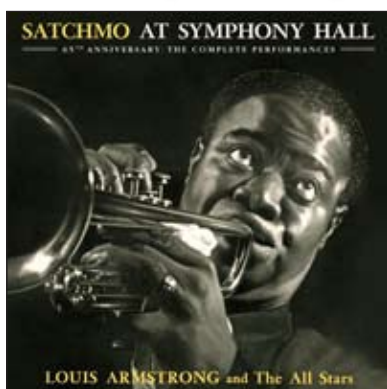
Cliff Richard is a British singer who is much more famous on that side of the Atlantic, but he does have hoards of fans here as well. He has been singing rock n' roll and pop music since the 1950s and it is estimated that he has sold some 250 million records to date worldwide.

He performed at this concert in Sydney, Australia earlier this year. This DVD certainly demonstrates that Richard still sounds and looks fantastic at the age of 73, and he has no shortage of dance moves. His backing consists of a top-notch band with backup vocals provided by a female singer and the two guitar players. Among the 35 songs are many of his big hits, including "Living Doll," "Summer Holiday," "The Next Time," "Move It," "Devil Woman," "Some People" and many more. Naturally, there are some songs included from his latest album as well.

If you happen to know one of his many fans, then this just-released (November 19, 2013) DVD will be a no-brainer as a gift choice.

Michael Braxton

2012 GIFT GUIDE



LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND THE ALL STARS

Satchmo at Symphony Hall - 65th Anniversary: The Complete Recordings HIP-O-SELECT 2-CD SET

It was 65 odd years ago that the great Louis Armstrong did his first small group performance in many years at New York City's Town Hall in May of 1947. The performance was such a success, and combined with the fact that Armstrong's Big Band was struggling, he disbanded his big band a month later. After performing with his new small group at Billy Berg's in Hollywood, he came to Boston's Symphony Hall in November 1947 for a performance that would be recorded and celebrated when it was initially issued on two LPs a few years later. Now, Hip-O-Select has just released "Satchmo at Symphony Hall - 65th Anniversary: The Complete Recordings," which includes several previously unissued performances and several performances unedited for the first time.

In addition to the leaders' trumpet and singing, Armstrong and the All Stars included Jack Teagarden on trombone and vocals, Barney Bigard on clarinet, Dick Cary on piano, Arvell Shaw on bass and Big Sid Catlett on drums. Velma Middleton was also on vocals. The music here was in the format that Armstrong would employ with leading groups for the rest of his life, although personnel would change (Catlett would pass away around the time of the original release of this material in 1951).

Included are two sets of music totaling about two hours. Both sets open with abbreviated renditions of Armstrong's theme "When It's Sleepy Time Down South," and close with short treatments of "I Got a Right to Sing the Blues," associated with Teagarden. Listening to the music one is treated to a rousing "Muskrat Ramble," followed by the poignant song about racism "(What Did I Do To Be So) Black & Blues." After taking us to Chicago on "Royal Garden Blues," he lets Teagarden get showcased for "Lover" and "Stars Fell on Alabama" with a nice vocal from Mr. T. A couple vocals from Velma Middleton include a take on Buddy Johnson' "Since I Fell For You," followed by Bigard

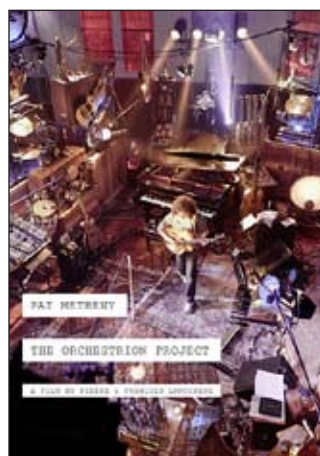
features on "Tea For Two" and "Body and Soul." Armstrong then takes a fairly traditional blues 'Back O'Town Blues," a staple still of New Orleans bands today which is followed by a showcase for Catlett's spectacular stick work, "Steak Face."

The second set displays a similar variety of material as Armstrong opens with some of his old favorites including "Mahogany Hall Stomp," "On the Sunny Side of the Street" and the parade classic "High Society." Teagarden was always at home with the blues and does a nice version of "St. James Infirmary," while Velma Middleton's "Velma Blues" is a mix of traditional lyrics. It's followed by her taking the initial vocal on "That's My Desire" before Armstrong joins in for some fun. Bigard is featured on "C Jam Blues" while bassist Shaw is spotlighted on "How High the Moon" and Catlett again gets to display his showmanship and deft drumming on "Mop Mop," although one can hear him failing to catch one of his sticks as it crashes into the stage. The last number of the performance (before the closing theme) is the previously unissued "Jack Armstrong Blues" that the two had recorded originally on a V-Disc. In addition to the two swapping lyrics, there was some spectacular playing by both on this.

While there is occasional noise from the source material, sound is generally quite good. This is packaged in a small hardback with the accompanying booklet including the original 1951 notes as well as the more recent observations (including how this reissue came about) of Ricky Riccardi, who is the Archivist for the Louis Armstrong House Museum.

This is one of the classic traditional jazz recordings and one of the most legendary performances of Armstrong's career, which thankfully is finally available in a complete issue.

Ron Weinstock



PAT METHENY The Orchestrion Project A Film by Pierre & Francois Lamoureux EAGLE VISION 2-DVD SET

When the first Pat Metheny Group album was released on ECM in the late '70s, I had not yet heard it when we ran a review written by a musician I knew who wanted to be one of our writers. It was a rather condescending negative review, which I thought odd since I had heard Metheny's previous two ECM releases before he started the PMG. When I finally heard it, I thought it was one of the most uplifting sets of music I had ever heard. That resulted in our two rules of reviews; first, that we only review

the best stuff we hear, and second, we don't publish reviews of albums I have not heard from anyone but a trusted regular writer. Even at that, I still like to hear them so I know what we are publishing.

Fast-forward 35 years later and Metheny is still going strong and has released this double DVD set where he performs his Orchestrion Project in the studio with an army of instruments he had adapted to play along with him, using solenoids triggered via Midi from his guitar. He is basically leading an orchestra, but he is the only one there. He is accompanied by a Yamaha Disklavier piano, vibraphones, marimbas, orchestra bells, various percussion instruments, basses, drums, cymbals, blown bottles and other custom-fabricated acoustic mechanical instruments, along with some modern day stuff like guitarbots (they are so cool) and Robotic Angeli Guitar. All of this was a result of a childhood fascination with his father's player piano, which he would crawl underneath to see what made it tick. Now he has taken the concept to a level that is, well...awesome.

Rather than going into each song, to use an old and perhaps worn out cliché...the music here speaks for itself. Like the first PMG album, and so many others since then, this music – all of it – is extremely uplifting and will no doubt bring a smile to your face...aided by watching him like a mad wizard making all this happen.

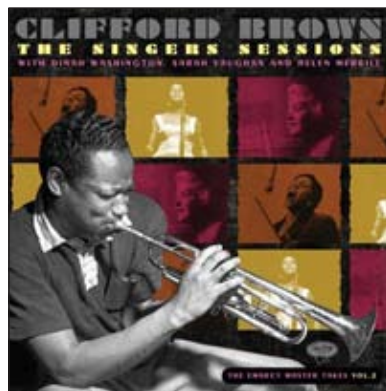
This DVD was filmed after Metheny came back from a worldwide solo tour of 120 concerts to promote his 2010 Orchestrion album. It was recorded in St. Elias Church in Brooklyn NY, where the project was originally conceived and built. It struck me that the last time I saw Metheny was at a 2006 concert during his reunion tour with Gary Burton at Ani Difranc's restored church in Buffalo NY, which she transformed into a music center know as Asbury Hall. It was the christening of the venue, being the first major concert.

This DVD set will definitely please all Metheny fans, along with fans of guitar, music that makes you feel good, player pianos, midi, musical instruments, things that are *definitely different*, church acoustics, solenoids, mad wizards and the list goes on. I might suggest that you watch The Making of Orchestrion and the Metheny Interview on disc 2 *first*, and then the performance on disc one. It will give you a better understanding of just what is going on. Have a great trip!

Bill Wahl



Pat Metheny & Emily Wahl at Ani Difranc's Church, 2006



CLIFFORD BROWN

The Singers Sessions

HIP-O-SELECT 3-CD SET

Hip-O-Select, the reissue label associated with the Universal Music Group that includes the classic Mercury, Emarcy and Verve catalogs has issued a second volume in its Emarcy Master Takes reissues of Clifford Brown's music, "The Singer Sessions." This deluxe reissue comes packaged in a profusely illustrated hard-back booklet with annotation from DownBeat associate editor Aaron Cohen, and three stick back pockets that the compact discs are housed in. The booklet contains wonderful photographs of the various performers on these sessions as well as the covers of the original releases of these recordings, which included not only LPs but extended play EPs as well. This packaging is marvelous.

The first two of the three CDs reissue the sessions that produced (among other releases) "Dinah Jams" and "Jam Session." The material is presented as it was originally recorded with Cohen providing the details on how this came about. Max Roach and Clifford Brown had already recorded extensively right before this session. Junior Mance notes that while labeled a jam session, this was actually a party in the studio with such an impressive cast of musicians that included Brown, Roach, Harold Land, Richie Powell and George Morrow along with pianist Mance, trumpeters Clark Terry and Maynard Ferguson, bassist Keter Betts, guitarist Herb Geller, and drummer Buddy Rich.

I am more familiar with the selections on which Dinah sings (such as perhaps my favorite rendition of "Lover Come Back to Me," and the superb "I've Got You Under My Skin"), so listening to the hot bop of Denzil Best's "Move" and the opening treatment of "What Is This Thing Called Love," done as one might have heard if they were on a Jazz at the Philharmonic tour. This is a joyful experience with wonderful playing by all. Brownie's mix of sweetness and hot fire always impresses, and one must not lose sight of just how good a saxophonist Harold Land was as can be heard in his terrific solo on "You Go To My Head." And one should not forget the shorter performances such as Dinah's wonderful vocal on "No More."

The third CD combines two later sessions on which Brown played, one with Sarah Vaughan and the other with Helen Merrill. The first session featuring Vaughan

was originally from an album titled after the singer and a second session that included, in addition to Brown, Paul Quinichette on tenor, Herbie Mann on flute, Jimmy Jones on piano, Joe Benjamin on bass and Roy Haynes on drums with Ernie Wilkins handling the arrangements. The playing is a bit tighter here as the focus is on Sarah Vaughan's vocals. There are plenty of nice touches such as Brown exchanging fours with Vaughan's scatting on "Lullaby of Birdland." "April in Paris," opens without the horns, with Quinichette taking a lovely vocal with Brown's muted playing accompanying Vaughan when she resumes singing before Mann adds his flute. On "He's My Guy" there are nice choruses for Quinichette and Brown before Jones takes the spotlight. The combination of Sarah Vaughan's divine singing, Wilkins' terrific arrangements and the superb playing by the studio band this date, not simply Brown, results in this classic recording.

Helen Merrill's eponymously titled debut recording had Brown, flutist Danny Banks (also on baritone) as featured horns accompanists on a Quincy Jones supervised date that included Milt Hinton or Oscar Pettiford on bass, Jimmy Jones on piano and Barry Galbraith on guitar in the studio. Brown's bright open playing during his solo contrasts with Merrill's soft vocals (almost like a whisper) on "Don't Explain" as she sings "you're my joy and pain." "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To" swings lightly and Brown takes some spirited choruses after Jones takes a solo. Listening to her on "What's New," I can understand why Dexter Gordon who also takes to this ballad. On "Yesterdays," Brown's featured choruses complement the longing she expresses. This was a recording full of charm and heart. It had an impact on Merrill such that she would revisit it four decades later with a homage to Brown employing a brass ensemble to evoke his spirit.

"The Singers Sessions" is a welcome companion to the previously issued 4 CD set, "The Emarcy Master Takes" which compiled the recordings Brown and Max Roach made together. This will be welcome to those who do not have the initial recordings. The music sounds good and the backing is attractive and functional. This music is, to quote Merrill on a Gershwin classic, "it's wonderful, it's marvelous," and recommended, although those already having prior reissues of some or all of this material might choose to pass on this latest reissue. Certainly this would make a welcome holiday present.

Ron Weinstock

ETTA JAMES

Live at Montreux 1993
EAGLE VISION DVD

Eagle Vision has released a DVD featuring the late Etta James at the 1993 Montreux festival, with some additional bonus tracks from several earlier Montreux shows. The first 11 songs were recorded at the 1993 festival, and both the sound and video quality are first rate – rather surprising on the video side, given that it was 20 years ago. After the band plays two instrumen-



Sing The Blues," which features a guest harmonica solo from Mr. Montreux himself, producer Claude Nobs.

The bonus tracks start with four songs from 1975, including "Drown In My Own Tears," "W.O.M.A.N.," and another slammin' version of "I'd Rather Go Blind." Next is one song from 1977, a medley of three songs in fact, "At Last/Trust In Me/Sunday Kind Of Love." One song is here from 1978, "Take It To The Limit." The year 1989 is represented with five songs, including "Tell Mama," "I Got The Will" and "Sugar On The Floor." A lone song from 1990 ends the set as she does the perfect closing with "Your Good Thing Is About To End." The video quality of these earlier shows on the bonus tracks is nowhere near the level of the featured 1993 show, but let's face it – they are listed as bonus tracks. It is fun to watch all the faces Etta makes during all the shows! The audio on the older shows is fine.



There is also a CD that was released a while before the DVD with an abbreviated set that includes six of the nine vocal tracks from the 1993 show, three from 1975, and one each from 1977 and 1989. The CD is titled "Live At Montreux 1975-1993."

Either would be a great gift for any Etta James fan, even if that fan might be you! But no matter who it is, for that extra impact wrap up the CD and DVD together.

Bill Wahl

jazz-blues.com



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

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

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA'S AMERICA: THE PATRIOT'S LIFE IN IMAGES AND SONGS

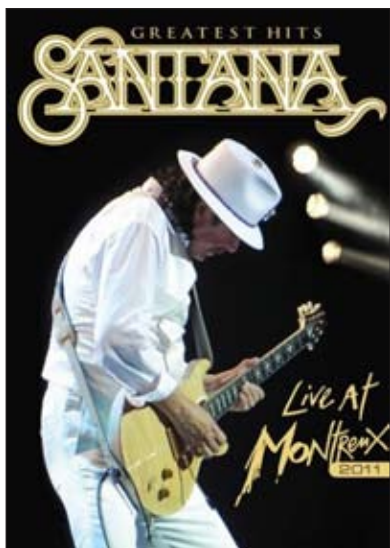
**by John Philip Sousa IV with Loras John Schissel
GIA PUBLICATIONS**

The America of John Philip Sousa was a far different, and perhaps simpler time than now, but there is little doubt that John Philip Sousa, as the Director of the United States Marine Band, as a composer of marches (leading him to become known as "The March King") and then leader of the Sousa Band, became one of the best-known Americans of his time and his music became a part of the fabric of the United States and still performed today including "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

"John Philip Sousa's America" is a look at his life, mostly through a wealth of unpublished and rare photographs, newspaper clippings, caricatures, publicity stills, and other archival material that accompany the reflections of Sousa's great-grandson on the March King's life, from his upbringing in Washington DC through the Civil War, his marriage, his initial forays into march music and the remarkable career that ended with his death in 1932. It was a career that included tours across the United States and through Europe and Asia. He was also a recording star in the early days of musical recordings and alumni of his band included Arthur Pryor who had a successful career leading a similar band to Sousa's, and Meredith Willson, who brought us the classic Broadway musical, "The Music Man." Today, his music is played world-wide, and not simply for Presidents.

In this narrative, Sousa's great-grandson is assisted by Lora John Schissel a senior musicologist at the Library of Congress. This is not a full scholarly biography of Sousa, but rather an affectionate look back at his remarkable life. This profusely illustrated book (hundreds of photos and illustrations) is a visual feast. Also included is a CD comprised mostly of performances of Sousa's music by the United States Marine Band with a brief spoken recording of Sousa, and there is a recording by the Sousa Band performing "The Stars and Stripes Forever." It is an invaluable addition to the literature on the music of the post-Civil War to World War I era, and part of musical environment from which jazz and modern popular music emerged out of.

