



Special Summer Festival Review Issue
New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival
Montreal Jazz Festival
Plus – CD Reviews

Jazz & Blues Report

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JazzFests Reviewed

Two Top Festivals featuring Jazz & Blues...and much more! Part II

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival The Montréal Jazz Festival



Attending the **Ponderosa Stomp**, which I reviewed in the June 2007 issue, was a prelude to attending the second weekend of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival that Mark Smith wrote about in the June issue. While our time in New Orleans overlapped, we did not go to many of the same shows. Generally the only time I am at the big stages (Acura and Gentilly) are for the earlier acts in the day and rarely for the closing acts for the day. One thing I did appreciate this year was the policy of pushing the chairs back from the front of the Acura stage which prevented folks from parking chairs for the best viewing and then traipsing off to other stages. Creating a standing room area up front was certainly appreciated by me (after all, it helped with my photography of the event which was taken from the audience and not from the press area).

Thursday, May 3, I spent some time at the Louisiana Music Factory, which has the best selection of Louisiana music anywhere and traditionally offers in store performances during the off-days at JazzFest. Later that evening, **The Legends of Swamp Pop** was presented by the folks who put on the Ponderosa Stomp at the

Notes From my New Orleans vacation

By Ron Weinstock

Cabildo on Jackson Square. Swamp Pop refers to some of the pop music that came out of Louisiana outside of New Orleans that reflected pop, Cajun, country and New Orleans R&B influences. Songs such as Cookie & the Cupcakes' "Matilda", Phil Phillips' "Sea of Love," King Karl's "Irene", Dale and Grace's "I'm Leaving It Up To You," Johnny Allan's "South to Louisiana," "The Cajun Twist" and "South to Louisiana," Rod Bernard's "This Should Go On Forever," and "Colinda", and Tommy McLain's renditions of "Sweet Dreams," and "Before I Grow Too Old." The houseband was Little Band of Gold, with C.C. Adcock, Steve Riley, David Egan and Warren Storm. Each did a number before bring up Tommy McLain who did a strong set of his material including "Juke Box Music," and "Sweet Dreams," before Rod Bernard followed with some tasty performances including some Chuck Berry. Roy Head was around so he did a few numbers including "Treat Her Right," followed by swamp bluesman Lazy Lester who mixed blues with a version of "Jambalaya," before Warren Storm come on to finish the evening." Of course one could catch shows at the House of Blues and there was at last one other significant free show that night.

One was hopeful **Friday, May 4**, that the threatened downpours would somehow miss New Orleans. After getting to the festival grounds I picked up my Brass Pass that was a premium for my pledge to WWOZ, the radio station associated with New Orleans Jazz &

Heritage Foundation that enabled not only admission but also re-admission to the grounds for the entire festival. WWOZ also broadcasts live from the Fairgrounds and covered live sets (sometimes on tape delay), so over the worldwide web I was able to hear sets by Donald Harrison, Lucky Peterson and Irma Thomas during the first weekend of JazzFest.

After picking up a spicy sausage sandwich and a beverage at one of the many food vendors offering local specialties such as soft-shelled crab poor-boys, boudins, jambalaya, alligator sausage, crayfish, and too many others to mention, I headed to the Blues Tent to see the beginning of Coca Robichaux's set. Not straight blues, Robichaux has a mystical persona, in a sense similar to Dr. John, but distinctly himself. In addition to his band, he had backing vocalists which I was told later were the Burning Bushes. After several songs I headed to the Acura stage to catch the Batiste Brothers Band. Led by guitarist and educator Paul Batiste, the Batiste Brothers may have descended from David Batiste and the Gladiators, a New Orleans funk band that included guitarist Paul and others. By 1976 they had become the Batiste Brothers band and continue to perform under that name. Members include David's son, David "Russell" Batiste, who is the drummer with the Funky Meters, Papa Grows Funk and other bands, who, along with siblings and cousins, provided a set of funk, blues and soul, showing that the Neville's and the Marsalis family are not the only talented musical families in the Crescent City today.

After a number of songs I ambled back to the blues tent to catch another number by Coco Robichaux before heading to the WWOZ hospitality tent, but first caught a bit of the Kambuka African Drum & Dance Collective with their polyrhythmic performance. There a friend mentioned that a 96-year-old Creole trumpeter, **Lionel Ferbos** was appearing in the Economy Hall Tent, the performance area devoted to traditional styles of jazz. Ferbos' musical career started in the 1930s with the Starlight Serenaders, later with Captain Handy's Louisiana Shakers and Fats Pichon with whom he backed jazz and blues pioneer Mamie Smith. Regularly performing at the Palm Court these days, he was accompanied by a fine band doing his repertoire that includes many of the songs popular in years past such as "Pretty Baby," "Sweethearts on Parade," and "Shake It and Break It," with Ferbos singing in a lively fashion. Based on his performance I picked up his new CD on the 504 label, Lionel Ferbos and The Creole Swingers, **Jazz in New Orleans - The Eighties/ Nineties**, with its interesting repertoire of material. Traditional jazz is passe in some quarters, but performances by the likes of Ferbos is among the charms that make New Orleans and JazzFest special and the crowd's enthusiasm can be seen as the second line parades its way through the tent.

After sampling his delightful music, I headed back to the Blues Tent where Po Henry & Tookie played some downhome blues. It was pouring rain outside, and standing two thirds of the way back in the tent I was becoming alarmed as a stream was rising with water up to people's ankles. It was it creeping up from the stage area towards the back of the tent, and I was on the side of the soundboard holding my camera equipment off the ground. The water eventually reached me and soaked my sneakers, socks



Someone alerted me to a performance by the 96 year old creole musician **Lionel Ferbos** who was playing in the dance bands that stayed in new Orleans in the twenties and thirties.

and feet, while the next act Louis 'Gearshifter' Youngblood, was setting up. After a few numbers, I took advantage of an apparent break in the weather to attempt to make it to the grandstand, but drenched and wanting to make sure my cameras did not get soaked, went instead with some friends back to the hotel and missed the opportunity to see Ellis Marsalis (whose set I did want to capture), Ivan Neville's Dumpstaphunk, vocalist John Boutté (also scheduled for the Jazz Tent), the Stooges Brass Band, and the real conflict among the closing acts was between Danilo Perez in the Jazz Tent and Walter 'Wolfman' Washington in the blues tent. The Panamanian Perez is pianist in Wayne Shorter's Band and having seen him several years ago in Washington DC, I imagine I missed a riveting performance. Wolfman Washington, who does not tour as much as one would like, is one of the most underrated blues acts whose album, **Blue Moon Risin'** was arguably the finest blues album of the 1990s (although unfortunately never issued in the United States). While I heard that Washington and Boutté were disappointing, that does happen. Boutté's performance of Randy Newman's "Louisiana 1927" from the 2006 JazzFest with its updated references to include Katrina may be the definitive reading of that song.

After the abbreviated day on Friday, **Saturday, May 5**, was a full day of music with me catching snippets of some performers and a couple of full sets by some local blues legends. First up for me was a visit to Economy Hall Tent and fine traditional jazz from the New Orleans Jazz Vipers followed by a brief visit to Congo Square to see Elder Edward Babb & the Madison Bumble Bees a multi-trombone brass band similar to the Madison Lively Stone of Wash-



The **Gangbe Brass Band** of Benin provided an interesting variant of brass band music.

ington DC's United House of Prayer. A joyful noise from this gospel brass band indeed. Walking towards the Blues Tent I passed Big Chief Ke Ke & the Comanche Hunters Mardi Gras Indians on the Jazz & Heritage Stage where they were dancing and chanting in their home-made costumes that they prepare each year. Henry Gray was opening the Blues Tent that day and sounded pretty fine with a band that included Lil Buck Sinigal and Rudolph Richard who was in Slim Harpo's Band. After sampling some of Gray's music, I went to the Acura stage for a bit of John Angel & The Swinging Demons with some Vegas styled lounge swing (Angel is sort of a visual Elvis singing in a Sinatra manner).

One of my favorite Brass Bands, The Pinstripe Brass Band were holding fort on the jazz & Heritage Stage with some folks demonstrating some fine second-lining in front of the stage. Certainly it's great to see these bands getting back together to play as the bands are the backbone of many social events in the communities, not simply entertainment in clubs. A short walk to the Fais Do Do stage enabled me to see a bit of traditional zydeco from Goldman Thibodeaux & the Lawtell Playboys from which I then crossed back the fairgrounds to the Acura Stage to see the Dixie Cups who did their hits "Iko Iko" and "Going to the Chapel" and much more. Four decades after having top 40 records they do not look or sound anywhere near their ages. Heading back to the Fais Do Do stage I stopped at Congo Square to see a marvelous brass band, Gangbe Brass Band of Benin, West Africa with a very different take on the music than their Crescent City brothers, but equally as lively and exuberant. Brian Zack & the Zydeco Gamblers put out a more contemporary version of zydeco, but equally had the dancers going. After a few numbers I caught some of the deep funk put forth by Joseph 'Zigaboo' Modeliste & Zigaboo's Funk Revue Band. Zigaboo is the legendary drummer of The Meters and is heard on all those classic Meters records from the seventies as well as countless sessions. The word legend is overused, but it applies to him and he had an incredible band that included David Batiste on keyboards, Chris Severin on bass and Tim Green on saxophone.