Ron Weinstock



SANTANA

Greatest Hits - Live at Montreux 2011 EAGLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT 2-DVD

Having been a fan of Santana since they first emerged onto the scene in 1969 with their debut album simply titled "Santana," it is pure pleasure to see this 2-DVD set come out spanning the entire 43 years featuring a 3-hour 20-minute performance at the Montreux Jazz Festival just last year – in July 2011.

There are several other Santana concert DVDs out there, but this particular set concentrates almost entirely on the actual Santana Band rather than his later work with other artists, such as the "Supernatural" album, which he recorded with several artists and varying personnel groupings which garnered him nine Grammy Awards including Album of the Year. While there are a couple from that album, the rest focus mostly on the Santana Band albums starting with three songs from the above-mentioned debut album – their first hit "Evil Ways" plus "Soul Sacrifice" and "Jingo."

From their second album, "Abraxis," they cover their famous pairing of Peter Green's "Black Magic Woman" with Gabor Szabo's "Gypsy Queen," followed, as it is on the original album, with Tito Puente's "Oye Como Va." Another from that album is Santana's marvelous instrumental "Samba Pa Ti." From "Santana III" you'll get treated to three Santana band originals, "Batuka," "No One To Depend On" and "Guajira" (the latter of which is part of a 2-song medley which we'll get to later).

One of the many highlights is the version of Santana's tear-jerking instrumental "Europa (Earth's Cry, Heaven's Smile)," the finest and most passionate version of which is on the live 2-CD set "Moonflower," but this version is a close second. Two songs are heard from the 1999 massive-selling "Supernatural" – "Maria, Maria" and "Smooth," though some may miss Rob Thomas on that second one.

Some of the nice surprises here include Santana's wife Cindy Blackman, a noted jazz drummer now for quite some time, who replaces drummer Dennis

Chambers for a medley of "Corazon Espinado" and "Guajira" followed by a duet featuring Blackman and bassist Benny Rietveld, which includes an excellent solo from Cindy. You'll also be treated to two songs featuring guests Derek Trucks and Susan Tedeschi, as Trucks offers up some fine guitar work and Tedeschi delivers some refreshing female vocals, not typical for the Santana Band for sure.

Other surprises include a version of Coltrane's "A Love Supreme," a song which Carlos has been quoting in his solos for many years, and also a version of the seldom covered Cream song "Sunshine Of Your Love," which is done so well that it would no doubt make Eric Clapton smile and Ginger Baker frown; due to the work of Dennis Chambers on drums. Chambers also takes a powerhouse yet humorous solo after the band plays "Soul Sacrifice."

Some of the other musicians here in addition to those already named are Paul Rekow and Karl Perazzo, who shine throughout in congas, percussion and vocals; lead vocalists Tony Lindsay and Andy Vargas; Tommy Anthony, guitar; Bill Ortiz and Jeff Cressman on trumpet and trombone respectively and David K. Mathews on organ and keyboards. Mathews formerly played with Tower of Power and Etta James, among others.

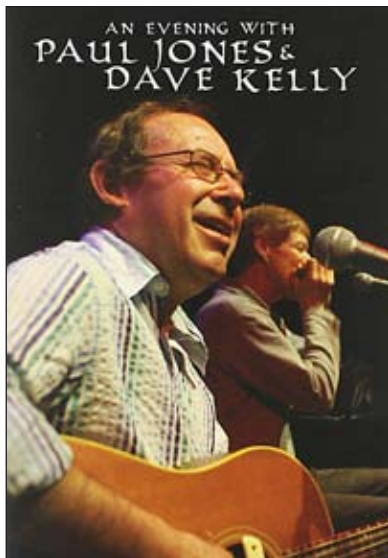
The concert actually opens with an instrumental, "Spark Of The Divine," which begins with percussion only before the band joins in. Then we hear "SOCC" with a rather outside improvisation section followed by what sounds kind of like electric Miles meets Santana. Then there is the only song here I don't really care much for, "Back In Black," which is an AC/DC song Santana did with rapper Nas in a few years ago. That could have been omitted from this set for sure. Then, after an instrumental "Singing Winds, Crying Beasts" they segue into "Black Magic Woman" and the classics begin.

This band was red hot on that summer night in Montreux, Switzerland and it was marvelously captured on this video, which excels in both audio and video aspects. And it is great to see the band playing all the classics with the horns added and almost everyone in the band singing backup vocals. To make the treat even better, DTS is one of the choices on the audio menu.

So while "Moonflower" is the definitive Santana album, it is now joined on the top shelf by "Greatest Hits Live at Montreux 2011" which I'd have to say is the definitive Santana Band video, although 1993's "Sacred Fire" is another must-have as well. Enjoy!

Bill Wahl

**Issues, Special Issues, Back Issues and
Thousands of CD & DVD Reviews
www.jazz-blues.com**



PAUL JONES & DAVE KELLY

An Evening With Paul Jones & Dave Kelly
SPV BLUE DVD

Members of the legendary British group, The Blues Band, guitarist Dave Kelly and harmonica player go unplugged for a live performance captured on a new DVD, "An Evening With Paul Jones and Dave Kelly" (SPV Blue).

Jones, who was one-time a member of the British group Manfred Mann, may be best known, but Kelly, brother of the great Jo-Ann Kelly had pretty strong credentials in playing blues. Given over four and a half decades experience by both, one isn't surprised by how engaging they are, not simply in their musical performances but their banter to the audience.

Songs range from adaptations of classic country blues like Charlie Patton's "Moon Going Down," to originals like "Without You," which Paul Jones notes had an unusual musical structure, but more importantly was a B side of a Manfred Mann single. Not all the performances are in a strict blues song form, such as "Velocity and Love," a spirited performance, but Kelly's "Mr. Estes Said" is a strong original blues that incorporates some classic lines in this moving tribute to the late blues poet. Paul Jones does a moving interpretation of Blind Willie Johnson's "Nobody's Fault But Mine," with his harp prominent and Kelly adding some spare guitar. There is nice use of split screen on this. A washboard player backs Kelly on a driving interpretation of Mississippi Fred McDowell's "Few Short Lines."

Paul Jones' contributes his moving tribute to "Sonny Boy Williamson," that was composed after Williamson's passing. It segues into a lively "Dust My Blues," modeled after one of Elmore James' recordings. "You're Wrong" was a recent composition of Jones, performed solo, followed by Kelly nicely handling Robert Johnson's "When You Got a Good Friend." Erskine Hawkins' swing classic "Tuxedo Junction" serves as a showcase for Jones' skilled harmonica playing and exhibits the influence of Sonny Boy Williamson on his approach.

The two trade verses on a powerful rendition of Muddy Waters' "I Can't Be Satisfied," and then this DVD

closes with a relaxed pace with Kelly taking the lead vocal on Jimmy Reed's "Baby What You Want Me To Do." It is an amiable close to a very enjoyable concert DVD. This was recorded in 2004 and there is a second volume available, which on the basis of this is worth checking out as well.

Ron Weinstock



ETTA JAMES

Heart & Soul: A Retrospective
HIP-O-SELECT 4-CD SET

I never had the pleasure of seeing Etta James perform. Several times I attended events she was supposed to perform at, but each time she withdrew shortly before the performance. I can only remember her by her body of recordings as well as television appearances she made. I remember the memorable episode of the original PBS "Soundstage" program where she sang a duet with Dr. John on "I'd Rather Go Blind."

The first albums of Etta James I purchased included the double-CD compilation of her Essential Chess Recordings and one of her albums on Island, which included a stormy rendition of "Standin' On Shaky Ground," and the classic Otis Redding number "I've Got Dreams To Remember." What was striking about her was her husky earthiness, yet the ability to caress a ballad so that her signature song was a song written in the forties, "At Last." She could be a force of nature and yet caress a ballad. Few could handle the range of material she did with the same conviction and authority. There was the church rooted style of "Something Got a Hold on Me" or "I'd Rather Go Blind" and the romanticism of "At Last" as well as her latter day recordings of standards.

While influenced by the recordings she listened to by Billie Holiday and Dinah Washington, one of the most important influences on her singing was her dear friend, Johnny 'Guitar' Watson. Some, who were not aware, may have called Watson, "the female Etta James" but if she was asked she would correct them and state she was the female John Watson. This might be evident if one mixed some of Watson's slow recordings like "Cuttin' In" or "Embraceable You," with James' ballads or her Billie Holiday Tribute, "Mystery Lady." Her impact can be seen in the number of recordings of her songs by others, with "At Last" becoming a wedding standard.

Prior to her death, Universal released on its Hip-O-Select label, the four-CD "Heart & Soul: A Retrospec-

tive,” that in its four CDs surveys her recordings from her debut as The Wallflower doing “Roll With Me Henry” for Modern Records to the previously unissued 2007 recording of Rodney Crowell’s “Ashes By Now.” The first disc opens with 9 recordings from Modern including “Roll With Me Henry,” and her jump blues “Good Rocking Daddy.” The bulk of this compilation derive from her stay at Chess starting from “All I Could Do Is Cry,” her duet with Harvey Fuqua of Willie Dixon’s “Spoonful,” the standards “At Last” and “Sunday King of Love,” duets with Sugar Pie DeSanto and her visits to Muscle Shoals which produced “Tell Mama,” “I’d Rather Go Blind,” and Otis Redding’s “Security.” Before she left Chess they experimented with other producers turning in renditions of “St. Louis Blues,” Tracy Nelson’s “Down So Low,” and Randy Newman’s “Sail Away.”

After her tenure at Chess she produced a moving version of Alice Cooper’s “Only Women Bleed” for Warner Brothers (although I prefer the rare Ike and Tina Turner rendition) and was caught live with Eddie ‘Cleanhead’ Vinson for Fantasy represented here on Percy Mayfield’s “Please Send Me Someone To Love.” She joined Island and produced a stirring “Damn Your Eyes,” that today perhaps only a Bettye LaVette could do equal justice to. Not everything is top level. Her duet with B.B. King on Big Jay McNeely’s “There Is Something on Your Mind” is a nice track but not as powerful as the original with Little Sonny Warner on the vocal or Bobby Marchand’s two-part reworking which is the source for the King-James interpretation here. Blues remained a core of her music whether on “The Blues Is My Business” or the acoustic blues rendition of Elmore James’ “The Sky Is Crying.”

The four-discs of this compilation of her work are housed in a hardback book with a superb, lengthy overview by Bill Dahl that outlines her life as well as the music included. It is lavishly illustrated and includes full discographical information. Hip-O-Select releases are generally limited releases so I might suggest that you get a hold of this while you can. She is simply one of the greatest blues and rhythm singers of the past six decades and this reissue showcases her musical legacy with some of the finest music of those years.

Ron Weinstock

THE HISTORY OF JAZZ SECOND EDITION

Ted Gioia

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS 2011

Ted Gioia has updated his “The History of Jazz,” which is welcome for those looking for a concise overview of jazz’s development. While the title might be more accurately titled, “Jazz: A Selective History” Or “A Concise History of Jazz,” that is a matter of semantics. Gioia does trace what is generally viewed as the music’s growth from its origins out of ragtime through its world wide spread. Gioia has updated his earlier history to perhaps give more emphasis to the global developments of jazz.

I give him more leeway in selection of material in such a topics as jazz history than I gave his “Delta Blues,” which was highly flawed and omitted seminal figures in his

subject matter. While there are unquestionably trends and artists in jazz’s development that he might have devoted some space to, it might have made this volume unwieldy. For example, he could have delved a bit more into some of the early women blues singers’ recordings, other than Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith.

Gioia writes very clearly about the artists and does present what most would agree are the major figures in the music’s history such as Armstrong, Morton, Hines, Ellington, Eldridge, Basie, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Parker, Gillespie, Coltrane, Monk, Powell, Miles Davis and many more. He concisely discusses their lives and music and innovations in a lively and informative way. I was particularly impressed by his discussion of Bill Evans and his importance and influence on contemporary jazz.

His discussion of the diversity of jazz around the world today is only an overview and overlooks some currents such as gypsy jazz. I do not know how exhaustive his suggestions for further reading was intended to be but there were some worthy books that were not included (such as recent bios of Lester Young). Gioia has included a list of performances for suggested listening as opposed to recommending albums. In this respect, I suggest it would have been useful to have presented these in a chronological manner as opposed to alphabetical by artist.

In summary, this is a thoughtful and erudite introduction to jazz history that will be of value to more people than simply jazz novices.

Ron Weinstock

LET'S GO

*Legendary
Rhythm & Blues
Cruise*

BLUESIN'

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

2011 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



HOWLIN' WOLF **Smokestack Lightning:** **Complete Chess Masters 1951-1960** **HIP-O-SELECT BOX SET**

Chester Arthur Burnett, known as Howlin' Wolf, was one of the seminal blues artists of all time. Sam Phillips who recorded Wolf's earliest sides said of Wolf "This is where the soul of man never dies." Having produced similar compilations of Little Walter, Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley amongst others, Hip-O-Select takes us to what is likely two sets of the Chess recordings of the Wolf over four discs and in an attractive hard back book with sleeves to have ready access to the four CDs that include 97 tracks and a little under 5 hours of music.

The book package contains an overview of Wolf's music from Peter Guralnick and an overview of the included recordings by Dick Shurman, along with a variety of photos and newspaper clippings with full discographical information. The music ranges from Sam Phillips' earliest recordings of Wolf in Memphis that were sent to Chess in Chicago through the 1960 session that produced "Back Dog Man," "Wang Dang Doodle" and "Spoonful." Roughly a third of the recordings on this set were recorded by Phillips in Memphis, with the remainder done in Chicago after the Chess brothers convinced him to move north.

Many of Wolf's signature recordings are included, ranging from the initial release of "Moanin' At Midnight" and "How Many More Years" from his first session in Memphis along with other deep south sounds as "Bluebird (Blues)," "Streamline Woman," "Mr. Highway Man" and "Saddle My Pony." Then there are his Chicago recordings including "No Place To Go," "Forty Four," "Smokestack Lightning," "The Natchez Burning," "Sittin' On Top Of the World," "Mr. Airplane Man," and "Back Door Man."

As the selected song titles suggest, there are many impressive sides included that if an artist had simply recorded a couple of songs would be regarded as the basis of a legendary career. In Wolf's case, his body of work merits

this consideration as well as the iconic songs. And the recordings start with the Memphis sides with Willie Johnson on guitar, Willie Steele on drums, Ike Turner, L.C. Hubert or Bill 'Struction' Johnson on piano, and on one session James Cotton, who plays on "Saddle My Pony." After relocating to Chicago, Wolf's sessions included Otis Spann and Hosea Lee Kennard on piano, Willie Dixon on bass, Willie Johnson, Jody Williams, Otis "Smokey" Smothers and Hubert Sumlin on guitar, Abb Locke on saxophone and Earl Phillips and Fred Below on drums.

While Williams and Johnson are very prominent on the earlier Chicago sessions, these recordings also allow us to appreciate the emergence of Hubert Sumlin as an important and original guitar voice, whose guitar lines, snaking against the rhythm, offer a bite in addition to Wolf's powerful vocals. This provided an immediately recognizable sound as the recordings evolved with the rollicking boogies of the Memphis days to storming shuffles and emphatically performed slow blues that hit like the Chicago winter winds.

All of the issued recordings are included along with alternate takes and several compilations of alternate takes and studio banter. From a listening standpoint, one wishes some of these alternates were not included in the generally chronological presentation of material, but rather at the end of the package. While there is a value of illustrating how the sessions shaped what was ultimately released, one wonders if so much of these multi-take tracks was included to fill out four CDs so they could split Wolf's Chess recordings into two volumes. This is the only fault one might suggest about this reissue. The sound is quite good on this reissue of some of the greatest blues recordings of the past six or so decades. With the holidays around the corner, Howlin' Wolf's "The Complete Chess Masters 1951-1960" will make a terrific gift.

Ron Weinstock



FRANK SINATRA **Best of The Best** **CAPITOL RECORDS**

"Best of the Best" is a new CD compilation that for the first time collects Frank Sinatra recordings from both Capitol Records and Reprise Records. The 23 tracks (13 from Capitol and 10 from Reprise)

collect his most memorable and iconic recordings. One is hard-pressed to say anything new about this music, which should be familiar to many.

From "I've Got The World On A String" to

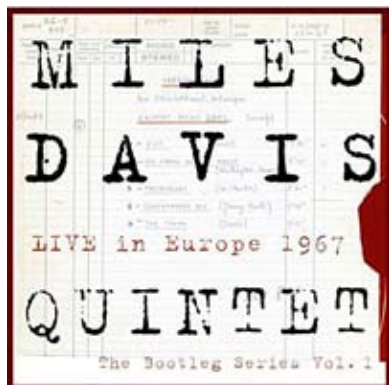
From ‘New York New York’” listeners are treated to classic interpretations of songs from the great tunesmiths like Cole Porter, Rogers and Hart, Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen. These are presented in arrangements from such masters as Nelson Riddle, Don Costa, Billy May, Quincy Jones, and Ernie Freeman. From spectacular big bands to lush orchestra stylings, the voice, the songs and the performances are timeless and marvelously mastered.

Despite the familiarity of the material, some tunes are going to come off as almost new to the listener, such as “In the Wee Small Hours Of The Morning” “Angel Eyes” and “Summer Wind.” Then there is “Fly me To The Moon” from a session with Count Basie that Quincy Jones arranged. At the same time, one appreciates nuances in the songs and the arrangements that might have been missed hearing Sinatra over a Car radio.

Frank Sinatra Jr. provides commentary on each performance, providing insights on how the material was selected and the imprint his father’s recording left. For example, I was unaware that a Kingston trio recording was the basis of Sinatra’s classic, “It Was a Very Good Year.” As his son notes, Frank Sinatra was unequalled in recognizing great lyrics. Sinatra’s music has been anthologized, a subject of box sets, and prior “Best Of” collections. Let others quarrel about specific songs that are not included. I will simply continue to enjoy the “Best of the Best.”

Incidentally, this is available as simply a CD, or in a deluxe package that also includes a DVD of a long out-of-print Seattle concert. I did not receive a copy of the DVD so cannot comment on it.

Ron Weinstock



MILES DAVIS QUINTET

Live In Europe 1967: The Bootleg Series Vol. 1 COLUMBIA/LEGACY 3-CD 1-DVD SET

This three-CD-plus-DVD showcase of Miles’ 1965-68 quintet fascinates not only for the masterful play of both the group and each individual member on constant display here. *Live In Europe 1967* also documents a pivotal time in the creative direction of the bandleader and, due much to his influence, jazz itself.

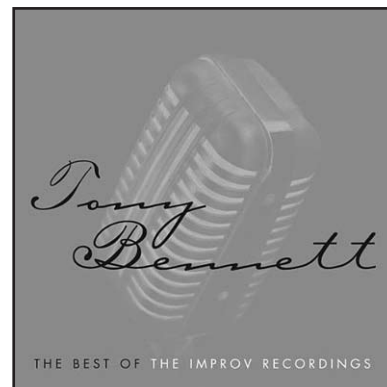
Chronological context magnifies the bounty of these “live” dates, taken from the group’s “Newport In Europe” performances in five cities. This assemblage- tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter, pianist Herbie Hancock, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Tony Williams, was Miles’ last conventional jazz lineup. Indeed, his future “electrification” would partially begin its development with these players

(think *Miles In The Sky*). Jazz itself was contending with the “free” movement, with interested parties everywhere taking highly passionate positions in the debate. These tremors might well have energized the brilliant, frequently urgent-sounding work each man delivers on these sets; each player contending with these changes in his own way.

Shorter and Williams seem the most possessed by the “free” scene, their statements consistently reaching for ways out of the structure. Miles consistently walks the tightrope, taking on the perils of all that latitude while never abandoning his exquisitely creative craftsmanship. Hancock most completely resembles the leader in approach and might be the ultimate “star” of these dates. For as much as an anchor is needed, the masterful Carter provides it. The set lists will be familiar to those who know Miles, and include multiple takes of “Round Midnight”, “On Green Dolphin Street”, and “Masqualero”.

Given the amplified paths taken soon after by Miles, Shorter, Hancock and Williams, directions that would birth the fusion era, the music documented on these sides are among their final “pure” jazz statements. In any case, *Live In Europe 1967* is a jazz experience of the highest magnitude, an experience most deserving of this deluxe package.

Duane Verh



TONY BENNETT

The Best of the Improv Recordings CONCORD MUSIC GROUP 4-CD SET

Gleaned from singer Tony Bennett’s brief stint on his own Improv label that last a couple of years in the mid-1970s, the compiled 16 tracks include studio and a couple of live performances of American Songbook titles. All of the tracks on this album are also included in Concord’s 4-CD boxed set, Tony Bennett: The Complete Improv Recordings.

Bennett is featured on this single disc with the Ruby Braff/George Barnes Quartet, Charlie Byrd, Vic Dickenson, Bill Evans, John Guiffreda, Chuck Higgins, Jimmy McPartland, Marian McPartland, Wayne Wright, Torrie Zito (Bennett’s musical director at the time) and others. Tunes include “This Can’t Be Love,” “Blue Moon,” “Isn’t It Romance?,” “You Don’t Know What Love Is,” “My Romance,” “You Must Believe In Spring,” and other romantic gems. The only departure is the up-tempo Rodgers/Hart chestnut, “The Lady Is A Tramp.”

Although at the time of these recordings Bennett

had complete artistic freedom, the Improv label was not a commercial success and shut down after releasing about ten albums.

Bennett is in prime form, accompaniment is respectful and this is a pleasing listen from start to finish. A 16-page liner booklet, with photos and lengthy notes (from the 4-CD boxed set) by Will Friedwald, accompanies this CD compilation produced by Nick Phillips.

Nancy Ann Lee



THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

Winterland
EXPERIENCE HENDRIX/
LEGACY
4-CD BOX SET

At one point on Disc Number Two, Jimi tells the audience, "We're sorry everything's so slow tonight." Truth is, Mr. Hendrix and crew had nothing to apologize for. It's the different character of each of the shows chronicled on this four-disc set that will keep fans returning to these October 1968 performances at the storied San Francisco

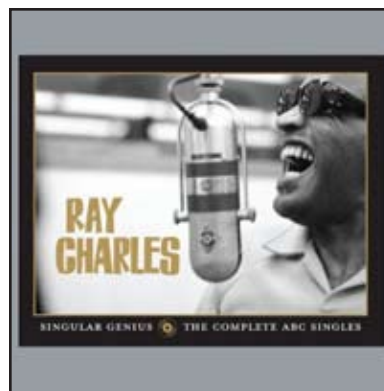
venue (synchronous with the release of the trio's classic *Electric Ladyland*). From jam session casualness to highly focused ferocity and points in between, *Winterland* abounds in energy, spontaneity and an almost "bootleg" charm. It's precisely how each evening's mood impacts the versions of "Hey Joe", "Red House", "Are You Experienced" and others played on that particular night, and how they (often dramatically) contrast with last night's version, that make this such a compelling collection.

The deluxe edition includes a 36-page book featuring unpublished photos and a rare interview. An eight-LP version and single CD compilation are also available. A must for the hardcore Hendrix fan.

Duane Verh

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

jazz-blues.com



RAY CHARLES

Singular Genius: The Complete ABC Singles
CONCORD 5-CD SET

"Singular Genius: The Complete ABC Singles" is the aptly titled box set issued by Concord of all of the singles issued by Ray Charles after he left Atlantic Records and signed with ABC Paramount. This complements the reissue of Charles' Atlantic singles, "The Birth of Soul" that was issued a number of years ago and takes us through 1970 and through some very familiar and iconic recordings. The 106 tracks are spread over 5 physical CDs and contain a booklet with an overview of the music from Billy Vera and session information about the selections included.

Vera observes, fans of Charles often are divided between those with a preference for the early R&B singles with the legendary eight piece band and those who enjoy his latter recordings often with a big band or full orchestra that cover a wider variety of material. It should be noted that even Charles Atlantic singles and recordings transcended the blues, rhythm and blues to include jazz. And while with Atlantic, he recorded the brilliant album "The Genius of Ray Charles" which indicated his future direction with big band and orchestral charts from Quincy Jones and Ralph Burns.

One reason perhaps some prefer the Atlantic period is the more homogenous material and musical framework of those recordings. ABC gave Charles greater leeway in the material he recorded and Sid Feller oversaw Charles recordings, as opposed to producing them. So there was considerable variety in the material including pop and country songs as well as blues and jazz classics. He would, in some cases, be backed by a big band, on others with an orchestra with strings, and there also were some small combo recordings. Furthermore on some recordings there would be a vocal chorale as opposed to gospel-based R&B.

While his earliest recordings were on ABC Paramount, Charles was able to have his own label, Tangerine where he could record musical idols like Louis Jordan and the sophisticated blues of the songwriter Percy Mayfield who contributed the signature Charles recording "Hit the Road Jack" along with "The Danger Zone," "At the Club" and "Hide Nor Hair." Then there are the duets with Betty Carter including "Baby Its Cold Outside," which was a bit more sophisticated than either the Louis Jordan and Ella Fitzgerald recording

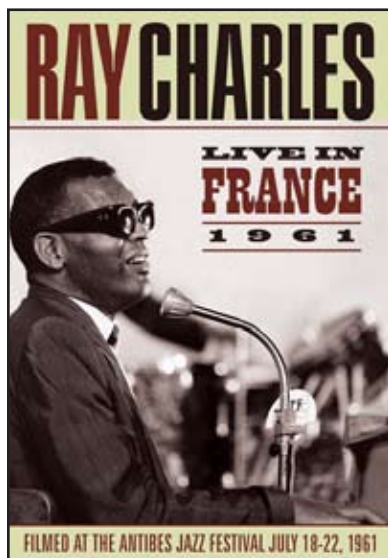
or Hot Lips Page and Pearl Bailey.

While with ABC Charles would record his path finding albums of country music and many of those classic recordings are also included as are his singular interpretations of The Beatles' "Yesterday" and "Eleanor Rigby." Standards such as "Without Love" and "Without a Song" (in two parts, one a vocal, the other instrumental) are mixed with the Harlan Howard classic that Charles invigorated "Busted," and he never forgot his roots in the blues with "Worried Life Blues" (the flip side of "Sticks and Stones"), Sam Cooke's "Laughin' and Clownin'", and the Chuck Willis classics "Feel So Bad" and "What Am I Living For." The latter number has a country flavor in the backing with the choral backing and the steel guitar in the orchestral backing along with a nice bluesy guitar solo. Not that long after he would record his classic rendition of "America The Beautiful."

On his last ABC singles, Charles covered Silas Hogan's "Every Saturday Night" with a smoldering big band rendition and Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire." One might argue that the performances as a whole are not as consistent as the Atlantic recordings. Perhaps it's the wide range of material he covers and not everything comes across with the emotional gravity of his best work. With a few rare exceptions, Charles was able to invest so much of himself in his music and placed his own stamp on his recordings and performances. On occasion he would not be able to transcend the sentimentality of a few songs, but that is the exception as can be heard here.

Oddly, my only complaint is that extracting the CDs from the box they come in can be tricky at times. "Singular Genius" is an apt title, and one can readily doubt whether we will ever see another performer with so much soul and so much musical depth. That genius and depth is evident here.

Ron Weinstock



RAY CHARLES LIVE IN FRANCE 1961

EAGLE ROCK ENT DVD

Eagle Vision has issued an amazing and important DVD by Ray Charles "Live in France 1961." This was filmed over four nights during Charles' first tour of Europe when he played a Jazz Festival outside of Antibes on the Cote d'Azur and marked a departure in that he

brought his big little band as opposed to the larger big band he was touring with in the United States. There is also an excellent video of Charles in Brazil from a couple years later that shows The Genius in his prime

with the full big band.

With Charles and his piano, we hear the legendary saxophone trio of Hank Crawford, David 'Fathead' Newman, and Leroy 'Hog' Cooper along with trumpeters Philip Guilbeau and John Hunt, bassist Edgar Willis and drummer Bruno Carr. And also present were the Raelettes of Gwen Berry, Margie Hendrix, Pat Lyles and Darlene McCrea. This was essentially Ray's Band during his years at Atlantic Records and the chance to see this band (which was the band on Ray's live Atlantic Recordings) makes this particular DVD special.

The performances are taken from French television programs of highlights from the Festival and as the folks from Reelin' In The Years Productions observe, this was filmed, not taped, which helps explain the excellent video quality.

However, film not used after cutting and splicing of source material, was discarded so this 105 minutes which includes multiple performances of several songs is all there is. Radio recordings of the entire shows existed that allowed rearranging the clips from the festival highlights into the performance order and provide superior sound.

The performances include the jazzy instrumentals including renditions James Moody's "The Story," Horace Silver's "Doodlin'" and his instrumental take of "One Mint Julep." Then there are stellar renditions of "Let the Good Times Roll," "Georgia On My Mind" with Fathead Newman on flute, "Sticks and Stones" and "What'd I Say." Does anybody need to have me say what a great band this was and that the members get showcased throughout?

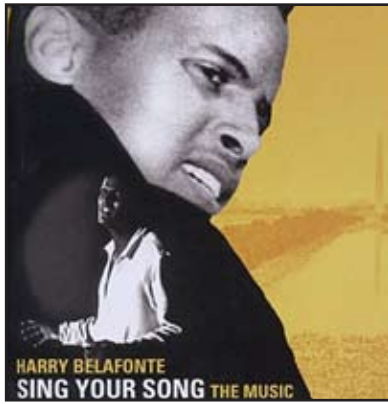
The filming did have the great Charles' vocals and piano front and center while focusing on the horns during their solos. Listening and watching how effortlessly he moves from a ballad like Cecil Gant's classic, "I Wonder" to the vocal interchange with Margie Hendrix who admonishes him to "Tell The Truth," one is awestruck even 50 years later. Similarly, one is amazed watching Charles jazz up "My Bonnie," and while getting down for the nitty gritty for "I Believe."

Few performers were so at home and so expressive at performing such a wide range of music. This DVD presents Charles at his greatest, and in addition to the terrific production, there is a booklet with Rob Bowman providing us the context for these performances.

This is a stellar DVD that should be of interest to many.

Ron Weinstock

jazz-blues.com



HARRY BELAFONTE
Sing Your Song: The Music
 SONY MASTERWORKS

Harry Belafonte's "Sing Your Song: The Music" (Sony Masterworks) has been issued to accompany the acclaimed documentary "Sing My Music" as well as his published autobiography "My Song: A Memoir By Harry Belafonte" (Knopf). The 17 performances here include some of his more famous ones as he developed from a folk troubadour to legendary singer, actor, social activist and an icon. It is a remarkable life he has lived and the music here is part of proof of that statement.

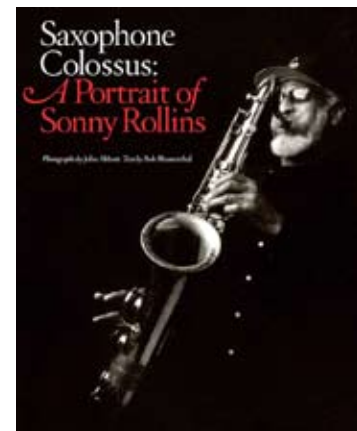
Opening with "Mark Twain" and Leadbelly's loving ballad "Sylvie" backed by just a guitar (and in the case of the latter number a vocal chorus) the warmth of Belafonte's singing is evident. I was not familiar with his rendition of Lord Melody's "Mama Look a Boo Boo," but it was one of his earliest recordings of Calypso which he helped popularize and others (written with his collaborator Lord Burgess) include the brassy "Cocoanut Woman," and "Banana Boat Song (Day-0)." The latter number helped make his album "Calypso 1956" the first album to exceed 1 million copies sold. Mixed in with lovely ballads such as "Scarlet Ribbons (For Her Hair)," it helps explain his great popularity (and of course his looks did not hurt at all).