After Zigaboo's funkalicious music I headed back to the



The man himself...Snooks Eaglin.

blues tent for Snooks Eaglin, passing one of the Brass Band parades that snake their way through the fairgrounds with high steppers from some of the social organizations and a large second line. The last few times I had been to JazzFest, Snooks played the other weekend so I could not catch him. I was not going to miss his show here, and therefore I passed on Nicholas Payton, as well as the Tremé Brass Band and Buckwheat Zydeco. I mean, if you are in New Orleans and love blues, how can you miss Snooks? I get to the blues tent before Snooks starts and get a pretty good seat in the center. George Porter is on bass for the show along with Papa John Gros on keyboards and drummer Raymond Weber and Snooks rocks things with his unique, rhythmic, pianistic attack on his guitar and his broad repertoire. It was a solid set, although it did not strike me as magical as other times I have seen him perform. After Snooks' set finished I passed up on the Holmes Brothers who I have seen any number of times, Willis Prudhomme and Dr. Michael White to see a wonderful big band led by trumpeter Roy Hargrove. Brassy and modern, the band roared and swung, and then as spice on the musical cake, he brought out, Roberta Gambarini whose singing was pure magic. I had not heard of this native of Italy but certainly became a big fan of this marvelous jazz vocalist and would later purchase her terrific CD, **Easy to Love**.

Leaving the Jazz Tent to purchase some refreshments, I passed the Gangbe Brass band who were now on the Jazz & Heritage Stage before returning to the Blues Tent to see another New Orleans legend Deacon John. After hearing his Live Jazz Fest album with his riveting interpretations of Elmore James, BB King and Junior Parker, I became a fan of his. Later his **Deacon John's Jump Blues**, both on CD and the DVD of a live performance of this music, further enthralled me (Both are available from cdbaby.com). His performance at the 2005 Ponderosa Stomp was a highlight for me and the opportunity to see him again was one I would not pass, not even for one of Bob Marley's sons, Donald Harrison or the Iguanas. Most of his lengthy set revisited the classic R&B and soul of his Jump Blues album, backed by a large band with a full horn



Wanda Rouzan & a Taste of New Orleans provided a set of classic New Orleans music

Having participated in the tributes to Alvin batiste and Bob French, **Bradford Marsalis** was up with a set with his own quartet with Joey Calderazzo on piano, Eric Revis on bass and Jeff 'Tain' Watts on drums for more modern jazz in the vein of his 2006 **Braggtown** CD.

section, and songs like Ray Charles “Jump in the Morning,” The Spiders’ “I Didn’t Want to Do It” and a medley of Shirley & Lee’s “Let the Good Time Roll” w/ “Feel so Good” he added Roy Brown’s “Good Rockin’ Tonite.” There was a wonderful reworking of Erma Franklin’s classic recording “Piece of My Heart,” by a fine singer whose name I did not write down. Finally, Deacon took out his slide and the band changed from the jump blues to the rocking Delta-based slide of Elmore James “Happy Home” and other similar urban post-war blues. This set was a highlight of the festival along with Hargrove’s big band and capped a terrific day of music. I should add if there was one act I wish I saw this day, it would have been Irma Thomas’ tribute to Mahalia Jackson. However the Gospel Tent was simply too packed to see or hear much.

Waking up the morning of Sunday, **May 6**, I turned on WWOZ where I heard the sad news around 7 a.m. that Alvin Batiste passed away that morning. Batiste was beloved in New Orleans as a musician and composer, but also as an educator who founded Southern University’s Jazz Studies program and more recently helped establish the New Orleans Center for Contemporary Arts. He taught and/or mentored such diverse individuals as American Idol judge Randy Jackson, drummer Herlin Riley and pianist Henry Butler. His kicking Bradford Marsalis off the Southern University Jazz band for not being serious enough helped shake up Marsalis who then took music much more seriously.

The death of Batiste, who was scheduled to appear in the Jazz Tent that day overshadowed the rest of the Festival and the day, became a tribute to him as so many performers, not simply in the Jazz Tent, noted.

I started the day watching Wanda Rouzan, a New Orleans entertainer, performing songs associated with the Crescent City with a terrific band. After several enjoyable

numbers, I checked out Maurice Brown’s band in the Jazz Tent where the emcees opened with a few words dedicating the day to Batiste. Trumpeter Brown is a Chicago native who subsequently settled in New Orleans and studied under Batiste at Southern University. In 2005 I saw him as part of some group and checked out his CD, **Hip to Bop**. Brown is an exciting player and had an excellent group playing a set of his intriguing compositions. Following his set I caught the beginning of J’Monique D’s set in the Blues Tent which suggested it would be a strong set full of strong vocals, harp and band playing with some heavy doses of humor. It’s good when someone so good does not take himself too seriously, though he takes care of the music in a most serious fashion. There was a quick stop at the gospel tent before I made it to the Fais Do Do stage for some traditional oriented Cajun music from the Savoy-Doucet band which included Beausoleil’s David and Michael Doucet, accordion maker Mark Savoy and his wife, vocalist, Ann Savoy. Then it was time from some funk from one of the Crescent City’s best bands, Papa Grows Funk with John Gros on the B-3, Chris Severin on bass, June Yamagushi on guitar and Ray Weber on drums.

After stopping to see the marvelous Sherman Washington & the Zion Harmonizers in the gospel tent, and blues-tinged Eric Liddell in the Blues Tent, I made my way to the Jazz Tent which I figured would be packed for the Marsalis Music Tributes and Bradford Marsalis Quartet in light of Alvin Batiste’s passing. Singer-trumpeter Jeremy Davenport was playing and singing a variety of songs that was entertaining with a fine band. Truthfully I would not have caught most of his set except that I wanted to be in a good location for the Marsalis Music set, and the substantial crowd in the tent

indicated there would be a full house for the latter sets.

After a short intermission, the Tribute to Alvin Batiste began. By this time, the aisles were packed and even in front of the stage where the security would try to keep aisles completely clear, they simply asked that a single lane be free. Members of the Governing Board for the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation came up and expressed their sorrow and a tribute to Alvin Batiste followed by a member of his family. Then three young musicians who were his students and were going to be in his band this day played a set of Batiste's music. Pianist Concun Pappas, bassist Max Moran and drummer Joe Dyson, were marvelous with strong ensemble playing with a crisp rhythmic drive, with Bradford Marsalis and vocalist Ed Perkins joining them. Perkins sang Batiste's "Clean Air" while Marsalis played on most of the set including the closing 'Salty Dog." Bassist Moran stepped forward and delivered his own personal sense of loss to his teacher, mentor and friend – but the emotional highpoint was when Batiste's niece and nephew, vocalist Stephanie Jordan and trumpeter Marlon Jordan performed a moving rendition of Shirley Horn's "Here's To Life."

A brief intermission was followed by the tribute to Bob French. French had replaced Earl Palmer as a studio drummer in New Orleans before his dad recruited him as drummer for the Tuxedo Jazz Band, and the past few decades saw him devoted to traditional New Orleans Jazz with some other studio work. As they were present on his Marsalis Music album, Harry Connick and Bradford Marsalis were part of his band that included, among others, Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews. As they played some spirited renditions of New Orleans classics. Towards the end of the set, Connick and Marsalis reprised their duo of "Just A Closer Walk With Thee," with Connick singing very movingly followed by a closing "Didn't He Ramble" by the full band, a short mini-jazz march and parade for the fallen Jazz Master. After another intermission, during which the Jazz Tent was a bit less full, Bradford Marsalis and his band played a superb set of their own music. The afternoon was quite a display of Marsalis' musical talents. To play either modern jazz or traditional jazz in itself is commendable, but the mastery he displayed of older traditional jazz as well as the high level of his own music was simply remarkable.

There was music going on at the various stages when I left the tent. I stopped to get a last fill of crawfish and caught the end of The Radiators closing set on the Gentilly stage. Others closing the festival included Taj Mahal in the blues tent and Connick on the Acura Stage. Because I spent so much time in the jazz tent (and I would have stayed for the Marsalis sets in any event), I missed performances by Marva Wright, Frankie Ford, Allen Toussaint, Big Sam's Funky Nation, Terrence Semien, Beausoleil, Soul Rebels, Joss Stone, Poncho Chavis, Anders Osborne, Steely Dan, Tim Laughlin, Ingrid Lucia, Preservation Hall Brass Band, Big Chief Bo Dollis & the Wild Magnolias, and Harry Connick, Jr. I have no doubt those that watched these acts enjoyed the experience/ JazzFest has too much to offer, even of the local musical acts and performers. The Festival continues to get even more crowded by folks coming primarily to see the touring big names, but what makes this festival special are the local acts who really are ones to seek out and provide the chance to sample varieties of music rarely heard on most mass media. The musical and culinary smorgas-

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Vocalist Stephanie Jordan and trumpeter Marlon Jordan were niece and nephew to Alvin Batiste. In addition to Stephanie speaking about her dear uncle, they performed Shirley Horn's "Here's To Life" for him.

board that JazzFest presents remains a national treasure. Few events would take precedence over it to me.

Incidentally, a number of performances from JazzFest were recorded and the music is available for purchase as CDs or as digital downloads from JazzFestLive.com.