He starred in the movie "Island In The Sun" and with Lord Burgess contributed the marvelous title song with a fine orchestra. There is also a lively rendition of the folk round, "Jump Down Spin Around," while his rendition of King Radio's calypso "Man Smart (Woman Smarter)" became covered by the Grateful Dead and The Carpenters among others. "Jamaica Farewell" is another familiar Belafonte classic as he sings about leaving his little girl in Kingston Town. Belafonte's regular accompanist at the time, Millard Thomas, has lovely acoustic guitar breaks on this, and it is followed by "Mathilda" another of his celebrated recordings.

His musical horizons would expand to incorporate African sounds as on a lovely vocal duet with Miriam Makeba, "My Angel (Malaika)," initially set against a soft guitar and percussion backing. "Jump In the Line" is a brassy song for the Trinidad Carnival that will be familiar from those who have seen the movie "Beetlejuice" (several other of these songs were also in

that movie's soundtrack). A duet with Odetta "A Hole in the Bucket," from a 1959 television special still is highly amusing over fifty years later. "Turn the World Around" with its afro-beat rhythm was recorded in the US but never issued in the US, although Belafonte did perform this with The Muppets and some will know it from that. "Can't Cross Over (River Come Down)" comes from that same 1977 session.

Obviously this compilation only scratches the surface of Belafonte's remarkable recording career. There are two subsequent studio albums and several concert recordings that post-date the music on this. However "Sing Your Song: The Music" stands up as a terrific selection of Harry Belafonte's music, and the insert includes notes on all the songs. This is highly recommended.
Ron Weinstock



SAXOPHONE
COLOSSUS:
A PORTRAIT OF SONNY ROLLINS

Photographs by
John Abbott,

Text by
Bob Blumenthal

2010 NEW YORK: ABRAMS

Sonny Rollins has turned 80 and part of the celebration is a superb new coffee table book, Saxophone Colossus: A Portrait of Sonny Rollins (Abrams 2010) with Photographs by John Abbott and text by Bob Blumenthal.

Photographer Abbott has been photographing Rollins for twenty odd years and was JazzTimes cover photographer for a number of years. The images in here come from a variety of sources including festival and concert performances as well as at his home, both his former apartment near the World Trade Center and upstate from New York City. There are a number of formal portraits mixed with Sonny in a silhouette with a festival audience in front of him. There are shots of members of Sonny's Bands in some of the performance shots as well as some of individuals who had associations with Sonny over the years including a 2002 portrait of Max Roach.

There are also pictures of Sonny with Roy Haynes

and Christian McBride taken around the time of Sonny's concert to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of his Carnegie Hall Concert, and backstage as he examines album covers of his older vinyl albums that have been brought for signature. Black & White and Sepia toned images mix with color images and all are marvelously reproduced.

Simply put, as a book of photographs of Sonny Rollins, one would have little trouble recommending this volume. Additionally it has the musings of Blumenthal on Sonny Rollins and his music. The book is divided into 5 chapters, each named for one of the tunes that Rollins recorded on the album *Saxophone Colossus*, which enables Blumenthal to provide some musical commentary on Rollins' music and life. He not only discusses the specific performance but also a variety of other recordings and performances, and includes some discussion of the views towards Sonny's music.

This is obviously not a full biography of Sonny Rollins or a full detailed discussion of Sonny's music, but Blumenthal's discussion and the listing of performances in the Appendix provides a concise guide to the central core of Sonny Rollins' considerable musical legacy.

Ron Weinstock



MILES DAVIS
Live at Montreux
Highlights
1973-1991
EAGLE ROCK ENT DVD

This Miles at Montreux DVD was released this past summer as a kind of prelude and a teaser to the mammoth 10-DVD set of Miles Montreux concerts Eagle released in October, which is featured on our cover and lead story in this issue. It features over 2 hours of music beginning with "Ife" in 1973 and ending with "Solea" in 1991. The eight songs in between come from his shows at the prestigious Swiss festival in the years 1984 (Speak: That's What Happened"), 1985 (Code MD" and "Pacific Express"), 1986, (Jean Pierre"), 1988 "Heavy Metal Prelude"), 1989 ("Jo Jo"), 1990 ("Han-

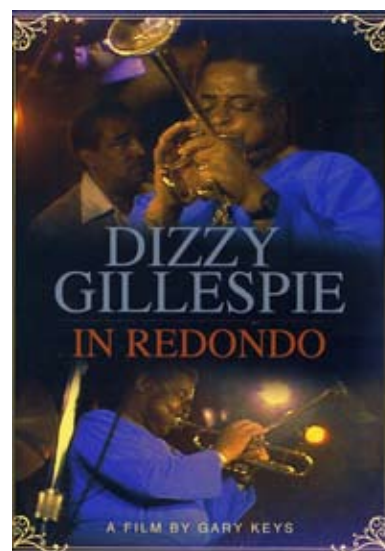
nibal") and 1991 ("The Pan Piper" and "Solea").

Naturally, in true Miles fashion, the band changes with each appearance over the various years featuring such players as David Liebman, John Scofield, Kenny Garrett, Bob Berg, Al Foster, Robben Ford and others, with a red hot guest appearance from David Sanborn on "Jean Pierre." Another highlight is the work of percussionist Marilyn Mazur on "Heavy Metal Prelude."

In 1973 Miles really didn't play much, playing some notes and bursts here and there and piddling around on the organ, while sporting mighty big hair with sunglasses that filled half his face. Nonetheless, the music is first rate with his rock edge of the period. He then took several years off from performing (for health reasons) and when he returned to Montreux in 1984 he was in great form, and pretty much was for the remaining shows. You can see him aging over the years, and the last two songs are acoustic recreations from his "Sketches of Spain" album, "The Pan Piper" and "Solea," along with an orchestra conducted by Quincy Jones (since Gil Evans had passed on). Over the years his sunglasses became tamer, and now he was wearing old-fashioned reading glasses. This would be Miles' last Montreux performance, as he passed away just three months later.

There is no question that this would make a fantastic gift for any fan of Miles' later work. Of course, an even better gift would be the 10-DVD set for those who can afford it. I certainly wish I could!

Bill Wahl



DIZZY GILLESPIE
Dizzie Gillespie
In Redondo
MVD VISUAL DVD

This 60-minute film by producer/director Gary Keys captures the playful trumpeter and his team in a live-recorded 1981 intimate set before a full house at the Concerts By The Sea jazz club in Redondo Beach, California.

Joining Dizzy on the crowded stage are saxophonist Pacquito D'Rivera, trombonist Tom MacIntosh, guitarist Ed Cherry (whose surname is misspelled in the cap-

tions), pianist Valerie Capers, drummer Tom Campbell, bassist Ray Brown, and electric bassist Michael Howell. Each musician gets plenty of moments in the spotlight as the band stretches out on the four main tunes.

The casually-dressed crew (except for Brown who's wearing a suit jacket) launches with a cookin' take on "Be Bop" with fine solos all-around. Dizzy takes melody head on a 17-minute version of his original, "Kush." They serve up a 10-minute rendering of "Birk's Works" and an 18-minute impromptu slow blues number called, "I'm Hard of Hearing Mama," which features vocals from then 63-year-old Dizzy. As the credits roll, the band plays about three minutes of a funk-laced "Jazz In America."

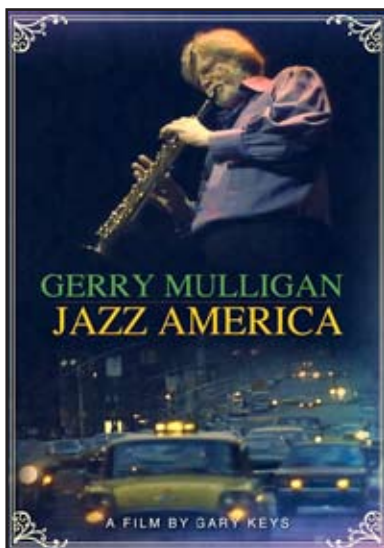
A few brief, interspersed off-stage interview clips with Gillespie present him snappily dressed but his comments add little of musical or biographical value. One can forgive some of the technical distractions because of the first-rate musicianship and the onstage banter. There are no notes.

Relaxed and friendly, the appealing performance whizzes by all too soon. *Nancy Ann Lee*

on soprano sax), "North Atlantic Run," and (my two favorites) "Song For Strayhorn" and "K-4 Pacific." The tune dedicated to Ellington band composer Billy Strayhorn contains one of the prettiest melodies of the set and the dramatic, traveling, time-shifting 'K-4' tune, Mulligan explains, is inspired by a steam locomotive that traveled from Philadelphia to Chicago. Gary Keys' cinematography provides tight close-ups from four cameras without any special effects and sound quality is excellent.

A multi-talented arranger, composer, saxophonist and conductor, Mulligan (b. 1927, d. 1996) is probably best known for his compositions and arrangements that led to the landmark recording, *Birth of the Cool*, which marked a new direction in jazz, departing from the bebop style.

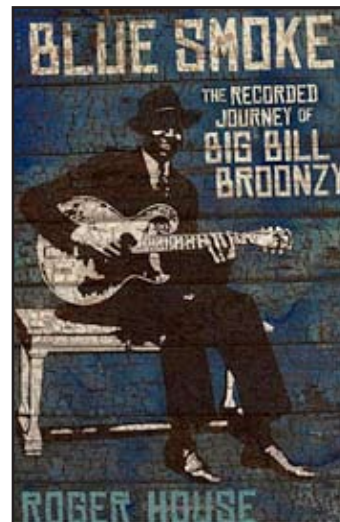
This intimate live performance by one of the world's most widely respected and revered jazz musicians documents him at the peak of his career, the same year he won a Grammy Award for "Best Jazz Instrumental Performance by a Big Band" for his DRG album *Walk on the Water*. *Nancy Ann Lee*



**GERRY
MULLIGAN**
Jazz America
MVD VISUAL DVD

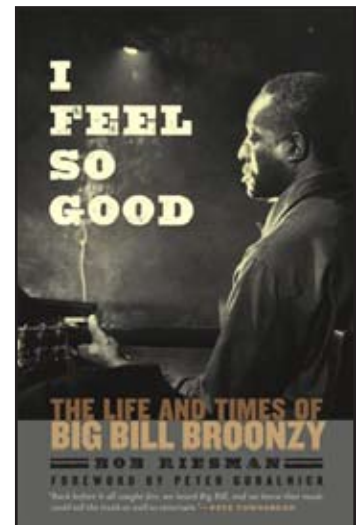
This 60-minute DVD captures baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan's quartet performing at Eric's in New York City. Filmed by Gary Keys, the set was likely originally produced for California's KCET television. Before starting the 1981 set, the film opens with a few minutes of interview snippets interspersed with Mulligan's riffs.

Mulligan is charming and friendly throughout the entire live performance, announcing the seven tunes and providing details behind some of his originals performed with pianist Harold Danko, bassist Frank Luther and drummer Billy Hart. Tunes include "17 Mile Drive," "Around About Sundown," "For An Unfinished Woman," "Walk on the Water" (featuring Mulligan



**BLUES SMOKE: THE RECORDED
JOURNEY OF BIG BILL BROONZY**

Roger House
2010: LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS



**I FEEL SO GOOD: THE LIFE AND TIMES
OF BIG BILL BROONZY**

Bob Riesman
2011: UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

It is rather intriguing that two books on the life and music of legendary Chicago bluesman Big Bill Broonzy have been published within a year. I had purchased and read, "Blue Smoke" by Roger House when I became aware of Bob Riesman's "I Feel So Good: The Life and Times of Big Bill Broonzy." The latter book provides a very different book than House's and, as discussed below, is the preferred biography of Broonzy, although House's book, while consolidating information that was known when he

wrote it, is valuable as a cultural history of Broonzy and his songs, but accepts perhaps too much of Broonzy's sometimes fanciful autobiography "Big Bill's Blues: William Broonzy's Story As Told To Yannick Bruynoghe."

For those who are not familiar with him, Broonzy was a very popular blues singer, guitarist and songwriter who had moved from the deep South after World War I and was mentored by Papa Charlie Jackson and Blind Blake before commencing a recording career in 1927 when Paramount issued his "House Rent Stomp." By the mid-1930s he had become established as a popular recording artist who recorded regularly for what was known then as Race Records series and, after World II, "Rhythm and Blues." Such songs as "Key to the Highway," "It Was a Dream," "When I Get to Drinking," "I Feel So Good," "Southbound Train" and others established Broonzy as a major star in the Chicago blues world and became part of the blues repertoire. He also played a significant role in the live club scene and was ready to take someone under his wing to mentor.

Broonzy also was one of the first bluesmen to cross over to a more general audience, starting with his appearance at the fabled "From Spirituals To Swing" concerts that John Hammond presented at Carnegie Hall in the late 1930s. Broonzy was a replacement for Robert Johnson who Hammond originally sought, but had died before he had been contacted. It was the beginning of a relationship with the white audience that included performing at the famed Cafe Society, concerts organized by Alan Lomax at Carnegie Hall and other venues in the late forties, and he later participated in early folk revival concerts in the United States, and he was amongst the earliest 'folk' bluesmen to tour Europe where he had lengthy engagements as well as developed some close personal relationships. His repertoire included 'folk songs' including those associated with other artists like Leroy Carr or Leadbelly, reworked renditions of his commercial recordings and protest songs like "Black, Brown and White."

House's "Blue Smoke" is a less detailed attempt at a biography. It is reliant on "Big Bill's Blues" for facts on Broonzy's early life as well as until he moved up north. He takes the basic parameters presented in the books, such as the claim of his parents being together during slave time, being born in Mississippi, serving in Europe in World War I and leaving the South after experiencing the white supremacist backlash against blacks after he returned from the War. The problem is that Broonzy's account of his early days is a fantasy that reflects the image that Broonzy wishes to project about his origins, but is not consistent with some of the facts of Broonzy's early life. That said, it isn't the only source of information on Broonzy's early life as Broonzy wrote a short account for Art Hodes magazine "The Jazz Record" and was also interviewed by Alan Lomax.

House's strength is focusing on Broonzy and his recording in the socio-cultural context they took place in. Broonzy was one of many blacks that migrated from the racist deep South to the urban North and places his music in the context of the house and rent parties, taverns and theaters and shared experiences the migrants had in the northern urban ghettos. He traces Broonzy's recording

career from Papa Charlie Jackson's introduction of him to Paramount Records through his establishing himself as one of the most recorded blues artists in the thirties and forties. Broonzy's recordings evolved from guitar duets where Broonzy displayed the influence of the great Blind Blake, to spectacular piano-guitar duets with Black Bob, and Joshua Altheimer, and then the small group blues with horns with Memphis Slim and Blind John Davis.

In considering Broonzy's crossing over to white audiences starting with the Spiritual to Swing, House does not note that Broonzy was a replacement for the dead Robert Johnson, and notes how Broonzy was presented as an authentic primitive in contrast to his status as a significant urban blues artist of the time. But while he recites facts about Broonzy's life, he also does not go into depth about, for example, the relationship Broonzy had with Lil Green, which went beyond simply playing guitar on many of her sessions, but also writing songs for her and accompanying her on early tours before she was connected with Tiny Bradshaw's Big Band.

After the roughly 160 pages on Broonzy, "Blue Smoke" also contains an extensive and invaluable 60-odd-page discography of all known recordings that Broonzy made as well as those by other artists on which he played. While flawed as a biography, there are insights and issues raised as well as some astute consideration of Broonzy's music that makes it worth considering. I do not regret purchasing this book despite its flaws.

Bob Riesman's "I Feel So Good" stands as the biography on Broonzy. Going beyond the mostly library sources of House's book, Riesman described the challenges he faced:

"Over the course of researching and writing the book, I've learned that Bill was exemplary in many respects, flawed in others, and capable of exquisitely contradictory behavior. He left invaluable material for future historians by writing dozens of letters to correspondents in Europe, Great Britain, and the United States, who preserved many of them. During the same period, he provided substantial amounts of misleading or just plain wrong information about himself, his family, and his colleagues to interviewers, readers, and audiences on three continents that would take decades to untangle.

Because of Bill's success at what magicians call misdirection—directing the audience's attention away from where the crucial action is being performed—the challenges facing a would-be biographer have not been simple or straightforward. He specified incorrect marriage dates to wives whose names he changed in the telling, heaped praise on a favorite uncle who is absent from all family records and memories, relocated his own birth to a different state and set it in a different decade, and gave himself different first and last names. It turned out that it was necessary to retrace his steps in Europe to find out who he was and where he came from."

Key to uncovering this was when he interviewed "Pim van Isveldt, the Dutch woman with whom he had fathered a son, Michael, in 1956. "Near the end of our conversation, Pim handed me a shoebox in which she had kept

the many letters Bill had written her. He had written one of them while visiting his sister, Lannie Bradley Wesley, in North Little Rock, Arkansas. Her home address, which Bill had given as the return address, was a vital clue.”

He would later meet and interview Broonzy’s grand-niece and grand-nephew, who helped establish some of the facts that Broonzy obscured. “Bill’s imaginative powers enabled him to obscure his origins and many portions of his journeys, while illuminating the worlds he grew up in and passed through. In my view, Bill’s life and work can best be understood and appreciated by considering both the facts and the truth—as Studs Terkel put it, “Bill is speaking the truth—his truth.” Here is my version of Big Bill Broonzy’s story.”

In the course of compiling this story he interviewed countless people including blues man Billy Boy Arnold (who was mentored by Big Bill and is scheduled to have an album of Broonzy’s music released), members of Broonzy’s family, Bill Randle who produced the last interviews of Broonzy, Studs Terkel, David ‘Honeyboy’ Edwards, B.B. King, Eric Clapton, Pete Seeger, Rambling Jack Elliott, Jody Williams, Jimmie Lee Robinson and Ron Sweetman. He also explored the archives of Yannick Bruynoghe, and Jim O’Neal provided tapes of an interview with Blind John Davis and a transcript of one with Memphis Slim. This is just to give a sense of the depth of research and material used for this biography.

And through his research (collaborated by other blues researchers), we know that Big Bill Broonzy’s real name is Lee Bradley and he was born in Jefferson County, Arkansas on June 26, 1903, the fourth and last boy of Frank and Mittie Bradley, and the Bradley Family lived in Jefferson County outside Pine Bluff from the 1880s through the 1920s.

While from the 1930s on Broonzy claimed he was born in Scott, Mississippi, ten years earlier than his actual birth date, Riesman observes, “the documentary evidence is clear that the facts are otherwise. Lannie Bradley Wesley’s granddaughter Rosie Tolbert keeps the family records. She and her older sister Jo Ann Jackson remember their uncle Bill and his sister (their grandmother Lannie), their great-grandmother Mittie, their great-uncle Frank Bradley Jr., and their great-aunts Gustavia and Mary. The censuses of 1900, 1910, and 1920 all show Frank and Mittie Bradley and their children living at home in Jefferson County. Tax records, marriage licenses, Social Security applications, and death certificates all confirm and reinforce the fact that Big Bill Broonzy was Lee Bradley of the Bradley clan.” Yet while he might misdirect on specifics as to his family and his early dates, Big Bill provided “an indelible sense of what it was like to be in a particular place at a particular time. This was both his gift and his artistry.” The truths he spoke were more general truths than the life he may actually have lived.

Riesman helps us understand and follow his life in considerable detail. The book opens with a chapter with an account of Broonzy’s funeral and notes that the arrangements were taken care of by Win Stracke, who had toured the Midwest with Big Bill in a folk song review, as well as also appearing on Studs Terkel’s radio program,

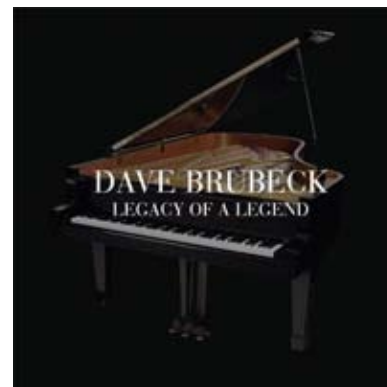
and he helped launch Big Bill’s European concerts tours. Bill trusted Win enough to name him executor of the estate. While House summarizes Broonzy’s funeral, Riesman goes into depth about the participants and their roles and the deliberate choice of four black and four white pallbearers.

Riesman continues in tracing his musical career as a country fiddler, often playing for white folk, to the brilliant guitarist who became the preeminent blues artist in Chicago. More context is placed in discussing his appearance at “From Spirituals To Swing,” including the fact that Blind Boy Fuller was in jail, led to Broonzy, not Fuller, being the ‘primitive’ blues artist in lieu of the deceased Robert Johnson. He covers more fully Bill’s performances in taverns as well as touring with Lil Green. The time he spent in Iowa is also fully detailed as is the European travels, with much new information presented that gives a sense of him as a person and how he was regarded by so many from such different backgrounds.

I read a proof of Riesman’s text, which included footnotes, a selected discography (actually recommended reissues) and Big Bill on film. It did not include photographs that likely will be in the published version nor an index.

“I Feel So Good” was a compelling read and a biography worthy of the subject, whose blues are timeless. Highly recommended.

Ron Weinstock



DAVE BRUBECK

Legacy of a Legend

SONY / LEGACY 2CD SET

As a kick-off to a year-long 90th birthday campaign at Legacy Records, the label has just released this 2-CD set for which Brubeck hand picked the 21 tracks as he looked back the quartet’s 17 years with Columbia Records.

The program opens with a track from their first studio album in 1955, “Jeepers Creepers,” and closes with two tracks featuring Gerry Mulligan from 1970, “Out of Nowhere” and “St. Louis Blues.” In between, Dave has picked songs culled from 19 different albums spanning the years from 1955 through 1957.

Most are the famous quartet with alto saxophone master Paul Desmond, bassist Eugene Wright and drummer Joe Morello, but there is also a track from the 1960 album Brubeck did with Jimmy Rushing, a song called “Evenin’,” and two tracks from the album “The Real

Ambassadors,” released in 1961 showcasing several singers. Included here are “My One Bad Habit,” featuring Carmen McRae, and “Summer Song,” featuring Louis Armstrong.

Two songs from the album “Time Out,” the first jazz album to sell a million copies, are here with the quartet’s most famous song, Desmond’s “Take 5,” along with “Blue Rondo a la Turk.” Another song from that album, “Three To Get Ready,” is featured, but in a previously unreleased live version from 1967. The enclosed booklet contains liner notes and annotations written by Brubeck’s son Darius. This is without a doubt a sweet treat for any Brubeck fan out there – or someone you’d like to become one.

Bill Wahl



WES MONTGOMERY

Movin': The Complete Verve Recordings HIP-O-SELECT 5-CD BOX SET

The great Wes Montgomery is celebrated in a new box set, “Movin': The Complete Verve Recordings,” from Verve through the Hip-O-Select, which like Verve is part of the Universal Music Group. Like other recent Hip-O-Select box sets, this comes in the form of a hard cover book which contains substantial annotations from Wall Street music journalist Marc Myers (who also does the excellent jazzwax.com blog) along with five CDs that contain all the substantial musical legacy that Montgomery produced for Verve, after his important, innovative and influential Riverside recordings. My only quibble with the packaging is that the pages used to contain the CDs (which contain session information) hold the CDs in a manner that makes it slightly difficult to extract and return the CDs to the sleeves without getting one’s fingerprints on the shiny side of the disc.

Myers essay is entitled “Birth of the Mod,” and gives an overview of Montgomery’s career with a focus on the Verve recordings. While comfortable in his hometown Indianapolis, Wes nevertheless became a major jazz performer through his association with the Riverside label. The death of Riverside’s Bill Grauer was eventually followed by bankruptcy. Without a record label, Montgomery signed with Verve and Creed Taylor who was one of its primary jazz producers and had been working with Jimmy Smith, Stan Getz and others. Myers details the recording of the eight albums by Montgomery on Verve, which marked some of Taylor’s

earliest jazz-pop experimentations and which turned the guitarist into a jazz-pop avatar, to quote Myers.

With Verve, Taylor mixed recordings of jazz standards, popular numbers and show numbers often with big bands that still had Montgomery’s guitar in front. From the first moments of his initial “Movin’ Wes” to the collaborations with Jimmy Smith, Montgomery’s brilliant fretwork was on display. While some of his recordings like the rendition of “People” on the Johnny Pate arranged first album employed fadeouts, like pop 45s, others like his rendition of the Duke Ellington classic “Caravan” were front and center burners. And it wasn’t simply Johnny Pate, as Taylor also employed Don Sebesky, Claus Ogerman and Oliver Nelson for other big band sessions.

Not to be forgotten among these big band sessions are the sessions with the Wynton Kelly Trio that included some live recordings. Jimmy Cobb, the trio’s drummer, recalls that Montgomery was somewhat uncomfortable with the commercial material, and that it was beneath what he was capable of. Myers explains how Montgomery, despite initially resisting such material, became more comfortable with it employing the example of “Going out of My Head.” After first resisting the simplicity of the material, Montgomery would make a Grammy winning recording, working out stuff with Grady Tate before the recording.

Yet as the recordings with Wynton Kelly and later the collaborations with Jimmy Smith make most evident, Montgomery had matured but remained the brilliant improviser, mixing single notes chords and octaves, and the best of the orchestrations simply add punch to this brilliance. But even when simply embellishing a melody as on “Going Out Of My Head,” his tone and note placement produced magic. When Montgomery and Smith collaborate on “Down By the Riverside” or “Milestones,” with terrific Oliver Nelson charts the, sparks fire. Then there are the small group sides by Smith and Montgomery with just Grady Tate and Ray Barretto on “King of the Road” and “Baby Its Cold Outside” that makes one wish they had recorded more.

It is almost impossible to find any recording here that doesn’t possess at least some musical magic, even the tracks with some imperfections that remained unissued at the time of recording. Of course some of the alternates and other tracks have been subsequently reissued. Unless one has an extensive collection of the source CDs, this is a must for fans of Wes Montgomery and/or jazz guitar.

Ron Weinstock

VARIOUS

Blues And The Alligator:

The First Twenty Years Of Alligator Records GAZELL RECORDS DVD

While Alligator is celebrating its 40th Anniversary, MVD Visual has issued “Blues and the Alligator: The First Twenty Years of Alligator Records,” making available Jim Downing’s film from 1990 that has been issued by Gazell Film. The documentary is a mix of performance



clips and interviews that serve to provide an overview of what led Bruce Iglauer to start his label and how it grew to become one of the most important (if not the most) labels producing new blues music.

The film opens with Lonnie Brooks in the studio recording with his band and Bruce in the control room discussing levels and such with the engineer before we start getting into

Bruce talking about his background and how Alligator got started. We see him at the studio as well as in his office having a business meeting with staff. The performance clips include a number of gems including a small excerpt of a band on Maxwell Street playing "You Don't Love Me," a fuzzy black & white film of Hound Dog Taylor, followed by a live club shot of Lil Ed & the Blues Imperials.

Kenny Neal & Billy Branch's duo album was contemporaneous with this film and a back porch performance by the two of "Devil Child" is followed by the two talking. We then are taken to a public school where Billy Branch is conducting a "Blues in the School" program with the kids singing and playing "Stormy Monday," and then starting Jimmy Reed's "Baby What you Want Me To Do" before we are taken to a clip of Kenny Neal and Lucky Peterson handling this.

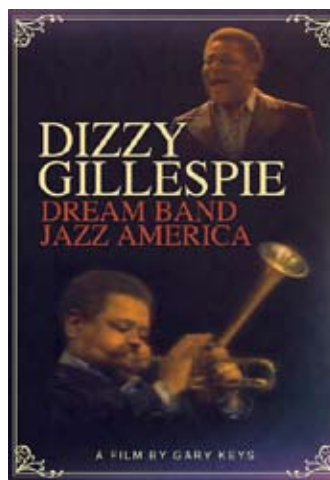
No question that through Alligator and her recordings for them, Koko Taylor became internationally known as the "Queen of the Blues" and was able to enjoy a recording career as opposed to housework. Recognition of her stature is reflected by showing her sing the "Star Spangled Banner" at Comiskey Park before Bruce and then Koko discuss how life has indeed changed. Koko with Lonnie Brooks doing a strong "It's a Dirty Job" follows this.

Bruce talks about how the blues has changed and ironically how Alligator has taken its artists from its roots playing in the community as they seek bigger paychecks and a bigger audience. As a result, the blues as they perform it has changed. Magic Sam's recording of "Sweet Home Chicago" segues into a hot live rendition by Brooks that takes this film to its close. It is a nice end to what certainly is an intriguing look back at Alligator. BTW, it is about time Robert Mugge's film on Alligator "Pride and Joy" made it to DVD.

Ron Weinstock

DIZZY GILLESPIE **Dream Band Jazz America** **MVD VISUAL DVD**

This 89-minute DVD, a film by Gary Keys, documents an historic 1982 all-star Dream Band Jazz America concert in New York City at Lincoln Center, featuring Gerry Mulligan, Max Roach, Milt Jackson,

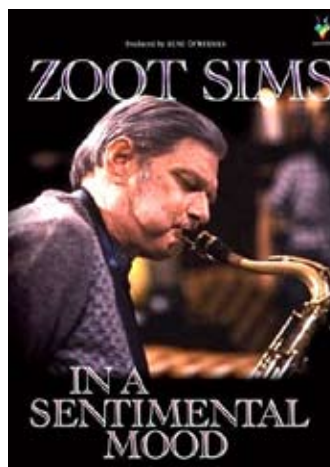


marks, "Manteca." What follows are Gillespie classics such as "A Night In Tunisia," "Groovin' High," "Tin Tin Deo," "Salt Peanuts," and more, including some 1952 Charlie Parker/Dizzy Gillespie film footage playing "Hot House" before a combo (featuring Dizzy, Roach, Jackson, Mulligan, Paul West on bass and John Lewis on piano) launches into that tune. Grady Tate is drummer for the first three numbers. Then Max Roach steps in with a 5:37-minute high-hat cymbals solo on "Mr. Hi Hat," a dedication to master drummer Papa Joe Jones who makes a cameo appearance onstage. The lone ballad, "Lover Man," features Jackson on vibes. As would be expected from these musicians, solos are impressive and cameras capture Dizzy's reactions to their creativity.

Many of these musicians are gone now, which makes this concert performance all that more treasurable. This is one film I'll want to watch over and over. It brings back memories of when I caught some of these musicians in other live performances, but this is a supreme gathering.

Backstage interview clips and Dizzy's humorous onstage antics boost the appeal of this outstanding concert DVD. Close-ups of the soloists and other smart camera work add to viewer enjoyment.

Nancy Ann Lee



ZOOT SIMS

In a Sentimental Mood
GAZELL RECORDS DVD

MVD Visual has released in the US the Gazell Records video of Zoot Sims, "In a Sentimental Mood." This video was filmed in November, 1984, just months before the tenor saxophonist passed away. It was filmed at the library of Sonet Records in Lidingo, Sweden with Sims backed by Bassist

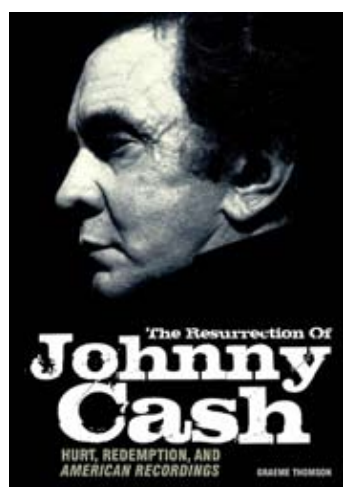
Red Mitchell and guitarist Rune Gustafsson. The library setting and the drummer-less trio make for an intimate performance. An interview by Mitchell of Sims (actu-

ally more of a conversation) is interspersed between the performances.

The performances focus on ballads starting with the Ellington classic that gives this DVD its title and ending with "Autumn Leaves." The swinging Sims was a master at ballad playing which, like his basic approach to the saxophone, reflected the influence of Lester Young, perhaps with a slight vibrato that might have been picked up from Ben Webster. Mitchell provides a foundation as Gustafsson lends some chords with each taking solo breaks. "Gone With the Wind" opens with somewhat more of a breathier sound, perhaps reflecting more Webster here (and Webster did record this on a session with Art Tatum).