Editor's Note: Our readers have noticed that we have been reviewing more and more live events. While we've been doing previews of, or announcing upcoming concerts and festivals for decades, reviews such as this one by Ron offer a glimpse of what to expect while attending the festival next year, or in years to come. JazzFest is so large, and covers such a broad scope of music, that both Ron and Mark Smith attended this year and, without their knowledge, covered different shows for us. Check out Ron's review of the Montreal Jazz Festival in this issue, and he'll be covering the Pocono Blues Festival in the next issue. All the photos included in the review are by Ron Weinstock. You can view these and hundreds of other photos Ron has taken at various festivals over the past few years at www.flickr.com/photos/novaron

—BW

CD REVIEWS

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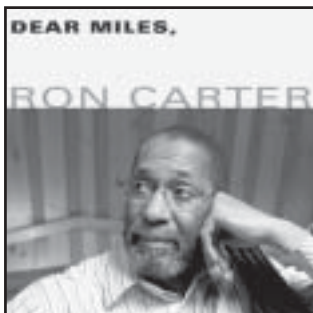
Kids: Live at Dizzy's Club, Hank Jones & Joe Lovano



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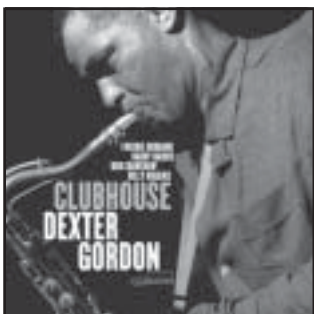


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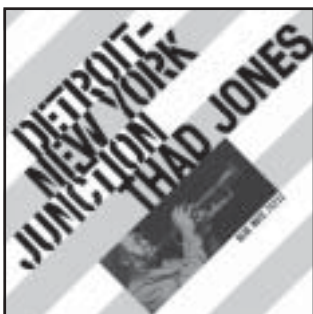
The Cat Walk, Donald Byrd



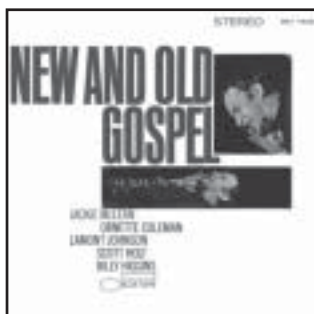
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Festival International de Jazz de Montréal

Montréal Jazz Festival Reviewed

By Ron Weinstock



Marianne Trudel

Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, the Montréal Jazz Festival, has over the years become one of the signature music events of the world. Over 300 musicians and street performers present over 500 concerts with 350 free ones over the eleven days and nights in the beautiful city (Guinness has it as the largest event of its kind). Despite its name, it's not simply a jazz Festival but presents a wide variety of performers. In addition to such performers as Mark Murphy, Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Hans Bennink, John McLaughlin, Bradford Marsalis, Wayne Shorter, Mike Stern, Ron Carter, Keith Jarrett, John Abercrombie, Oliver Jones, David Holland, Harry Connick, Jr. and Roy Hargrove, one could explore blues with Kelly Joe Phelps, Vasti Jackson and Paul Deslauriers, or enjoy such performers as Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Derek Trucks, Meshell Ndegeocello, Bela Fleck

& the Flecktones, and even world music from Seun Kuti & Egypt '80, Toumani Diabaté, Marsh Dondurma, Carlinhos Brown, and Rachid Tama.

The Festival is centered on the Place des Arts and Rue Sainte-Catherine is closed for several blocks between Rue Jeanne-Mance and Boulevard Sainte-Vrbaine and for the evening the streets are closed up to Avenue President Kennedy. There are ten public stages for the many free events as well as the concert facilities of the Place des Arts. Additionally, several Montréal clubs host various other festival series, including some right outside the festival area. For our journey to Montréal, my wife and I stayed at the Hyatt Regency at Rue Jeanne-Mance and Rue Sainte-Catherine, the Festival headquarters and immediately adjacent to not only the Festival site but also the Complex Desjardins with some boutiques and dining establishments. Food is available readily on the Festival grounds and not outrageously priced, but is from vendors. One treat that is popular are the barbecued franks, the spicy ones being the best, but one can get salads, burgers, bistro food and more or dine at the various restaurants adjacent to the festival site or go to the food court at the Complex Desjardins. The hotel is a walk away from a variety of museums, Old Montréal and McGill University.

While the Festival has events starting in the daytime, the focus of the concerts is really the shows starting in the evening. Early performances include scholastic big bands from various schools on the Main General Motors stage at Noon and 3 p.m. with afternoon performances from a variety of Dixieland, Klezmer, Latin and similar musical bands. The two main free stages were the General Motors and Alcan Stages on Rue Sainte-Catherine adjacent to the Hyatt and the Complex Desjardins. Inside the Complex Desjardins, they presented a marvelous children's program for the first part of the festival in late morning, and then hosted a musical instrument and equipment industry show the last several days. There was a children's park that was a marvelous playground with musical instruments and adults that would mesmerize the young playing specially concocted instruments. Also street performers including dancers, gymnasts and others entertained throughout the festival site. A couple of blocks from these stages are Tente SIMMM and Club Jazz. A couple blocks north of these venues is the Loto Quebec stage that featured blues, while on the Avenue President Kennedy is the Samsung Stage and a bit west at Boulevard de Maisonneuve and Rue Jeanne-Mance is the Carrefour Stage. On the plaza of the Place des Arts is the CBC - Radio Canada stage. Some of the stages are set up so they alternate performances, whereas the others are placed to avoid sound bleed from other venues.

The Festival website has so much information about the various series of concerts and the performers as well as accommodations, and they offered a Festival Fun Pack

which included a festival t-shirt, a sampler CD, and a ticket to a concert in the Jazz D'Ici series as well as admission to the nightly jam sessions at the Hyatt's bar. It is a great value.

After our dinner **Monday, July 2**, my wife and I caught a bit of Toronto pianist, Stacie McGregor's fine band before heading to Club Soda which was a venue for two series of concerts, one of which Voix Du Monde included among its artists Freddie Cole & Roberta Gambarini and Mark Murphy. We saw the show by Dawn Tyler Watson and Paul Deslauriers who both are well known and respected among the Montréal blues scene, although their duo performances was as much pop, folk and jazz inflected as blues. They brought interpretations to songs from Smokey Robinson, Paul Simon, Led Zeppelin and The Beatles as well as a nice rendition of *Trouble in Mind* and *Shine on Harvest Moon* and a couple originals. Tyler Watson is a marvelous vocalist and Deslauriers was a most adroit and sympathetic accompanist as well as singer, and they have an album representative of their performance on the Justin Time label (should be available in the US), **En Duo**. After this show we headed to catch a bit of Kim Richardson on the Loto Quebec stage and that lady can sing as she belted out among other songs, the Wilson Pickett classic *634-5789*. One of those blogging for the English language newspaper, the Montréal Gazette said it simply, "You Go Girl." After my wife went back to our hotel room, I met Dawn Tyler-Watson and Paul Deslauriers at the Record Tent and after chatting with them met Brian Slack who is such a main part of the Quebec Blues Scene. Soul Live was spinning their funky jazz on the main stage and after watching them for several numbers I went in to call it a night.

Tuesday July 3 had us doing a bit of sight-seeing before catching the beginning of Jtardi whose klezmatic mix of balkan, gypsy and eastern European was a bit too much for my better half as was Marsh Dondurma, an Israeli 15 piece Brass Band that was interesting more than compelling. After grabbing something to eat, we caught a bit of a parade before going to see a captivating soul-folk, singer-songwriter Melissa Laveaux, a Montréal native (of a Haitian family) who lives in Ottawa. Backed by a percussionist and bassist, she was joined by a trumpeter after several numbers. Bilingual, she first sang several captivating numbers in French before singing some in English. I skipped David Gross' set on the Blues Stage, which I heard was excellent to see Montréal's Marianne Trudel who led a superb Quintet. She and her group were a revelation and her music evoked for me the Keith Jarrett European Quartet and some of the marvelous early Jan Garbarek recordings. She is a marvelous composer as well as pianist and her band (taken from her website www.mariannetrudel.com) was comprised of Chet Doxas - soprano sax, Jonathan Stewart - tenor sax, Morgan Moore - bass and Kelby MacNayr - drums. A truly excellent ensemble and the performance was so captivating it led me to buy her marvelous disc **Sands of Time** (with slightly different personnel). With its lyricism and passion, I heartily recommend it. Afterwards we wanted to see guitarist Ray Bonneville but the tent stage was packed, but we could still hear some remarkable playing. Walking back we caught some of the massing crowd to see Seun Kuti's spectacular show before I first saw WhipCream, a jazzy fusion band that had a very strong sound. The Festival Program described their sound as



Vasti Jackson

"Funky Jazzy Gogo Bar," whatever that means. I wanted to purchase a recording by them but alas none were at the Record Tent. We went to catch Jackson, Mississippi's Vasti Jackson on the blues stage. He did a charged set with his own take on Katrina's toll on Mississippi's Gulf Coast areas and a solid reworking of Johnnie Taylor's *Still Called The Blues*, with strong singing, great vocals and considerable showmanship. After Vasti's set I went to Rue Sainte-Catherine where giant screens showed the spectacular afrobeat of Kuti and Egypt 80 with its polyrhythms and mesmerizing horns. A street party of over a hundred thousand with everyone in great spirits was happening and the show climaxed with some pyrotechnics to match the music. The series of paid concerts took a break with an exception for a special booking of Van Morrison.

For **Wednesday, July 4**, we caught another Klezmer Band briefly before moving on. At 6 p.m. we went to Spectrum de Montréal, a venue that may have been demolished when you read this, to see the Derek Trucks Band, who we had both enjoyed on the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise in 2005. Derek may be best known as a member of the Allman Brothers Band and Eric Clapton's Band, but his own group is one of the most fascinating bands and labels like blues or jam don't begin to describe them adequately. From instrumentals evoking Indian ragas, to updating Howlin Wolf's *Forty Four Blues*, to a rendition of *My Favorite Things* based on Coltrane's classic versions and an encore of Curtis Mayfield's *Freddy's Dead*, this was one tight improvisatory group that is underrated. Mick's brother Chris Jagger was on the blues stage at the same time but I cannot imagine him being anywhere as interesting as Derek and his terrific band. I almost regret leaving my camera at the hotel for this

show as this indoors show was one where non-flash still photography was permitted, but it was nice to simply listen and watch this group. As much as I enjoyed Derek, I wonder how we might have marveled at Richard Bona who was with the Jaco Pastorius Big Band, which was one of several shows Bona was featured in as part of the annual Invitation series. Later that night I saw Derek and members of his group likely heading to see Bob Dylan who was performing that night.

After dinner, I saw the end of New York singer's Emily King first show on the Alcan Stage with before experiencing on the main stage the big band, Le Sacre du Tympan led by bassist-composer Fred Pallem. The Festival website and program suggested they were France's answer to Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention and the music sounded liked it was composed for a big band, yet with some absolutely marvelous musicianship and soloing from the aggregation's most accomplished and imaginative players. Perhaps lacking some of the overt camp humor of Willem Breuker's Kollektief, nonetheless this music grabbed my imagination and the flair of the playing and the strength of the compositions won them a fan and I picked up the CD on Thursday when they also presented two sets. After they finished their spellbinding music I wandered to the Club Jazz stage to see bassist Adrian Vedady and his Quartet, yet another Montréal musician anchoring solid modern jazz with free accent, but still structured. It was another band whose members played off each other like the Harlem Globetrotters displaying their basketball skills. Then I returned to catch more of Emily King whose set reflected more of an urban pop-soul flavor with her gritty originals and a marvelous rendition of Bill Withers' *Ain't No Sunshine*. I concluded my evening by going to the bar at the Hyatt Regency where the nightly jam was taking place and at around 1 a.m. I made it upstairs to my room for some sleep.

On **Thursday July 5**, my wife wandered down to Old Montréal for some shopping in boutiques, visiting of some galleries and dining. That night we had a ticket for a series devoted to local contemporary jazz, Jazz D'Ici and a performance by Alain Bédard Auguste Quintette. Bassist Bédard is inspired by the distinctive angular melodies of Thelonious Monk as reflected by his wonderful Effendi Records album, **Sphere Reflexion**. I was intrigued by the description of this band and delighted when my wife and I found tickets to this show. I purchased, and had listened to, the CD prior to the show and was delighted by Bédard's Auguste Quintet even more. Live the band evoked more Mingus than Monk, especially the Mingus of the two **Changes** albums with the interplay of the two saxophonists. Also a dancer performed with the Quintet for several of the compositions. This was another exceptional band that received a well-deserved enthusiastic reception.

The Jazz D'Ici was slightly off the main festival grounds and we returned to catch some of the enthusiastic performance from Boston vocalist Robin McKelle, who sang a variety of songs from the American songbook and more obscure numbers. Then there was an opportunity to see Le Sacre Du Tympan once more so my wife could get a sense of what I had enjoyed the night before. Next was an opportunity to catch a bit of Matt Schofield on the Loto-Quebec Stage. Schofield is an Englishman who was backed by just organ and drums, and while a muscular guitarist and vocal-

ist, his music swung and his vocals were very soulful. Meshell Ndegeocello's show at the Spectrum and her subsequent collaboration that night with Richard Bona were viewed by some of the critics as among the Festival's music highpoints with her genre transcending performances. I do wish I had not had a conflict with the Bédard August Quintette show, since I have seen her father, Washington DC area saxophonist Jacques Johnson, perform more than a few times and she is an amazing talent.

The afternoon of **Friday, July 7** we had a chance to see a bit of Denny's Dixieland Clan performing which was clearly the best of the three or so traditional jazz bands we saw at the festival. They avoided the most obvious warhorses of the genre and had some imagination in their song selection. We caught a few numbers from a hard boppish flavored, No Name Jazz Sextet before our first main course of the night. We had wanted to see 13-year old sensation Nikki Yanofsky, but her four-day run for **Ella... Of Thee I Swing** was a sellout. Incidentally the first track of the sampler CD for the festival was her dazzling rendition of *Air Mail Special*, that was a bonus track for the Verve CD **We All Love Ella** (unfortunately, it was not included on the advance review copy Bill Wahl had of this disc). Bradford Marsalis' concert was also sold out so we went to see vocalist Carol Welsman who sang a number of Latin-tinged numbers and sang in five different languages backed by an adept band for a marvelous performance. Her recent Justin Time album is a bit disappointing in that the production by Jimmy Haslip of the Yellowjackets smooths out some of the grit she had live. Not that it is a bad disc, but it could have been better. I was hoping go see Burnside Style, a band of some of RL Burnside's kin but found instead Smokinsonic. I headed to the GM stage to see young soul singer Ryan Shaw whose debut album **This is Ryan Shaw** so impressed me. I got there as he launched into Bobby Womack's *I'm Looking For a Love* and heard him handle a variety of R&B classics including the Falcons' *I Found a Love* with is guitarist partially evoking Robert Ward's guitar from the original recording. When he started singing *If I Had a Hammer*, it hit me that he really was influenced by Sam Cooke. The only problem with this set was he was a featured act, not opening for Joss Stone so it got a little irritating to hear him repeat who he was and plug his new album every few songs. He has such a voice, and needs to sometimes play to the audience a bit more. After his set I listened to several fine songs performed by saxophonist Christine Jensen and her fine band. Some may be familiar with this marvelous lady and even more with her sister, trumpeter Ingrid Jensen who has two marvelous discs on Artists Share. After her set I meandered to the Loto Quebec Stage for a bit of Smokinsonic with special guest Antoine Gratton. There I ran into a fellow member of the Blues-L internet group, Eric Paul-Hus who gave me background on these performers who brought up some guests. I had a chance to see Paul Deslaueriers in an electric vein and saw why he is so revered by his fellow Montréal blues musicians. He has chops and even when he rocks out, still shows such taste in his playing. Anyway, I caught a few more songs from Ryan Shaw before calling it a night and an end to a memorable visit to Montréal.

The folks putting on the festival really bring such a warm joy to the experience here. And as massive an undertaking

as the Festival was, while we were in Montréal, the city hosted some games of the FIFA Under-20 World Cup of Soccer, there was an International Women's Water Polo Competition and an Irish Step-Dancing Competition. There is so much to see in this most romantic and lovely city and the festival's extraordinary musical selection, with something for any taste, is icing on the cake.

Anyone interested in attending next year can check keep an eye on www.montrealjazzfest.com.

All photos by Ron Weinstock

BLUES WATCH

By Mark Smith

New Release blues....While the release schedule is slowing down a bit as we head into the dog days of summer, there's still plenty of discs to add to your collection and give a spin when you're not stage side at your local blues festival. Check these out:

Tab Benoit- *Power of the Pontchartrain*; **Duke Robillard-** *Duke Robillard's World Full of Blues*; **Tinsley Ellis-** *Moment of Truth*; **Howard Hewett-** *If Only*; **Boz Scaggs-** *Runnin'Blue*; **Joe Bonamassa-** *Sloe Gin*; **Carolina Chocolate Drops-** *Dona Got a Ramblin Mind*; **Mem Shannon-** *Live: A Night at Tipitina's*; **Bryan Lee-** *Katrina Was Her Name*; **Billy Gibson Band-** *Live at Rum Boogie Café*; **Robben Ford-** *Truth*; **Albert King/Johnny Winter-** *Blues Guitar Killer*; **Popa Chubby-** *Electric Chubbyland, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2*; **Elvin Bishop-** *Booty Bumpin': Recorded Live*; **Matt Schofield Trio-** *Ear to the Ground*; **James Blood Ulmer-** *Bad Blood in the City: The Piety Street Sessions*; **Peter Green-** *The Supernatural*; **Chris Duarte-** *Blue Velocity*; **Johnny Jones-** *Can I Get an Amen*; **Susan Tedeschi-** *The Best of Susan Tedeschi: Episode 2*; **Kara Maguire-** *Nobody's Girl*; **Teresa James & the Rhythm Tramps-** *The Bottom Line*; **Rory Gallagher-** *Big Guns: The Very Best of Rory Gallagher*; **The Paul Delay Band-** *The Last of the Best*; **Sugar Ray & the Bluetones-** *My Life, My Friends, My Music*; **Scott Holt-** *From Lettsworth to Legend: A Tribute to Buddy Guy*; **Bobby Rush-** *Raw*; **Various Artists-** *Crescent City Bounce*; **Darrell Nulisch-** *Goin' Back to Dallas*; **Laurie Morvan Band-** *Cures What Ails Ya*; **Gina Sicilia-** *Allow Me to Confess*; **Memphis Slim-** *The Real Boogie-Woogie*; **Canned Heat-** *Under the Dutch Skies 1970-74*; **Angie Stone-** *Life Goes On*; **Chris Harper-** *Blues Is My Life*; **Monster Mike Welch-** *Cryin' Hey!*; **Marie Knight-** *Let Us Get Together, A Tribute to Rev. Gary Davis*; **Various Artists (Fabulous Thunderbirds, Robert Jr. Lockwood, The Mannish Boys, Floyd Dixon, Louisiana Red, Big Pete Pearson, Kid Ramos and others)-** *House Rockin' and Blues Shoutin'! Celebrating 15 Years of the Rhythm Room*; **Mason Casey-** *Sofa King Badass*; **Matt Wigler-** *XIII*; **Omar Kent Dykes and Jimmie Vaughan (with special guests including Kim Wilson, Lou Ann Barton, Delbert**

McClinton and James Cotton)- *On the Jimmy Reed Highway*; **Rod Piazza and the Mighty Flyers Blues Quartet-** *ThrillVille*; **The Insomniacs-** *Left Coast Blues.... DVD blues....* **Delbert McClinton** hosts an annual week-long voyage of non-stop music and fun in the Caribbean dubbed the "Sandy Beaches Cruise." The event has been captured on a new concert film and music documentary, **Rocking the Boat: A Musical Conversation and Journey**. As noted in the press release for the film: "Music performances were culled from over 150 hours of footage shot in high-definition aboard the 2006 Sand Beaches Cruise. In addition to a number of high-energy performances by **McClinton**, the film also includes (mostly original) standout songs from **Rodney Crowell, Marcia Ball, Stephen Bruton, Wayne Toups, Jimmy Hall, Al Anderson, Tommy Castro, Paul Thorn, and Teresa James**. The result is a shipboard musical gumbo of rock, blues, country, funk, zydeco and rhythm & blues. In addition to the music, the film includes interviews with McClinton and friends with stories about the joys – and rigors – of the road. Also included are vintage photos and video of McClinton during his over 40 years in music. Another Texas music icon, Kinky Friedman, makes a special appearance, giving his unique spin on Texas musicians and the culture itself."