The interview portions includes recollections of his early days, including a story of his time with Benny Goodman when he had a big apple on the stand and Benny had him solo and took the apple and kept gesturing for Sims to keep soloing as Goodman ate the apple. He recalls it was the longest solo he ever played with Benny. After Sims had talked about his early days on 42nd Street, Mitchell himself recalls playing with a trio opening for Charlie Parker at the Onyx Club, and Bird after the set comes by and speaks in a very proper Wasp-ish accent and asks Mitchell to play the next set with him. Mitchell thinks this isn't serious until Bird announces it from the bandstand.

The light banter complements the performances, with the filming centering mostly on the players faces and expressions. So we see Sims and his embouchure but little fingering, but there is plenty of character revealed in their faces as well as in the music. "In a Sentimental Mood" is a delightful video that fans of Sims' ballad mastery will certainly enjoy. **Ron Weinstock**



THE RESURRECTION OF JOHNNY CASH: HURT, REDEMPTION AND AMERICAN RECORDINGS

by Graeme Thomson
2011 - LONDON: JAW-BONE PRESS (254 PAGES)

While not a full biography, Graeme Thomson's "The Redemption of Johnny Cash" is a remarkably thorough examination of the revival of Johnny Cash's musical and career fortunes in the last years of his life. Cash of course emerged with Sun Records in the mid-fifties and then had a lengthy career on Columbia Records which included some major recordings, both thematic albums and "Live at Folsom Prison." The Man in Black also had a weekly television show where he had an intriguing mix of performers from Louis Armstrong to Bob Dylan.

But as the 1980s came, and with shifting person-

nel at Columbia as well as shifting musical trends and tastes, Cash found himself without a record contract as sales on his recordings dropped to the tens of thousands, well below what was required by the bean counters that were running the major labels. And as a concert act, he was increasingly a country oldies act, playing to older crowds that might flock to the Cash Theater in Branson, Missouri, or county and state fairs. And let's not talk about country radio, to which a new Cash release was no longer a must play. At the same time, Cash was having other personal battles including health issues and ongoing battles with addiction and a career that seemed directionless.

Thomson traces how the what superficially would seem to be the odd linkage between Cash and Rick Rubin, the head of Def Jam and Def American Records and known as the producer of hip hop and metal records. But it was a partnership that enabled Cash to return to prominence with nothing simpler than having him sing some songs accompanied solely by his own guitar. This simple idea recognized that Cash's strength was his personality as a performer, undiluted by lavish accompaniments and production. This was evident with his Sun Records sides and the best of his Columbia recordings. His music had an integrity that resonated with listeners that transcended fans of country music that had been diluted. Many high moments, and who can ever forget having seen the video for "Hurt."

Interviews with countless people including Rosanne Cash, Nick Lowe, Rodney Crowell, Will Oldham, 'Cowboy' Jack Clement, Adam Clayton of U2, Bruce Lundvall and others helps Thomson put together the story, taking us from the depths, to a show at the Viper Room in Hollywood, shortly after completing the "American Recordings," and to an unforgettable set in Glastonbury in 1994. The recordings, with what seemed as the time unusual choices of material, are detailed as well as his health struggles that he fought through the final recordings with Rubin, which includes a discussion of the production of Cash's posthumous recordings and how they were compiled.

Thomson is to be thanked for this terrific chronicle of Johnny Cash's last years. It is an excellent biography that is thoroughly researched, well written, handsomely published and will certainly appeal to fans of Cash as well as contemporary popular music.

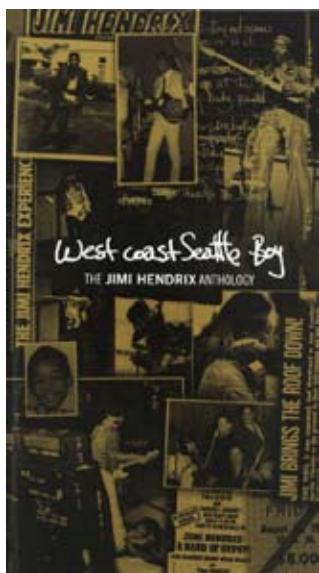
Ron Weinstock

WEST COAST SEATTLE BOY

**The Jimi Hendrix Anthology
EXPERIENCE HENDRIX/LEGACY 4-CD & 1-DVD SET**

There are a handful of musicians whose influence is such that listeners crave any and every note that can be turned up. Jimi Hendrix is one of these and this four disc-plus-DVD set goes a long way towards satisfying that urge for discovery. 40-plus previously unreleased tracks trace the legendary guitarist's path from R&B journeyman to rock superstar.

While the music is the main attraction, the package also includes a 60-page booklet with rare photos and



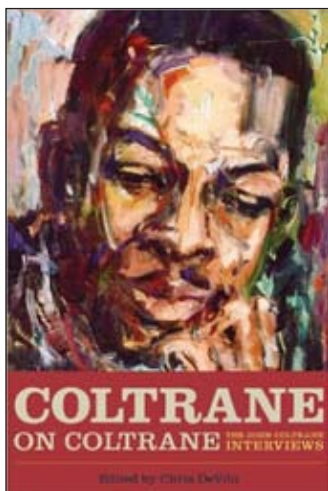
annotations on each track by John McDermott.

Beyond their sheer amusement value, the selections on the first disc, on which Hendrix works behind the Isley Brothers, Don Covay or Little Richard, reveal stylistic flashes that speak to his future work. It's hard not to hear his flourishes on early ballads and sense the roots of leads on "Little Wing" or "The Wind Cries Mary."

Alternate versions of several songs from *Are You Experienced* and *Axis:Bold As Love* bring interesting perspective to those pieces and mark Hendrix's "birth" as a producer. Supercharged "live" Fillmore East performances of "Fire," "Foxey Lady" and "Stone Free" speak for themselves. The most intriguing fare in this package might be the abundant demos, impromptu takes and works-in-transition performed by the Experience and Band Of Gypsies line-ups or mixes of the two.

While several would see the light of day, completed or edited, often posthumously, the collective creative energy displayed on these versions of "Room Full Of Mirrors," "Hey Baby (New Rising Sun)" and others suggest the Seattle Boy was far from finished when he left us.

Duane Verh



COLTRANE ON COLTRANE: THE JOHN COLTRANE INTERVIEWS

Edited by Chris DeVito
2010: A CAPELLA BOOKS -
CHICAGO REVIEW PRESS

The lead author of this John Coltrane reference, Chris DeVito, has provided an invaluable new volume that includes practically all of the published interviews

about John Coltrane, although also with articles, album liner notes (including Coltrane's notes and poem for "A Love Supreme") and similar pieces which have material where Coltrane is talking about himself and his music. Also included are lengthy interviews with a childhood friend from Coltrane's native High Point, NC, and a music teacher in Philadelphia. While some of the material may be familiar to some, there are a number of pieces that most will not be aware of. That said, it should be noted that the overwhelming majority of the interviews and articles will be new to the reader. Also it does not include the full text of Ralph Gleason's interview with Coltrane (only an excerpt

is provided), as the entire interview will be published in a book of Gleason's interviews that is coming out. Also, where the source tape is available, DeVito makes corrections and changes based on the tape such as on Frank Kofsky's interview, the lengthiest of the interviews with Coltrane published here.

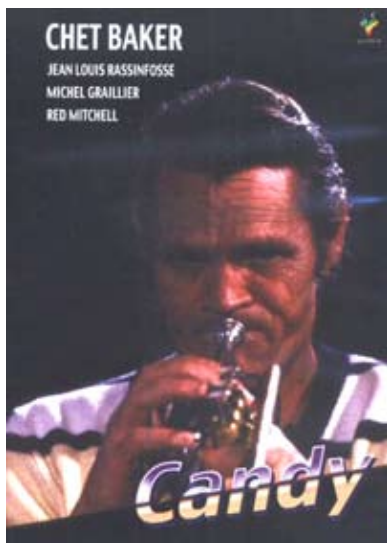
The earliest piece here is a 1952 Baltimore Afro-American account of a 1952 performance by Coltrane and Specs Wright followed by a previously unpublished interview by August Blume in 1958 when Coltrane was in Baltimore with the then new Miles Davis Quintet. The informality of the discussion, which was recorded without Coltrane's knowledge at the end, is fascinating as he discusses music, philosophy, religion and other performers. Coltrane's straight-forwardness comes across here and throughout the latter interviews. His humility and the fact he was constantly striving to improve himself as a musician and searching in his music is something repeated in various latter interviews and so many of the interviews note the contrast between the apparently 'angry' music and his calm and thoughtful responses, whether discussing how he tries to relate to audiences, reactions to he and Eric Dolphy being called anti-jazz (an infamous DownBeat article), how playing the soprano saxophone was affecting his playing of the tenor saxophone, and thoughts on members of his band and musicians he admired.

Interestingly, many of the interviews from the sixties after the famous DownBeat article where Coltrane and Dolphy respond to their critics, come from European publications and we get a sense of audience reactions to a live performance of "A Love Supreme" from some of the introductions and questions. Then there are concerns (and restraints) about playing in clubs and the quality of PA systems as opposed to concerts. While the issues of politics as well as racial discrimination do come up, the interview with Kofsky is perhaps the one in which he discusses points at length. Also included is an invaluable remembrance of Coltrane with Babatunde Olantunji with whom Coltrane was a friend and eventually a collaborator, and Coltrane helped open the Olantunji Center of African Culture, which was the site of one of Coltrane's last performances and notes that Coltrane was withdrawing from certain performance venues because of a desire to have more self-determination over his music. Also included is a remembrance of Hod O'Brien that remembers Coltrane as an extremely generous man, who allowed O'Brien to take a break when he had not had a break for several hours and needed to use the facilities.

Chris DeVito has provided an invaluable service in bringing all this material together, despite some repetition of themes between some of the interviews. They do help provide a sense of this gentleman who was not simply one of the most significant musicians of the 20th Century, but a man to be admired on so many other levels.

Ron Weinstock

jazz-blues.com



CHET BAKER Candy GAZELL RECORDS DVD

A companion of sorts to the Zoot Sims DVD "In a Sentimental Mood," MVD Visual has released in the US the Gazell Records DVD of Chet Baker, "Candy." Like the Sims video it is an intimate trio recording that finds the trumpeter in the library of Sonet Records in Lidin-go, Sweden with Sims backed by pianist

Michel Graillier and bassist Jean Louis Raissinfosse with one duet with bassist Red Mitchell, resident in Stockholm at the time, who also conducts a brief interview with him.

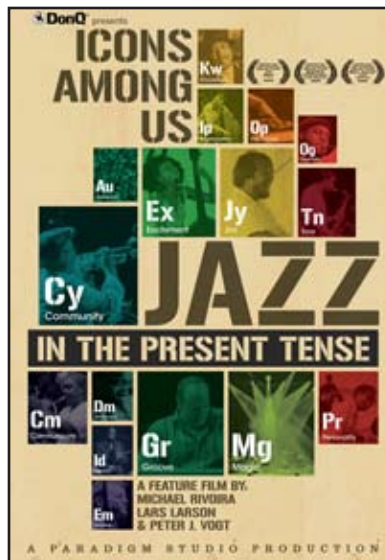
Performances are introduced by the song-titles and the CD opens with Baker taking the vocal on "Candy," before his trumpet solo. While by the time this was recorded, Baker's James Dean-like looks had a weathery look; certainly the visual appeal of him is still apparent, as is the genial melodicism of his approach. Bassist Raissinfosse sets the tone on his 5-string electric upright bass providing a bass line to anchor the performance of "Love For Sale," with more lyrical playing from Baker and some nice piano by Graillier. It's followed by a lively version of Bud Powell's Tempus Fugue-It," and the bluesy late-night feel of "Sad Walk."

The trio portion concludes with a nice "Red's Blues" some nice playing by all, Miles Davis's "Nardis" with a slight exotic flavor and the standard "Bye Bye Blackbird," which of course many know of from Miles' classic recording. Baker's playing is suggestive of Miles and like Miles he focused on painting a mood rather than exhibit fleet technical facility, and his vocals similarly inhabited a narrow range but had such an expressive quality to them. One can't overlook pianist Graillier who turns in a nice blues solo on "Red's Blues, or Raissinfosse's firm playing throughout.

Mitchell and Baker are seen at a piano when Mitchell mentions that he was able to work out on piano some chords in playing "My Romance," and Baker stating it was among the first songs he recorded before the two of them play a duet of it with Mitchell playing piano. It is a fine way to end this engaging DVD. *Ron Weinstock*

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

jazz-blues.com



ICONS AMONG US: JAZZ IN THE PRESENT TENSE

PARADIGM STUDIO
(DVD 4-DISC SET)

People have been trying to define what jazz is for decades. Musicians themselves usually chafe at labels, in part because jazz has the capacity to absorb many other musical styles, blurring

the boundaries that shift with each new generation of players and each new performance.

This outstanding educational feature-length film was produced by John W. Comerford and directed by Michael Rivoira, Lars Larson and Peter J. Vogt. A theatrical version of the film was presented worldwide at jazz festivals, various institutions, and film festivals, and aired in 2009 on the Documentary Channel.

Now available to the public on four-discs, with extensive bonus features and a separate comprehensive 62-page study/discussion guide in pdf format on CD, the film compiles seven years of interviews with over 80 living jazz artists and many hours of live performances in venues from around the U.S. and Europe. Despite numerous interview slices and performance shots, the film is efficiently assembled without seeming choppy or disorganized--a credit to editing by Kristian R. Hill.

How people perceive jazz and the commercial value of the art form covers a lot of the film. Veterans and younger musicians intelligently comment on what they believe jazz is today.

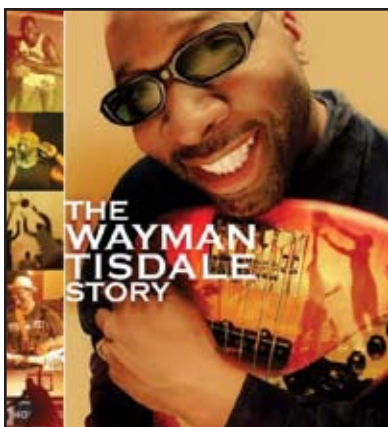
Included are interviews with Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Terence Blanchard, Ravi Coltrane, Jason Moran, Bill Frisell, Gretchen Parlato, Matthew Shipp, Charlie Hunter, Donald Harrison and numerous others. Commenting on the commercial value of jazz and minimal jazz record sales, executive director of Earshot Jazz John Gilbreath claims, "We're sitting on a powder keg of incredible creative potential that may make a bang that very few people will hear."

Jazz is perhaps best described by keyboardist Marco Benevento who states, "Everybody's playing a different version of 12 notes, all at the same time. So call it what you want. It's 12 notes, man. It sounds easy but there's a million combinations."

Focusing not on the legends of the past but on modern players into the future, the film has educational value for widespread viewing and extended discussion in the classroom and among jazz fans.

First-rate video and audio quality and the attentive way the 90-minute film is presented make this, to date, the best documentary on jazz that's ever been produced.

Nancy Ann Lee



WAYMON TISDALE

The Wayman Tisdale Story

RENDEZVOUS RE-
CORDS CD/DVD

I admit it. I'm a music snob who changes the station at the first hint of elevator music. So when my editor asked me to review this album and DVD, I agreed to do it but not without a significant roll of the eyes first. Wayman Tisdale...sure, I'd heard of him. Ex-NBA player turned musician, passed a few years ago...

So I went out to Amazon, to minimize the amount of time I would spend in the elevator waiting to get my teeth drilled and decide how I might write the most positive review possible in the shortest amount of time. This review is to appear in our gift guide issue... 'tis the season!

To my surprise, I found that this elevator moves to a funky beat and lovely melodies. This music makes you happy and I admit it. So, OK – I thought that I would watch the DVD to find a quotable quote and got another surprise. Now here I have another admission, frankly, I didn't know if a DVD chronicling the last couple of years of a man's life would be appropriate fare to include in the gift guide...as cold as that sounds, I considered putting it off to another issue.

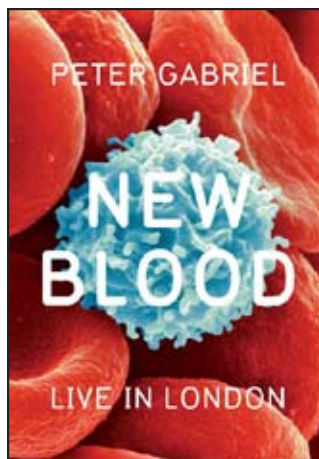
But it was in the DVD player so I hit play. Am I ever glad that I did! If I had not, I would have cheated myself out of knowing much more about this man who had a palpable joy for life. No anger at the random nature of illness, as the man said, "...it's just something he had to deal with." And he did so with grace and love and gratitude for the gifts that he had been given in life- particularly the gift of music.

Yes, he was blessed with athletic ability but even more blessed by the people around him and his family and his faith and Wayman Tisdale expressed all those things through his music, through his life and through his example. This man made me like things that I never thought I would...Oklahoma, basketball, smooth jazz and, dare I say it (anyone who knows me please avert your eyes)...Toby Keith! The last cut, Cryin for Me (Wayman's Song) is a beautiful, heartfelt tribute.

For those of you who are already Wayman Tisdale fans, this set is a must have especially if you were a fan of his music without having known any more than I did about the man. As musicians in the documentary say, "he's for real!" A gifted man with a trillion dollar smile always at the ready, his wisdom, moral strength and love for humanity are rarely seen in anyone, let alone someone who spent only 44 years on this planet.

Tisdale is interviewed repeatedly throughout the film and always with a smile. This album and companion DVD are a joy to watch and to listen to. Spend the money and gift someone (or yourself) to that lesson in love and living right, Wayman Tisdale.

Wanda Simpson



PETER GABRIEL

New Blood

Live in London

EAGLE VISION DVD

Peter Gabriel, timeless and contemporary, progressive and creative, never seems to disappoint. Unlike many of the bands, performers and young adult musical prodigies of the time, Gabriel has managed to avoid the trap of being pigeon-holed and eternally lashed to their past successes. Gabriel's

work has continued to grow over the years. His new work fits comfortably into the present while old favorites are always welcome.

Mood and music and performance art, all three are present and admirably accounted for in this concert DVD shot at the Hammersmith Apollo in March, 2011. The 46 piece New Blood orchestra shares the stage and marvelous arrangements for this performance. No bass, no guitar, no drum kit – Gabriel's idea for this performance was to rearrange all selections for this orchestra and the result is magical.

This DVD (also available in 3D) invites the audience to be right there in London as this full-blown piece of art is presented. Sound quality, camera angles and Steadicam shots paint a multi-dimensional artistic picture. LED art that enhances rather than distracts, and Gabriel's trademark vocals produce moods and reactions that sometimes give the audience the distinct impression that they themselves are a part of the arrangement. This video captures and holds on for the entire 162 minutes. Never ceasing to amaze, Gabriel succeeds once again in transporting those in attendance (or on a living room sofa) to another place and time. Some songs have a distinctly gothic flavor to them while in some instances, the presentation feels other worldly.

John Metcalfe, the musical director has come through in making Gabriel's vision a reality for one and all. The arrangements are thoughtful and complex while still flowing and floating over the listener. Backup vocals from Melanie Gabriel and Ane Brun round out the sound. Gabriel generously features Melanie (his daughter) and/or Ane on several songs. Melanie's solo on "Washing of the Water" (not on the 3D edition) clearly shows that talent runs in the family and Ane Brun on "Don't Give Up" are among the many stand out numbers included on this DVD.

Gabriel makes it extremely difficult to single out any song over any other. From the way he pays tribute to the past with renditions of "Red Rain" and "Solsbury Hill" to unconventional and beautiful treatments of songs like Paul Simon's "The Boy in the Bubble" and Lou Reed's proposal to Laurie Anderson "The Power of the Heart," Gabriel delivers every selection on this DVD like a present to the audience.

This DVD is essential for any Peter Gabriel fan as well as to those who are on the fence about their devotion. It is truly a feast for the eyes and for the ears. Highly recommended, presenting this DVD to someone who likes Gabriel this holiday season is more than a safe bet, it is a gift in every sense of the word.

Wanda Simpson

2010 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

ALBERT KING / STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN: IN SESSION STAX

A December 1983 television production "In Session" in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada featuring Albert King and Stevie Ray Vaughan has become legendary. The music has been available for years (and Stax reissued it a few years back) as has been the video of the television broadcast.

Now Stax has issued a deluxe DVD/CD set of "In Session" that includes three previously unissued performances on the DVD, which had been left out of the original broadcast because of time constraints. The previously unissued performances are signature songs of Albert, "Born Under A Bad Sign," and Stevie Ray, "Texas Flood," along with Albert doing the blues standard "I'm Going to Move to the Outskirts of Town."

While they had previously played together at Antoine's in Austin, Texas, this session was performed not too long after Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Texas Flood" was released. In the liner notes for this new release of this material Samuel Charters writes, "It was evident from the first choruses, that they were playing for each other. And that was the best audience either of them could ever have."

The music never lost its intensity, its quality of something very important being handed back and forth and there was time for Stevie and Albert to see where their ideas took them." It is a joy to watch the two interact, accompanied by organ, bass and drums who I would hazard a guess were Albert's rhythm section at the time.

Watching and listening to them, it is clear that Albert is the mentor and Stevie Ray, his student as Albert recalls seeing Stevie and talking about others who play a lot of notes but lack soul, but Stevie was always watching and learning.

Albert handles the bulk of the vocals and one watches them trade extended solos and play rhythm for each other. The vocals may be a tad restrained at the beginning of the performances, but as they get into them and get into their solos, there are some truly magical moments.

At times, one can't hear where Albert's playing begins from that of Stevie Ray as his playing here certainly shows King's influence on him with his phasing and tone, yet at other times, there is more in the vein of the post-war Texas blues guitar tradition.

The smiles they give for other's playing and the hug of the two at the end of the performance shows that they realized just how magical the performances were.

It was the last time they would share the stage together, and now all the magic of that December day in Hamilton is finally available. *Ron Weinstock*

PLAYING FOR CHANGE Playing For Change Live HEAR MUSIC DVD+CD

Several months ago I reviewed a recording by Grandpa Elliott, a New Orleans Street Singer who was associated with Playing For Change. At that time I noted that Playing for Change, according to its website (<http://www.playingforchange.com>), began as the brainchild of Grammy-winning music producer and engineer Mark Johnson. Utilizing innovative mobile audio/video techniques, Playing For Change records musicians outdoors in cities and townships worldwide. They have a single-minded passion to record little-known musicians.

The name Playing For Change evokes the coins thrown to street musicians as well as the transformation their music inspires. They also believe music can be a force to foster understanding and peace between persons of diverse backgrounds and cultures. They have an arrangement with Concord Records to allow dissemination of their recordings, one of which was the fine Grandpa Elliott CD. Now they have issued a combined CD/DVD package, "Playing For Change Live" (Playing For Change Records/Timeless Media). The concert DVD has two more performances than are on the CD as well as two bonus performances

Included are performances from several concerts in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada and Spain with a core group of musicians that travel and perform together which does seem to have varying personnel from tour to tour (I am basing this on the personnel on this CD/DVD set with a slightly different personnel for a fall 2010 US tour that is given on the website. Grandpa Elliott is present on this to contribute his harmonica and vocals and other members of the Playing For Change Band here on pretty much all the performances include vocalist Clarence Bekker from Amsterdam, Netherlands; guitarist Jason Tamba from Matadi, Congo; vocalist Mermans Kenkosenki from Matadi, Congo; vocalist Ruth 'Titi Tsira from Guguletu, South Africa; guitarist Louis Mhlanga from Harare, Zimbabwe and djembe by Mohammed Alidu from Tamale, Ghana.

There is a mix of classic blues, rhythm and blues and reggae songs mixed with African based performances. Grandpa Elliott opens up with a robust and exuberant "Fannie Mae," with Keb' Mo' guesting on guitar with the band and his later rendition of "Sugar Sweet" is only on the DVD. "Don't Worry" is an uplifting song with wonderful vocals from Bekker and Tsira as the band gets a strong reggae groove with Grandpa Elliott taking a solo break as well as guitarist Mhlanga who consistently plays some of the sweetest sounding guitar, with a precise attack that is rhythmically compelling.

Mermans Kenkosenki contributed "Back to the Roots" with a bit more African-reggae flavor again with such marvelous singing that bring so much warmth with the message of understanding and hope. The great Toots Hilbert is guest vocalist on a terrific rendition of Otis Redding's "I've Got Dreams to Remember," with supporting vocals from the aggregation. There are so many highlights including Titi Tsira's marvelous original "Fela Ngaye," as well as Ziggy Marley guesting on "Love is My Religion."

Bob Marley's "One Love" serves as the basis for the group to conclude the filmed portion of the DVD while the exhilarating treatment of "Stand By Me" on the DVD serves as backdrop for the credits. Interspersed between the performances on the film are back stage scenes and the performers talking about their background and what music has meant to them and how they came to join Playing For Change. Of the two bonus scenes, one is of Grandpa Elliott singing "Amazing Grace" without accompaniment while hugging a cancer patient who was a special guest at the performance due to the Make A Wish Foundation.

The singing is so good, the band is terrific and the non-performance film scenes show how in touring they have become as much a family as a performing troupe. The whole experience presented here has so much soul and joy about it. In case I have not been clear, this is highly recommended. It should be available from better vendors as well as from the Playing For Change website.

Ron Weinstock

RAY CHARLES

Genius + Soul = Jazz

CONCORD 2-CD SET

Concord continues its program of reissuing Ray Charles' classic output with a two-CD package, "Genius + Soul = Jazz" that makes available not only that release, but the three other jazz recordings Charles produced after leaving Atlantic Records, "My Kind of Jazz," "Jazz Number 2," and "My Kind of Jazz Part 3." It is an interesting chapter to Charles' musical legacy. Since he joined Atlantic, Charles' music more directly reflected a broad range of musical influences only hinted at his SwingTime recordings that were mostly in a Charles Brown vein but hinted at the mix of gospel, soul jazz and jump blues that he would meld into the Genius' unique style.

The title album was one of the first albums issued on Impulse records and had Ray on Hammond organ backed by the Count Basie band without its leader, and another session with other great jazz veterans of that era. With arrangements by Quincy Jones and Ralph Burns, Charles and the band turn out brassy renditions of originals like "From the Heart," a couple of vocals including a strong "I'm Gonna Move to the Outskirts of Town," a big band rendition of Bobby Timmons "Moanin'" and the instrumental rendition of the Clovers' hit "One Mint Julep," that was a #1 R&B hit and a top ten pop chart smash. Incidentally, Charles seemed to have a

soft spot for Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers because there are several other Jazz Messenger tunes adapted in these Jazz recordings in addition to the Bobby Timmons classic.

"My Kind of Jazz," the second album reissued in this set, was recorded in Los Angeles and Charles had such musicians as trumpeters Bobby Bryant and Blue Mitchell, and saxophonists Clifford Scott and Leroy Cooper, while Charles is on piano. The Blakey songbook is mined for Bobby Timmons' "This Here," while there are also renditions of Benny Golson's "I Remember Clifford," Lee Morgan's "Sidewinder" and Horace Silver's "Senor Blues." As Will Friedwald's annotation observes, Charles was among the instigators of the jazz waltz, including Toots Thielemann's "Bluesette." Charles contributed the original "Booty-Butt," to this and also the disc opens with a rendition of "Golden Boy," from the musical of the same name.

"Jazz Number 2" was recorded with the Ray Charles Orchestra that included Johnny Coles, Blue Mitchell, James Clay, David 'Fathead' Newman, Don Wilkerson and Leroy Cooper and opens with the four part "Our Suite," with some strong tenor sax, trumpet and baritone sax along with Luiz Bonfá's "Morning of Carnival (Manha de Carnaval)," and Teddy Edwards' marvelous "Brazilian Skies," both displaying a definite tropical flavor.

This flavor is also evident on Alf Calusen's "Samba De Elencia," on the final of the four albums compiled here, "My Kind of Jazz Part III," with a different Charles Band that still has James Clay and Leroy Cooper but now has Clifford Solomon (some may be familiar from his work with Charles Brown). Horace Silver's "Sister Sadie," is among the other performances while Benny Golson contributed an original, "Ray Minor Ray."

The fun of the performances here are they are solid swinging big band jazz with strong blues roots but definitely modern touches. A bonus track of "Misty" is included from a session led by trombonist Steve Turre, recorded nearly a quarter century after the latest of the big band sessions, with Charles spare piano complementing Turre's growling tailgate playing. This is a convenient package of Charles post-Atlantic recordings which should appeal to the Genius' fans as well as lovers of swinging big band jazz.

Ron Weinstock

BLUES IN BLACK & WHITE

The Landmark Ann Arbor Blues Festivals as photographed by Stanley Livingston

2010: ANN ARBOR, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS

In 1969 – two weeks prior to the Woodstock – the first Ann Arbor Blues Festival was held on the University of Michigan Campus. I neither attended Woodstock or the Ann Arbor Blues Festival. The Ann Arbor Blues Festival was the one of the two I wish I could have attended. It was a gathering of blues legends that one would never see the likes of again. In 1970 a second Blues Festival was held and then after a short hiatus, the festival returned as the Ann Arbor Blues & Jazz Festival for a few more years, with a somewhat broader

palette of music that now ranged from Son House to Sun Ra, the Art Ensemble of Chicago to Otis Rush. The University of Michigan Press has published “Blues in Black & White” a celebration of those path-making festivals centered around the marvelous photography of Stanley Livingston, one of several photographers who documented this event.

Livingston passed away in mid-September, 2010, but lived to see publication of this book that he worked on with his former photographic assistant, Tom Erlewine, who is the book’s editor and designer. The previously unpublished photos here were from thousands he took at the festivals. Livingston had never heard blues until he attended the first Ann Arbor Festival. He recalled, “When I arrived, Howlin’ Wolf was playing. I was struck by the intensity in his eyes. He had a scowling, expression, but then he’d smile just like a little baby. He was the greatest.”

Seeing Wolf and the others he knew he had to photograph them and that is what he did; and he did it so marvelously. The book presents candid backstage and performance shots that capture a young Luther Allison (Ann Arbor was a breakthrough performance for him); Howlin’ Wolf; Mississippi Fred McDowell (in performance and with a little child hugging him); Doctor Ross; Johnny Winter and pianist David Alexander (n/k/a Omar Sharif) hanging out; Lucille Spann and Sippie Wallace, Buddy Guy and Junior Wells (together and separately); B.B. King; Otis Rush; Papa Lightfoot; Victoria Spivey, Johnny Shines and a laughing Robert Lockwood; Charlie Musselwhite with Freddie Roulette playing lap steel guitar; Roosevelt Sykes backstage with Big mama Thornton and Big Joe Williams; Johnny Winter and Luther Allison playing guitar together; Magic Sam (a nice sequence of shots, one of which includes (an unidentified Eddie Shaw on saxophone) as Sam smiles and Bruce Barlow looks on); Lightnin’ Hopkins; Mance Lipscomb; Son House (one where he and his wife sing a gospel number a cappella and the other shows Son intensely playing guitar); Albert King (including one picture where Robert Lockwood is hugging him on stage); Muddy Waters; Otis Rush; Mighty Joe Young; Bonnie Raitt accompanying Sippie Wallace; Jimmy ‘Fast Fingers’ Dawkins; Freddie King; Hound Dog Taylor; J.B. Hutto; John Lee Hooker, Juke Boy Bonner; Bobby Bland; Pee Wee Crayton; John Jackson (with his characteristic warm smile); Koko Taylor; and Robert Pete Williams.

I am sure I may have omitted a few names but as you can see, this was a veritable Blues Hall of Fame and very few of the performers shown here are still alive. But this book is more than photos of blues legends. These are classic images of the performers and performances as Livingston gives us a sense of the intensity and joy on stage and back stage. As Peter ‘Mudcat’ Ruth is quoted on the back cover, “These photos are works of art.”