For more information or to purchase a pre-release limited edition DVD of the film, visit www.rockingtheboatmovie.com. That's it for this month.

See ya... Mark

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BOBBY HUTCHERSON
For Sentimental Reasons
KIND OF BLUE

On his first album as leader in eight years, vibraphonist Bobby Hutcherson delivers one of his most mellow and enjoyable studio sessions. Performing with him on 11 standards are pianist Renee Rosnes, bassist Dwayne Burno and drummer Al Foster.

A lush version of the title song launches the set and is followed by a lesser-known, waltzing Harold Land original, "Ode To Angels." Other tunes include the Gershwin brothers' "Embraceable You," Fats Waller's "Jitterbug Waltz," the Jimmy McHugh-Dorothy Fields treasure "Don't Blame Me," and other recognizable classics. Hutcherson and Rosnes team up for a lovely duet interpretation of Leonard Bernstein's "Somewhere." Without Foster, the remaining three musicians perform a delicate rendering of the Rodgers-Hart gem, "Spring Is Here." Hutcherson performs the finale, "I'll Be Seeing You," in a warm-hearted, four-mallet solo performance.

Hutcherson is a vibes veteran, one of the most expressive and influential artists of the instrument, and he's teamed with like-minded players who add emotion and power to this set. A gorgeous album, possibly Hutcherson's best, **For Sentimental Reasons** is truly a love note to his fans.

Nancy Ann Lee



MEM SHANNON
Live: A Night At Tipitina's
NORTHERN BLUES

Recorded live at the venerable New Orleans club where countless musicians have perpetuated the musical spirit that permeates the city,

this disc features guitarist /vocalist Mem Shannon at the absolute top of his game. Mardi Gras 2007 was the occasion that filled the club for the show but Shannon was the reason everyone stayed instead of taking the customary booze addled stroll down Bourbon Street. With Joe Cabral (of the Iguanas), Tim Green and Jason Mingledorff on

saxophones joining Shannon's regular band, The Membership (Josh Milligan on drums, Angelo Nocentelli on bass and Roben Dabon on keys), he has all the ingredients necessary for a night of New Orleans style blues. Leaving the shuffles and boogies to the Chicago axe-slingers, Shannon lays down fleet fingered solos and chunky chords that weave in and out of the massive groove laid down by the rest of the band. Check out the instrumental break on *No Such Thing* or the cover of the Neville Brother's *Voodoo* for a lesson on funkiness. As adept as he is on guitar, Shannon is not the least bit afraid to share the spotlight and leaves plenty of room for his band mates to solo at length. While the musicianship is top notch the lyrics, which are delivered with his deep, world-weary grits and grease voice, hit just as hard. On *Payin' My Dues* Shannon reflects on how hard he has had to work to make a mark in an industry obsessed with youth. *All I Have* quickly separates itself from the many angry post- Katrina rants against the ineptitude of the governmental authorities by taking a sentimental look at the mementos and scrapbook items found in the ruins of his home. This first person account of the personal devastation of having your life reduced to piles of trash hits you square in the gut and is hands down one of the most compelling tales to emerge from the storm. Shannon is no quitter though. He immediately follows up with a scorching version of Tom Petty's *I Won't Back Down* which is even more of a declaration of victory and determination than the original. Other stand out cuts include the tear jerker, *Forget About Me* where people are tortured by their failure to meet the expectations of their loved ones and the slyly funny *Smell Something* where Shannon utters one of the lines of the year: "I smell something funky/And I know that I just took a bath/It must be the music/Ain't nothing else smell like that") If Mem Shannon hasn't been part of your musical diet, you need to add him now. Tasty stuff indeed.

Mark Smith



CHET BAKER
Chet
RIVERSIDE/CONCORD
KEEPNEWS COLLECTION

One in a series of re-issues originally produced by Orrin Keepnews as co-owner of Riverside, this all-instrumental CD by trumpeter Chet Baker was recorded in December 1958 and January 1959. He's featured performing nine ballads (and a bonus original) in five settings from quartet to sextet with baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams, flutist Herbie Mann, guitarist Kenny Burrell, pianist Bill Evans, bassist Paul Chambers and drummer Connie Kay or Philly Joe Jones.

Baker is in fine form on classics such as "Alone Together," "How High the Moon," "'Tis Autumn," "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To," "If You Could See Me Now," and more. His sidemen provide appropriate support without overshadowing.

Fantasy Records reissued this CD on the Original Jazz

Classics label in 1992. However, sound quality of this CD re-issue benefits from 24-bit remastering from the original master tapes. Packaging includes original art and Keepnews' original liner notes as well as a lengthy updated commentary, "Chet - Revisited," by Keepnews. Even if you own the earlier CD reissue, you'll want to replace it with this one for the quality and extras. *Nancy Ann Lee*

MIGHTY LESTER

We Are Mighty Lester

WWW.MIGHTYLESTERBAND.COM

Due respects to Roomful Of Blues, there IS another potent jump/blues band in the East. And a kick-ass organization it is. Mighty Lester, an octet hailing from North Carolina's Research Triangle area, has the two basics a top-flight jump outfit requires: a high-powered horn section and a muscular rhythm crew. In addition ML sports standout entities in vocalist Todd Dewberry, whose pipes are possessed of both the grit of Tom Waits and the spookiness of Little Charlie and the Nightcats' frontman Rick Estrin, and guitarist Lenny Terenzi, whose B.B.-flavored lead work should please the "blues" contingent of the jump/blues crowd.

These two plus sax man Jeff Thomas also comprise the band's songwriting corps and they each deal with the classic jump style with appropriate wit and abundant *spanache*. Mighty Lester is a band whose profile is destined to rise beyond their home turf and jump fans should not do without this disc. *Duane Verh*

Mighty Lester will be appearing at Wilbert's in Cleveland on August 8, Bill's Blues Bar in Chicago August 9 and Bayfront Blues Festival, Duluth MN August 10. For more tour dates, visit www.mightylesterband.com.

ARTURO SANDOVAL

Rumba Palace

TELARC

Cuban trumpeter Arturo Sandoval leads a rousing 10-tune Latin-jazz studio session recorded in Coral Gables, Florida with his "little Big Band."

Titled after his newest nightclub in South Beach Miami, this disc features modern, densely layered and fiery

new tunes arranged by Felipe Lamoglia. Soloists, including Sandoval, are superb. One of the best tracks, launched with Sandoval's muted trumpet solo, is the sultry samba, "Sexy Lady," performed with nine musicians. The title tune captures with catchy melody and rhythm as well as Sandoval's warm-toned solo. The finale, "Nouveau Cha Cha," is a modern, danceable piece, heavily laden with horns.

Compared with other groups of this ilk and size, this band achieves a modern sound lacking authentic Afro-Cuban roots. Arrangements suffer from too much loud, bright and brassy layering that is most noticeable when the talented rhythm section breaks up the sonic blasting for a pleasant interlude. *Nancy Ann Lee*

CHARLIE WOOD

Lucky

INSIDE SOUNDS

A fixture on Beale Street playing the Hammond B-3, with whom legendary guitarist Calvin Newborn would often join, Charlie Wood has a new Inside Sounds release, *Lucky*, that brings a soulful, jazzy sophistication to the blues.

Through the magic of overdubbing, Wood plays virtually all of the instruments here aided by Kirk Smothers' saxophones. The opening *Can't Teach That Stuff* is a sizzling rocking boogie woogie where he talks about his musical life, including how Albert King took him on the road, with hot solos from Smothers on tenor and Wood on the B-3. It is followed by a nice down-in-the-alley rendition of Percy Mayfield's *The River Invitation*, with his evocative, smoking singing.

Echoes of Professor Longhair reverberate on Wood's celebration of the Crescent City and his hopes for its survival with his faith in the human spirit, *Never Gonna Stop New Orleans*. *What's It Gonna Take* is rollicking piano blues where he asks his woman what it will take to slow her down and get to her. Ray Charles' *Lonely Avenue* is slowed down in a nice reworking while *Ear Candy* has a nifty lyric about telling one's lover what she or he wants to hear.

There is a fine cover of Mose Allison's *One of These*

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Days, with Wood sounding very comfortable handling the vocal and laying down some choice piano, while the closing rendition of W.C. Handy's *Beale Street Blues* is a wonderful performance with Wood and his piano joined by Billy Gibson who adds some harp on this intimate sounding performance.

There is a funky ambiance throughout this and plenty of space for Wood's keyboards and solid vocals. Wood also adeptly provided a full ensemble sound although the rhythm sounds a bit mechanical (although certainly better than a rhythm loop). Overall *Lucky* is a most enjoyable release.

Ron Weinstock

KAHIL EL 'ZABAR'S INFINITY ORCHESTRA

Transmigration DELMARK

In a live-recorded April 2005 performance, percussionist Kahil El 'Zabar leads a 39-piece jazz orchestra in Bordeaux, France, where he has continued as artist-in-residence every year since 1980 when he brought his Ethnic Heritage Ensemble to the jazz festival there.

In 1978, El 'Zabar led a band called Infinity Orchestra comprised of Chicago musicians. For this recording, he reverses the name and features regular El 'Zabar Ethnic Heritage colleagues Ernest Dawkins (alto saxophone) and Joseph Bowie (trombone) along with excellent musicians from French communities in West Africa, North Africa and the West Indies.

A departure from the small groups usually led by El 'Zabar, this is a powerful big band that performs five original compositions co-arranged with Robert Irving III. El 'Zabar primarily conducts rather than play percussion; the latter is capably handled by Orchestra members. The longest piece at nearly 25 minutes, "Speaking in Tongues" is a stunning showcase for the soloists and the sole number featuring an El 'Zabar solo. Compositions are full of vigor and surprise, flavored with spicy AACM influences. "Nu Art Claiming Earth," a 15-minute suite enhanced by rolling drum beats, also features Bindi Mahamat's rapping in French. The finale, "Return of the Lost Tribe," composed by El 'Zabar in 1978, features Bowie and Dawkins on the frontline backed by the band's big, tough sound.

Highlighting fiery soloing, a huge (19 piece) horn section, riffing percussion and superb collective improvisation, this disc adds nicely to existing recordings by the dynamic percussionist, composer, teacher and leader. A showcase for the leader's abundant talents, this is a must-own CD for his fans!

Nancy Ann Lee

JOSH WHITE/ BIG BILL BROONZY

Comes A-Visitin'- Comes A-Singin'

EMPIRE MUSICWERKS

This release featuring Josh White and Big Bill Broonzy makes available on CD music originally issued on two 10-inch LPs originally issued on the Period label. The album notes call the two among the greatest exponents of the folk-blues idiom and that would not be an unfair description of these tracks as both artists are quite urbane in their presentation.

White, who had gone from a Piedmont blues and gospel singer-guitarist to a member of the emerging folk scene in the post-World War II era is heard backed by a small rhythm combo as well as a vocal chorus that included his daughter Beverly. Material ranges from the opening *Bonbons, Chocolates, and Chewing Gum; Bury Me High* and *She's Too Much For Me*, which are very ably performed with deft musicianship and very appealing vocals.

The Big Bill Broonzy selections were recorded in Paris and include a rendition of *Baby, Please Don't Go* (miscredited to Broonzy) along with *Do Right Blues, Backwater Blues, and Hollerin'* and *Cryin' the Blues*. All are wonderfully sung and played with some crisply delivered guitar, if perhaps the vocals are taken with a certain self-consciousness.

I suspect no one will call these performances by either essential, but certainly there is quite a bit here that is very enjoyable.

Ron Weinstock

MARIA SCHNEIDER ORCHESTRA

Sky Blue ARTISTSHARE

Composer/orchestra leader Maria Schneider won a Grammy for her 2004 ArtistShare release, *Concert in the Garden*, an amazing feat when you consider it was accomplished without in-store distribution. This commanding album follows that release.

Four of the five pieces are commissioned works requested by presenters to be premiered in their concert halls. The non-commissioned "Rich's Piece" is a medita-



THE WAY THINGS GO is a fresh take on traditional Blues from the veteran Bluesman. **CLEVELAND FATS** once again shows that he is a master singer, guitarist, and songwriter highlighting his talents on nine originals and three covers. This recording includes the re-teaming with his former boss and mentor **ROBERT LOCKWOOD, JR.** and special guest **BILLY BRANCH** on harmonica.



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tive work written especially to feature the sound of innovative tenor saxophonist Rich Perry. The remaining works spotlight soloists such as Ingrid Jensen (flugelhorn, trumpet), Scott Robinson (clarinet), Donny McCaslin (tenor sax), Gary Versace (accordion), Charles Pillow (alto sax), and Steve Wilson (soprano sax).

Schneider's orchestral works are always engaging, full of rich colors, well-blended harmonies and the unexpected. "Aires de Lando," a Peruvian polyrhythmic piece features Robinson's lovely solos. "The Pretty Road" (13:23 minutes) was inspired by a scene from a hill at night and features a reoccurring theme throughout. "Cerulean Skies," the longest piece at 22 minutes, is an airy number inspired by Schneider's love of birds (which you'll hear) and features McCaslin, Versace, Pillow as well as the rhythm section with pianist Frank Kimbrough, guitarist Ben Monder and bassist Jay Anderson. The title piece (8:06 minutes), a melodious, sunny elegy in remembrance of a close friend who died during the time Schneider was composing the piece, features Wilson's compassionate soprano sax solo.

Schneider has once again triumphed with this remarkable album exclusively available at MariaSchneider.com.

Nancy Ann Lee

MICHAEL POWERS

Prodigal Son

BARYCON RECORDS

Michael Powers received much acclaim for his **Onyx Root** recording with his interesting take on the blues mixed in with some psychedelic rock. His latest Barycon release,

Prodigal Son, starts off as it will be more a rock vein with the opening over-the-top rocked out rendition of Freddie King's recording of *Goin' Down*. I find the next number, *It's a Bloody Life*, a bit more to my taste with an appealing raspy vocal, an intriguing mix of acoustic and electric guitar in the backing and a hint of John Lee Hooker's influence.

The title track benefits from not being cranked up as Power updates the biblical tale. *White Lightning* is a strong funky number while *Wild Side* has Powers rocking out again before he evokes a Bruce Springsteen vein for the reflective *Every Grain of Sand*. *Lay the Hootch* is another rocking number with some nice piano followed by the fast walking tempo of *Oh John*, with a nice buzzing guitar solo, followed by a some rock flavor on *Signed D.C.*, as he sings "That nobody cares, nobody cares, for me." *Compassion* is an attractive acoustic instrumental with a tinge of country-folk flavor that suggests Powers' musical influences are very broad indeed and followed by a bit of hokum on *You Got To Go Down*, with a bit of skiffle feel with some nice acoustic guitar from Powers and a washboard in the backing. A rousing rendition of the Tiny Bradshaw's *The Train kept a Rollin* follows, perhaps channeled through Aerosmith more than Johnny Burnette.

If one were going to call this a strong rock record I would not argue. At the same time, there is more than enough here of a blues nature to also describe this as a fine blues recording with some nice rock flavoring and if I find the hard rock moments the least appealing to these ears, I won't dispute there is plenty of gold to be heard here.

Ron Weinstock

KERMIT RUFFINS

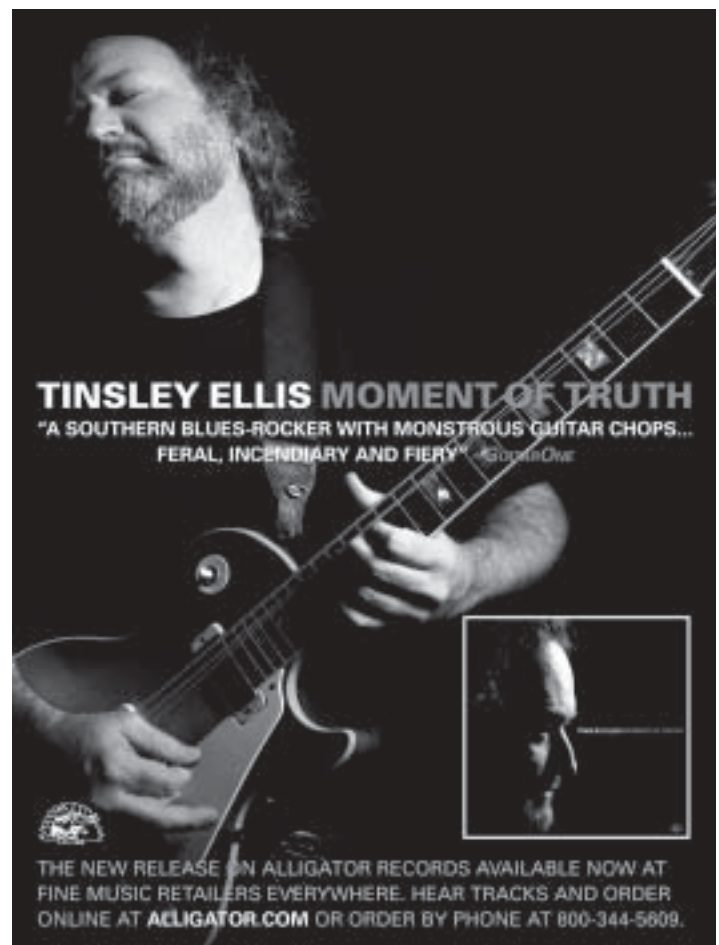
Live At Vaughan's
BASIN STREET RECORDS

From the days when he was probably the most visible member of Rebirth Brass Band, Kermit Ruffins has been playing his trumpet and singing with the idea that jazz can entertain as well as be art. Having reestablished, after Katrina, his long-standing gig at Vaughan's in New Orleans, his newest recording was recorded in performance at the club.

What can one say except that this an exuberant collection of performances that should bring a smile to most as he and his quartet handle standards like *World on a String* and *Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans?*, along with second line gems like *Palm Court Strut* and Kermit's *TremÉ Second Line*, and his jazzifying R&B classics like Sly Stone's *If You Want Me to Stay*.

Ruffins' band of Richard Knox on keyboards (he has an excellent organ solo on *World on a String*), Derrick Freeman on drums and vocals and Kevin Morris on electric bass is augmented on several tracks by Roderick Paulin on saxophone and Corey Henry on trombone (both heard on Kermit's *Drop Me Off in New Orleans*), Neshia Ruffins (*Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans*), and others.