The book includes an introduction by Jim O’Neal who discusses how the Festival impacted him and led to the beginning of the magazine, *Living Blues*. Michael

Erlewine, who founded the All Music Guide, provides a History of the Ann Arbor Blues Festival as well as an interview with Howlin’ Wolf. *Blues in Black & White* also includes brief biographies and suggested recordings of the artists pictured (and this also serves as an index for the photographs). The book also strikes me as beautifully printed with the images wonderfully reproduced. It is a no-brainer and anyone who considers himself or herself a blues lover needs this book. This reviewer also suggests that it is among the finest recently published books of music photography. **Ron Weinstock**



MILES DAVIS **Bitches Brew** **Legacy Edition**

& 40th Anniversary Collector's Edition **COLUMBIA LEGACY 4-CD SET**

Miles Davis’ groundbreaking 1970 album “Bitches Brew” started a whole new arena in music – blending jazz with rock – and wound up being Miles’ first RIAA Gold Album and placed 94 on *Rolling Stone* magazine’s list of the 500 best albums of all time. Still sounding fresh 40 years later, the double LP has seen a brand new reissue on CD with more enhanced sound and six extra tracks – alternate takes of “Spanish Key” and “John McLaughlin,” and stereo single version edits for “Miles Runs The Voodoo Down” and “Spanish Key,” plus mono single edits of “Great Expectations” and “Little Blue Frog.”

A third CD is included featuring a previously unreleased live concert at the Tanglewood/Berkshire Music Center in Lenox, MA in August 1970. His band here consisted of Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea, Gary Bartz, Dave Holland, Airto Moreiera and Jack DeJohnette as they burn through four songs from “Bitches Brew” plus “Directions,” “The Mask” and “It’s About That Time.” Yes, these guys were hot that night, and the recording quality is pretty decent - on par for the era.

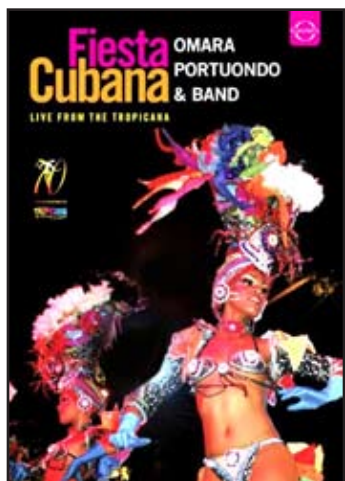
The *Legacy Edition* closes with a fourth disc, a DVD featuring a fine live concert at the Tivoli Konsertal in Copenhagen, Denmark in November 1969. Here the band comprised Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette as they cover three BB songs plus “Directions,” “Agitation,” “I Fall In Love Too Easily” and “It’s About That Time.” Another fine set with decent audio and video, and the second disc of previously unreleased performances in the four-disc set.

The *40th Anniversary Collector’s Edition* expands on

the Legacy Edition by augmenting the four discs with a 180-gram vinyl double LP featuring the album's original six songs on two platters in a double gatefold like the original album. It all comes in a 12x12 box completed with a 48-page color 12x12 book with a 5,000 word essay by Ashley Kahn, photos, producer's notes and a Lenny White interview.

Two very nice packages from Columbia Legacy in the excellent ongoing Miles Davis reissue sets program, which would most definitely please all the "Bitches Brew" fans out there!

Bill Wahl



OMARA PORTUONDO & BAND

Fiesta Cubana: Live From the Tropicana

Naxos of America & EuroArts

Colorful and exciting, this DVD was recorded on in December 2009 for the 70th birthday celebration of Havana's popular nightclub, Tropicana. Featuring elaborately costumed dancers, a brassy big band, various singers, and special guest vocalist Omara Portuondo and her five-man band, the show is bold, daring and briskly-paced.

The disc opens with scenes of Havana, interspersed with colorful, flashy dancing by the Tropicana Ballet to pulsating tempos from the band. After performances by the dancers and house singers, Omara Portuondo takes the stage with her combo (Harold Lopez Nussa, piano; Jorge Luis Valdés Chicoy, guitar; Omar Gonzalez, double bass; Andres Coayo Batista, percussion; Rodney Yllarza Barreto, drums). Interspersed with two Tropicana show segments, Portuondo sings seven traditional numbers, ranging from the *guajira*, *bolero*, *mambo* and *son*, melded to elements of jazz. She closes her performance with the audience lightly clapping and softly singing along to her lovely rendering of the classic "Guantanamera."

Camera work from eight videographers is excellent, ranging from brilliantly lit, full stage shots to close-ups that capture the rapture and excitement of Tropical Ballet dancers, musicians and singers. This is a dramatic production with dancers moving all over the stage and, at times, into the audience.

Bonus features include another singing performance, "Gracias," which segues into a very informative sub-titled interview with Portuondo (you can select the language: German, French, English). She speaks of her history

on stage and film, and film clips, still shots and music accompany her interview. Another bonus performance, "Equilibrists," features two young male gymnasts. Trailers for four other song and dance DVDs are also included.

Born Omara Portuondo Pelaez in Havana, October 29, 1930, Portuondo has accrued more than 50 years as a singer and dancer since she joined the dance group of Cabaret Tropicana in 1950, following her older sister, Haydee. She participated in other dance groups and sang with various orchestras during the 1950s, with and without her sister. Portuondo recorded a solo album in 1959 that featured both jazz and Cuban music. She embarked on a solo career in 1967. In the 1970s and 1980s, she performed at home and abroad and was featured in films and on television. She gained widespread fame performing with the *Buena Vista Social Club*. She lives and continues to perform in Havana.

Directed by Henning Kasten and produced by Paul Smaczny, the thrilling Tropicana performances offer superb viewing and listening for fans of the music.

Nancy Ann Lee



PEOPLE YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW: LEGENDARY MUSICIANS PHOTOGRAPHED

By Herb Wise

OMNIBUS PRESS OCTOBER 1, 2010

Herb Wise was an editor for Oak Publications who published *Sing* out as well as various books on folk and blues (Samuel Charters' "The Bluesman" was originally published by Oak), when photographer David Gahr took him outside, gave him a camera and had him start shooting pictures. While his initial efforts were not productive, it led to him becoming a fixture with his camera at festivals and concerts throughout North America, documenting a wide spectrum of music, focusing on folk and bluegrass with some blues, country and jazz mixed in from Mariposa in Toronto, the Ann Arbor Blues Festival, the Philadelphia Folk Festival, the American Folk Life Festival, and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

This is a coffee table sized volume of his photos. There is an amiable quality to many of these, which are often informal portraits, although there are some very fine performance images included. Graham Vickers includes brief descriptions of the artists depicted and sometimes the circumstances the photos were made of. Striking images of Richard Havens, Sam Chatmon, Jaco Pastorius, Professor Longhair (one great picture with reflections showing in his

sunglasses), Chuck Berry, Charles Mingus, Saul Broudy, Jim & Jesse McReynolds, Frank Zappa, Jackson Browne (great portrait), Sonny Terry (reclining against a trailer), Joan Baez & Kris Kristofferson, Joe Zawinul, Arlo Guthrie, Ray Charles, Doc Watson, Leon Redbone, Stephane Grappelli, Bob Dylan with the Band, an early Taj Mahal and Koko Taylor sitting in front of her van at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival. Its a pretty diverse group of images, and some are devoted to showing dancers at the festival while a young Rosanna Arquette is seen at the 1971 Philadelphia Folk Festival. Blue Lu Barker and Danny Barker are seen in their living room, while Roosevelt Sykes is backstage at the 1981 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. The pictures mostly come from the sixties and seventies.

The reproduction (with a slight sepia tint) seems quite satisfactory and there is a wealth of performers captured here, some famous, others less so. "People You'd Like To Know," is a book you might skim through when you first get it and return to look at the images again and again. It is reasonably priced with a list of \$34.95, should be reasonably easy to find and makes a nice addition to one's collection of music photography books. *Ron Weinstock*

LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS: HIS LIFE AND BLUES

Alan Govenar
CHICAGO REVIEW PRESS
2010: 368 PAGES

One of the blues most iconic artists, Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins, is the subject of a welcome new biography from writer and photographer Alan Govenar. Govenar has written a number of books including "Texas Blues : The Rise of a Contemporary Sound," as well as a musical "Blind Lemon Blues," that has been performed Off-Broadway. Hopkins was celebrated during his life for his ability to spin songs seemingly out of the blue, for his sometimes acerbic commentary on people, the relationships between men and women and current events, while performing for two very different audiences, the urban working class folk that bought his commercial recordings and frequented the bars in Houston's black community and the white audience that was first introduced to his music during the folk revival and later when he became one of the most respected performers on the blues circuit from the sixties through his death in 1982.

Hopkins was born in rural Centreville, Texas. At the time Texas was pretty racist, with lynchings happening far too frequently. In this world, life was rough and hard and often violent. Hopkins' dad was shot to death over a card game when he was three. Shortly thereafter his oldest brother, John Henry left because he would have killed the man who shot their dad. He grew up in a world of country suppers and square dances, and had to share in the farm work. He learned to play guitar as well as dance as a youngest and this enabled him to give up the hard life of farm work. Relying on interviews of those who knew the young Hopkins, as well as Hopkins' own recollections (some were issued on one of the many recordings he made), Govenar shows the develop of the young artist

who would spend time with Blind Lemon Jefferson and Texas Alexander. Alexander was a particularly important person for Hopkins and their travels together would be reflected in some of his repertoire.

Hopkins would settle into Houston whose Black Community had a varied night life ranging from the upscale El Dorado Ballroom Club to neighborhood bars for the working and country folks. It was the later venues that Lightnin' would play at. To middle and upper-level residents of the Third Ward, he was likely invisible. Then he was discovered by Lola Cullum, who had discovered Amos Milburn and had taken the pianist out to California where he recorded for Aladdin Records in 1946. As a follow-up to Milburn's success she brought Hopkins and pianist Wilson "Thunder" Smith to record. While Hopkins played on Smith's "Rocky Mountain Blues," Hopkins on acoustic guitar, Smith on piano and a drummer, he recorded "Katie Mae Blues," and "Mean Old Twister." It was at the session that Cullum nicknamed Hopkins Lightnin'. These recordings would start one of the most prolific recording careers in blues history and were unusual in the use of acoustic guitar, since Hopkins played electric on nearly every recording he made until he recorded during the folk revival when some producers insisted (based on some false notion of authenticity), that he play acoustic. Not all did so, as Chris Strachwitz who started Arhoolie Records in part because of Hopkins. Strachwitz had been a fan of Hopkins juke box recordings and would record Hopkins using electric guitar for the recordings that would be issued on Arhoolie as well as some he made for other labels such as Poppy (later reissued on Tomato).

Govenar tracks Hopkins' recordings after his initial Aladdin sides, through he recordings at Bill Quinn's studio for Gold Star and other labels, Bobby Shad, the Herald label and then Mack McCormick who was first to record Hopkins for the folk music market, followed by Samuel Charters, Strachwitz and others. Hopkins, like his contemporary John Lee Hooker, was one who would record for any label willing to pay him, and he insisted in being paid in cash which may relate to Hopkins having minimal education and essentially being illiterate as well as a general mistrust of whites. So he would insist on cash payments, and eschew royalties. Then he would complain he was underpaid by the record company, while asserting he received substantial cash payments.

Govenar traces Hopkins' career as a recording artist and performing artist, noting the changing nature of those who booked and managed him. Mixed in are accounts of his performances including recollections of those who saw his performances and his differing persona for his two different audiences, who related to his music in fundamentally different fashions. The interaction between Lightnin' and those watching him at the Third Ward neighborhood bars was far different from the restrained, but attentive white audiences that proved to much more financially lucrative. While Hopkins had a guarded personality, he does flesh out some of his personality as well as provides a cogent discussion of Lightnin's songs and music, ranging from his ability to spin songs out of current events to his development of "Mr. Charlie," which with his spoken

introduction, became a staple of his performance.

"Lightnin' Hopkins: His Life and Blues" is a celebration of Hopkins' life and music. There are a couple of minor factual errors. There is a reference to a performance at Toronto's New Yorker Theatre which John Hammond opened as being in 1978, but unless this was a repeat booking, I am certain this show was in 1977 because I was living in Buffalo and went with my friend Paul to catch this show, one of the two chances I had to see him perform. In 1978 I was living in the New York area, and did not return to Toronto until 1984. Also Terry Dunn, the owner of Tramps, was remembered as a Texan but in fact was an Irish immigrant whose origins would be hard to miss. Still these are minor errors and do not detract from the invaluable biography Govenar has provided us.

In addition to extensive endnotes and a selected bibliography, Andrew Brown and Alan Balfour have contributed a fifty page discography of Hopkins extensive recording career which includes much new information including correcting the identity of the steel guitarist who recorded with Hopkins in 1949 for Gold Star. It was Hop Wilson, not Frankie Lee Sims as long suggested, who can be heard on "Jail House Blues," and "T" Model Blues." In addition to Govenar's narrative, this discography ensures that this will be the standard reference on Hopkins for years to come. In summary, this is an invaluable addition to the blues literature.

Ron Weinstock

The 2010 entries are a bit on the light side as we switched computers midway through the year and the earlier computer is not currently operating.

Mr. Ed



LET'S GO

*Legendary
Rhythm & Blues
Cruise*

BLUESIN'®

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

ELLIS ISLAND. WHERE THE WORLD CAME TOGETHER AND AMERICAN STYLE BEGAN



WE ARE ELLIS ISLAND

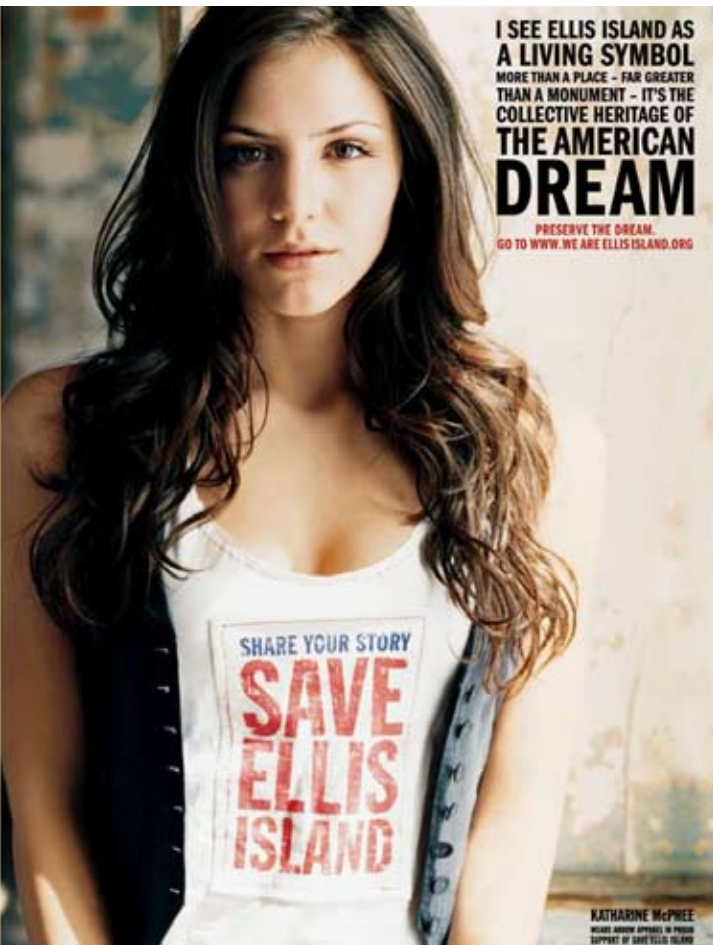


SHARE YOUR STORY WWW.WEAREELLISISLAND.ORG SAVE ELLIS ISLAND

ARROW
AUTHENTIC APPAREL SINCE 1851

I SEE ELLIS ISLAND AS
A LIVING SYMBOL
MORE THAN A PLACE - FAR GREATER
THAN A MONUMENT - IT'S THE
COLLECTIVE HERITAGE OF
**THE AMERICAN
DREAM**

PRESERVE THE DREAM.
GO TO WWW.WEAREELLISISLAND.ORG



SHARE YOUR STORY
**SAVE
ELLIS
ISLAND**

KATHARINE MCPHEE
WELLES ARROW APPAREL IN PROUD
SUPPORT OF SAVE ELLIS ISLAND