The most obvious influence on Ruffins is Louis Armstrong, which is reflected throughout his playing and vocals. While there is a traditional jazz base to the performances, they are enlivened by a dose of second-line R&B



flavoring making for lively, swinging and danceable performances like the *Palm Court Strut* or Ruffins' *Hide the Reefer* ('because he comes the creeper') that frankly will bring a smile to the listener, but after listening it will hit you that Kermit Ruffins can really play, like on his very fiery solo on the Sly Stone classic. **Ron Weinstock**

RYAN SHAW

This Is Ryan Shaw

COLUMBIA

Listening to *This is Ryan Shaw*, the debut album of 26-year old Georgia soul singer was a revelation. Knowing nothing about him, and listening to him for the first time, I was blown away.

He is a young singer doing covers of Bobby Womack, Jackie Wilson and the Falcons, and featuring originals, as well as tough funky dance numbers that sound like Junior Walker classics and bringing the same gospel-rooted intensity to these performances that characterize the originals. One does not expect to hear many young deep soul singers emerging in this era of hip hop, but this album certainly was a wonderful discovery.

Shaw is not too shabby with his originals like the frenetic *Nobody*. Producers Johnny Gale and Jimmy Bralower contribute the solid, funky backing for these truly exciting performances.

This is a most impressive debut and one will be watching him grow as a performer. **Ron Weinstock**

TRIO OF DOOM

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

It wasn't long for the late 60's term "supergroup", coined for short-lived pop groups such as Blind Faith, to become overworked and of little value. A decade later, however, the fusion world spawned its own legitimate candidate, deservedly for its skill base and circumstantially for its extremely brief existence. In spring of '79 John McLaughlin, Jaco Pastorius and Tony Williams introduced the guitar-bass-drums power trio model to fusion on stage in Havana. Studio sessions followed and some of that output made it out on Columbia's *Havana Jam* collections.

Out this summer are both the studio and live tracks and those who could imagine what this crew is capable of will not likely be disappointed. High-energy sonic assaults and break-neck-paced virtuosity were to be expected. What impresses upon repeated listening is the cohesion and group identity the threesome was able to pull together on very short notice. Tracks include compositions available elsewhere such as Jaco's "Continuum" and McLaughlin's "Are You The One?" but not delivered with the scorching urgency here. Fans of any or all of the three need this in their collection. **Duane Verh**

JIMMY HALL

Build Your Own Fire

ZOHO ROOTS

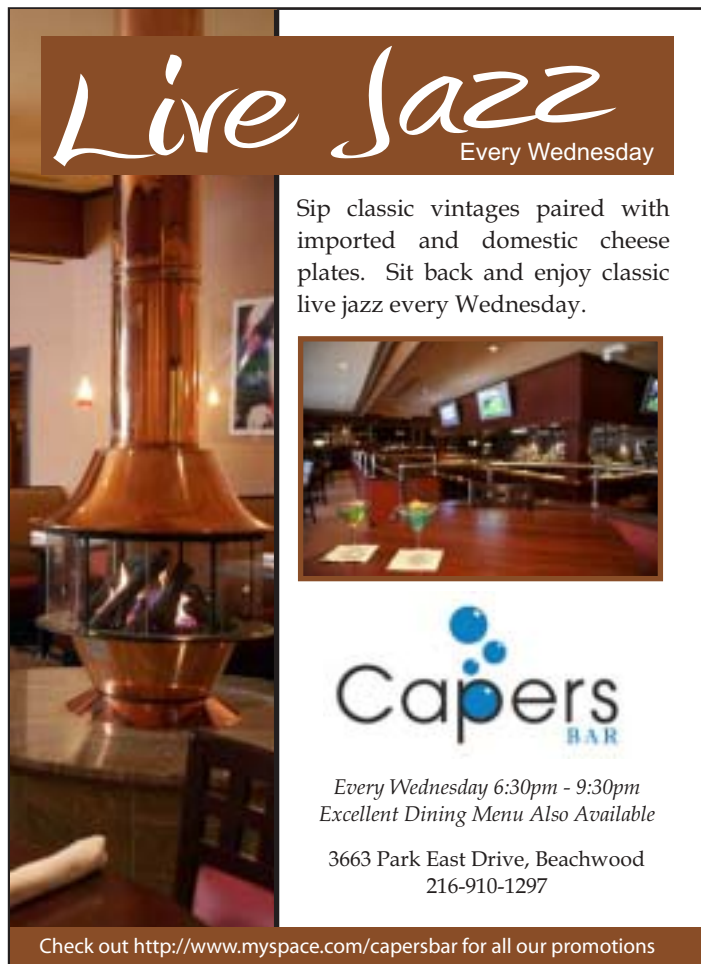
Former Wet Willie vocalist Jimmy Hall has crafted a terrific tribute to Rhythm and Blues songwriter and guitarist Eddie Hinton. Joined by the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Collective and Kentucky Headhunter guitarist Greg Martin, Hall lays down soulful, rocking vocals that have the same blue-eyed punch as Delbert McClinton who guests on *Still Want to Be Your Man*.

The sampling of Hinton's vast catalog included here reveals why he's been covered by everyone from Aretha Franklin, Tony Joe White, Gregg Allman, Dusty Springfield to UB40. Simply put, he wrote great material that hits all the right emotional chords.

Highlights include *Here I Am*, which Hall delivers as a funky groove fest that is at least a first cousin to Stevie Wonder's *Signed, Sealed, Delivered* while both versions of *Coming After You* (the second is Greg Martin's raw boned version) feature the gritty, rough edges of early Muddy Waters or even ZZ Top circa *Tres Hombres*. *Build Your Own Fire* is an atmospheric rock fueled number that trumpets the importance of self sufficiency.


Also included are plenty of deep soul ballads to tug at your heartstrings. In Hall's capable hands Hinton's material should reach a whole new generation of fans looking for authentic deep south R & B.

Hall's rich vocals should also turn some heads and earn new fans for him as well. **Mark Smith**



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JOHN MCLAUGHLIN

The Essential John McLaughlin

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

John McLaughlin was more than fusion's first superstar. In addition to the guitarist's signature blistering speed and pervasive Eastern musical influence, McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra, established the bedrock aesthetic and protocols of the fusion movement: challenging "heads", high-speed solo virtuosity and supercharged rhythms; "rules" that were followed by most of the bands spawned by that scene. Not surprisingly, those days are at the core of a tasty two-disc cross section covering the greatest stretch of the Scottish axeman's storied career.

In addition to highlighting his Mahavishnu/Shakti/post-Mahavishnu era waxed for the Columbia label, *The Essential John McLaughlin* includes some choice samples from earlier days. His time in the 60's British blues/jazz scene is documented in a quartet run-through of "Doxy" with Brit r&b legend Graham Bond on alto and future Cream-sters Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker making like a jazz rhythm section. His American debut as a member of the Tony Williams Lifetime and his feature on Miles' *Jack Johnson* highlight the lead-up to McLaughlin's ascension as *the* fusion guitar god. High marks go to the inclusion of his high-energy feature, alongside Bruce, Carla Bley on organ and drummer Paul Motian from Bley's quirky and somewhat obscure opera *Escalator Over The Hill*.

The second disc closes with a track from McLaughlin's very recent *Industrial Zen* which makes the case that the man remains one of the strongest voices, and fleet-fingered players, in the genre he helped create. *Duane Verh*

DUKE & THE DRIVERS

Harder Than Before

GROOVE INTERNATIONAL RECORDS

Duke & the Drivers have been around since the 70s and have just released their first studio album in 30 years. The band's longevity certainly shows in the tight performances offered here. Based in Boston, the Drivers are an absolute party band if ever there was one.

Lead singer Sam Deluxe may be the main ingredient with his gruffy, gritty vocals, kind of along the lines of Omar Dykes (the Howlers), and his superb, often very humorous writing skills. He wrote or co-wrote 11 of the 12 songs, with the exception being "60-Minute Man" which originally surfaced in the 50s with The Dominoes and has been covered by some others since. But as funny as that song is, many of Jo Little's (Sam Deluxe) are right up there with it.

The theme is girls, guys with girls, partying and cars...oh yeah...and more girls. After several listens this disc still makes me laugh...while alone in the car as I drive down the road. The Drivers' mix of B&B, funk and rock n' roll combined with the witty tales and well written and arranged music makes this a blast. Little has a knack for borrowing melodies from well-known songs and it works very well. And why not...Santana does it in his solos, as did Dexter Gordon and others. The remaining Drivers are Cadillac Jack, Mad Mississippi Buffalo, Rhinestone Mudflaps III and Earthquake Morton.

They also have a slew of talented guests playing a variety of instruments, but it is the 4-piece Uptown Horns, and especially Crispin Cioe's baritone sax and Larry Etkin's trumpet (they both play on most of the tracks) that put the icing on the proverbial cake.

If I ever make it to the New England area I will make it a point to check these guys out, For now, you can get the party going with this marvelous disc. Check some of it out at www.cdbaby.com/cd/drivers2, and look into the Drivers at www.dukeandthedriver.com. By all means...party on!
Bill Wahl

BILLIE HOLIDAY

Remixed & Reimagined

LEGACY RECORDS

Following closely on the heels of the most interesting Nina Simone Remixed & Reimagined, the folks at Columbia Legacy have given Lady Day a similar treatment. Though I enjoyed the Nina disc, I was actually afraid to play this one in fear that Billie remixed ala 2007 might be a bit much too digest. I must say, it works...somehow. Like the Nina, there is an intriguing array of styles in the mixes and the music, and, not surprisingly, some songs work much better than others. While the strict purists would probably be up in arms if they heard it, the fact is that they probably won't hear it anyway.

For the benefit of those who might know these names, DJs, producers and musicians such as Nickodemus, DJ Logic, Tony Humphries, Madison Park, Poppysed and

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Charles Feelgood are among the list of contributors here. Given the treatment are 14 songs from her Columbia years (1933-44) including "Summertime," "Glad To Be Unhappy," "Billie's Blues," "All Of Me," and more. Just a couple of the tracks here include Poppysseed's rhythm blast treatment of "He Ain't Got Rhythm" and Madison Park's spooky techno (with a muted trumpet sound in there no-less) production of "I'm Gonna Lock My Heart (And Throw Away The Key)." While some songs are definitely hip hop/dance laced, others have a more jazzy club/lounge/dance sound.

Chances are that those who liked the Nina R&R probably enjoy this one as well. If you have any reservations, check the songs out online first and then see what you think. It is definitely well worth checking into. It should turn Billie Holiday on to a whole new crowd...worldwide.

Bill Wahl

L.A. BLUES ALLIANCE

What A Life

BABY REE/FONTANA

A name such as this outfit's suggests an assemblage of players put together on short notice, rehearsed ever so slightly and then off to do some gigs where each member front the show for a few numbers and there's a whole lot of jamming in lieu of involved arrangements.

Well the evidence on disc is quite to the contrary. Blues neo-traditionalist Keb Mo', slide guitarist Sonny Landreth, venerable keyboard man Mike Finigan *et al* may indeed just get together now and again but the very respectable originals and well-crafted cover tracks here sound like they've been worked up & polished with great care. The band overall is solid and there is some truly standout work. Finigan's covers of Son House's "Death Letter Blues" and (yes) J. Cash's "I Walk The Line" reveal that age has not reduced his vocal fire. Amy Keys delivers first-rate vocals in support of Finigan and on her own feature "Maybe Your Baby". Landreth and harmonica man Stanley Behrens smoke throughout.

This is an airplay-worthy set that hopefully will put this not-a-bit-loose show on the road. *Duane Verh*

DOWN TO THE BONE

Supercharged

NARADA JAZZ

The main issues for a one-trick pony are these: 1) is the pony good at the trick? And 2) is the trick popular? In the case of British jazz-funksters Down To The Bone the answer in both cases is most definitely "yes". The horns-and-rhythm crew's stock in trade is solid, infectious groove music informed chiefly by the jazz-soul scene of the '70's. Solid foundation plus the high profile kept by trombonist Bob Dowell and saxophonists Paul "Shilts" Wiemar and Pete Grogan evoke the sounds and spirit of the Crusaders and that of James Brown's J.B.'s in their Fred Wesley/Maceo Parker heyday.

Suffice it to say that almost every track on *Supercharged* delivers reliably on the band's rep for body-swinging good time music with respectable solo work thrown in for good measure. If one knows this sound and digs it, there's no disappointment to be found from this pony. *Duane Verh*

MOCEAN WORKER

Cinco de Mowo

MOWO

Jazz and re-mixing have coexisted for more than a decade now and the best work in the hybrid form shows equal respect for the jazz half of the equation. No player in this game "gets" the jazz part like mix-meister Mocean Worker. Grooves from all eras and strains of jazz cook atop and alongside break-beats and scratches with a natural-sounding affinity for one another that enlivens both camps. And, oh yeah, makes for some hip-swaying jams.

Worker likely comes by his jazz savvy naturally. Born Adam Dorn, he's the son of legendary jazz producer Joel. His fifth release, *Cinco de Mowo*, moves from hot, nasty trumpet-sections to solid *barrio* grooves to soundscapes breezy and Brazilian, and even some flute from Rahsaan Roland Kirk and doses them all with beat-box rhythm too strong to fight. Worker manages to bring a solid, almost-humanized swing to what, at its root, is a bunch of electronic 1's & 0's. Re-mixes are sacrilege to "purists" perhaps but for those more tolerant of generational cross-talk, it's fun, and in Worker's hands, creative stuff.

There's still some summer days on hand for the Northern hemisphere and *Cinco de Mowo* makes for great seasonal music. Readers in the Southern Hemisphere (we know you're there) can get ahead of the curve and snag their summer fare now. *Duane Verh*

ANDRE PREVIN

Alone

EMARCY

A new and rare jazz solo album from pianist Andre Previn (b. 1929), this 13-tune CD is a pleasing treasure trove of ballads. Previn has released only two other solo piano albums in his entire career: one in 1996 and his first solo piano album in 1958.

Previn delivers elegant readings of jazz standards such as "Angel Eyes," "What Is This Thing Called Love," "Night

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and Day," "I Can't Get Started," "My Ship," "Skylark," and other favorites. His style is expressively straightforward without a lot of flourish or ornamentation. As if he were reciting the lyrics to himself, he remains so true to the melodies, you'll want to sing the songs with his backing.

One of the most versatile musicians in the world, Previn has accrued considerable credentials as a jazz pianist, although he's as widely known for his scores to films such as "My Fair Lady" and "Gigi," and later jazz recordings of tunes from those musicals with Shelly Manne and Leroy Vinnegar.

This is a relaxing, contemplative listen that shows Previn's faultless technique and warm interpretive skills. It's a must-own for jazz piano fans. *Nancy Ann Lee*

Other Good Stuff!

UB40

Live At Montreux 2002 EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD OR CD

Back in the early-80s when UB40 only had a cult following in the U.S., I and a crazy friend were nuts enough to present them in concert...in Cleveland Ohio. But I guess it was not so crazy after all. The place was packed...with some people traveling 500 miles or more. At that time, the English Reggae band named after an unemployment form in the UK had only import albums stateside, each with well crafted originals, such as "One In Ten" - which is included on this set (on both the DVD and CD versions). Shortly after, the band went in a somewhat different direction giving their reggae treatment to cover songs in a more pop-oriented fashion than their early work...with songs over the years such as "Red, Red Wine," "The Way You Do The Things You Do" and "I Can't Help Falling In Love With You."

This 2002 Montreux performance finds the band in good form playing 16 songs on the CD and 21 on DVD. Although I kind of lost interest in the band when they changed direction, I do remember them being quite fine in live performance. That fact prompted me to see them at a Reggae Sunsplash concert last year with a number of other top reggae bands. As with this set, they played their newer material, but turned out a stellar performance to cap off a great evening of music. The well recorded audio (and well-shot video on DVD) Should certainly please UB40's many fans across the planet. The DVD, with the extra songs, is especially enjoyable when played cranked up on a home theatre system. While I would have liked to have seen at least a couple more of the songs from their early years, I certainly understand that from a marketing point of view I am well back in the minority. This (especially the DVD) would also be a thought for the holiday season gift list, though it still seems so far away... I'm afraid it will be here before we know it. *Bill Wahl*

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Rock Hall Celebrates the 40th Anniversary of the Monterey International Pop Festival with opening of new Exhibit

CLEVELAND - On July 25, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum opened, Monterey Pop: Rock's Legendary Festival, an exhibit dedicated to the 40th Anniversary of the Monterey International Pop Festival. The Festival, held in June of 1967, was a completely innovative and monumentally influential event in American cultural history. Considered the premiere rock festival, rock movie and rock charity benefit and all a full two years before Woodstock, the Monterey International Pop Festival brought together artists of different styles, races and ages. From Ravi Shankar to Otis Redding to the Grateful Dead, the Festival was a gathering point for a generation, and the apotheosis of the "Summer of Love."

The Monterey International Pop Festival is most famous for launching the careers of Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Otis Redding and the Who. The stellar lineup also included the Mamas and the Papas, Booker T & the MGs, Moby Grape, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Lou Rawls, the Byrds, Laura Nyro, Jefferson Airplane, Buffalo Springfield, the Steve Miller Band, Hugh Masekela, the Association and others. All of the artists (except for Ravi Shankar) performed for free, and a ticket could be purchased for \$3.50. Over 200,000 attended, and Monterey International Pop Festival became the template for all great rock fests since. All proceeds went to the Monterey International Pop Festival Foundation, which actively gives to community charities to this day.

The Festival also yielded the 1968 platinum album, Jimi Hendrix and Otis Redding at Monterey, and the critically acclaimed 1969 D. A. Pennebaker film Monterey Pop all of which were produced by Lou Adler and John Phillips. The film will be showing at the Museum along with the exhibit. A DVD of this Criterion movie is available for sale, as is this year's two-CD retrospective release Monterey International Pop Festival. The Monterey International Pop Festival Foundation will benefit from the release of the CD.

The exhibit, which is on display in the Ahmet M. Ertegun Exhibit Hall, is made possible because of the generous donations from Lou Adler and D.A. Pennebaker.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum is the nonprofit organization that exists to educate visitors, fans and scholars from around the world about the history and continuing significance of rock and roll music. It carries out this mission both through its operation of a world-class museum that collects, preserves, exhibits and interprets this art form and through its library and archives as well as its educational programs.

The Museum is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. On Wednesdays the Museum is open until 9 p.m. Museum admission is \$20 for adults, \$14 for seniors (60+), \$11 for children (9-12) and children under 8 and Museum members are free. When you become a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, the world of rock and roll becomes yours to explore. Call 216.515.1939 for information on becoming a member. For general inquiries, please call 216.764.ROCK.

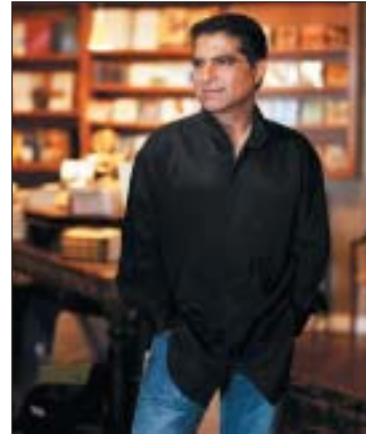


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