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Part 4

CLEVELAND FATS

Jazz & Blues Report

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Our original mascot from the early Buffalo Jazz Report days – mid '70s He is older now, but Still Cool!

Created by
Christine Engla Eber

Cleveland Fats

Carrying on the Musical Legacy of Robert Lockwood Jr.

By Ron Weinstock



I first met Mark Hahn, who performs as Cleveland Fats, in Buffalo in the mid-1970s when he had traveled there as part of Robert Lockwood's band to perform at the University of Buffalo Folk Festival. I had the pleasure of seeing him a number of times over the years with Robert Lockwood Jr. until Robert's performance at the 1992 Blue Bayou Festival which was Hahn's last performance with Robert as he then set out for a solo career. A couple years later his first CD appeared, **The Other Side of Midnight**, which was picked up by Ichiban. With his most recent disc **The Way Things Go** helping launch the Honeybee label, I had the chance to speak with Mark as part of the publicity for this excellent CD. This was about a week after Robert Lockwood Jr. had suffered his stroke, so some of our conversation centered on Lockwood's condition. But given the central role that Lockwood played in Mark's career and life, a good por-

tion of our chat would have been on the late legend in any event.

Mark was born in Ravenna, Ohio on February 10, 1956 and grew up near Kent. As a youngster he messed with a guitar but was not really into music at the time. He recalls seeing B.B. King on a Saturday night TV show when he was 12. He had seen nothing like it, but the blues hook was in and the next day he attempted to buy a B.B. King album, but the store was out of B.B.'s albums so he purchased one by Albert King instead. This began a period of learning and listening as he purchased records and started playing along.

He met Lee Eddie Clark and Clark's family when he was 14. Clark was from Mississippi and his sons played in the family band and were in mark's age group. They wanted a guitarist to play blues, as their guitarist did not like blues. So at the age of 14, mark started working in bars two nights a week and got turned on to Little Milton, Junior Parker, Earl Hooker and Little Johnny Taylor among others. The vocalist with the band was a cousin of Eddie, Otis Trotter who was also operating a shoe shine parlor.

In 1974, a Kent State University dee-jay, Chuck Ruby, took Mark to Cleveland to see and meet Robert Lockwood at The Grapes of Wrath, across from the bus station, with band that included Gene Schwartz and Hammering Hank Cockran on drums. Robert was playing with a twelve-string at the time and Chuck got Mark to sit in. Robert had Mark come back the following week and started to show him how to play behind him with Lockwood's unique style. Robert continued showing mark things at the bars, what to do, how to act. Mark started going to gigs and became part of the Robert Lockwood Band, a lengthy musical association that lasted until the summer of 1992.

During part of the seventies,

Lockwood's band also included vocalist Otis Trotter, who Mark brought to a gig and at first sat in. The band included Gene Schwartz, Maurice Reedus on tenor sax and either Hammering Hank Cockran or George Cook on drums. Cook was a blind drummer who had played with organist Eddie Baccus and Roland Kirk as the Three Blind Mice and played many gigs with Baccus around Cleveland until the latter drummer was on Lockwood's **Contrasts** album and became full-time with Lockwood when Cochran got sick.

With Lockwood Mark toured quite a bit, including traveling to Japan in 1978, his first trip outside the United States. By this time he had been in the studio on Lockwood's excellent **Does 12** album, also on Trix. It was a good, steady gig, although there was a period in 1983-84 where it started getting slow, and when it was real slow in 1986 he wintered south in Florida.

Robert encouraged Mark to sing. Once he had laryngitis and told Mark "I know you can bring us through the gig." After it went well Robert told him, "You did good and do more of it...good for you when you have your own band... you play behind yourself. That way you won't have to hire a guitar player." When Mark left Robert and started his career as Cleveland Fats, he had learned his on-stage lessons well.

Robert remained one of the formative persons in his life. "If I had never been a musician, I would have wanted to get to know him. He has good core values, a decent guy. {There is} not an insincere bone in his body. He is a heckuva good guy...I've never seen a guy who truly loved to play guitar like him. He really loved it." While Lockwood was the biggest musical influence as well as personal influence, others he cites as shaping his music include Earl Hooker, Albert King, Magic Sam, Muddy Waters, T-Bone Walker, Otis Rush and Blind Lemon Jefferson.

Mark recalls listening to music with Robert who would dissect things while listening. He recalled Freddie King, who Robert was on the bill with at the Agora, having dinner at Robert's house. Hideaway was playing and Freddie mentioned something about a chord. Robert replied to the effect "that damn chord?" and Freddie

laughed that he stole that from Robert.

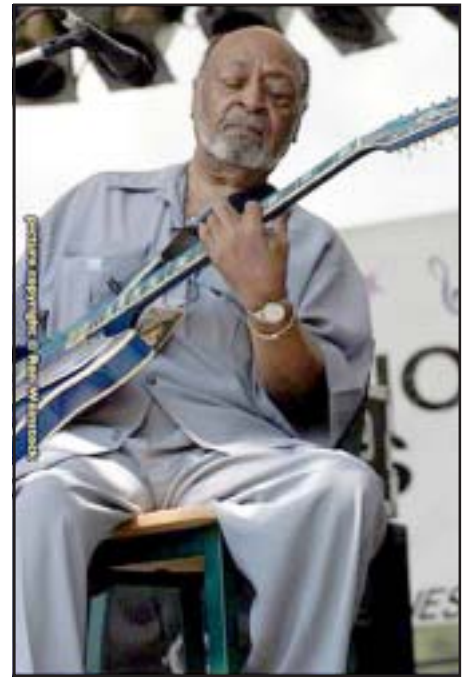
After leaving Lockwood he put out **The Other Side of Midnight** which Ichiban made generally available in 1997 and had Norm Tischler on saxophone and Gene Schwartz on bass for several tracks. He was playing 7 or 8 nights a week and also worked in heavy construction, which he had started when he was 18. He started taking his pension in 2004, which gave him more time and autonomy to play music. Of course, working a day job is no unusual thing for musicians. In fact, Lockwood was delivering prescriptions for Sherwood Drugs when I met him in 1970 and later was painting houses.

Fats has seen the ups and downs of being a musician. A marriage ended in divorce as his ex did not want a musician husband, and he states he should never have been married.

The new CD, **The Way Things Go**, was recorded over two days in January 2006 with Earwig's Michael Franks producing. The selections on which Robert Lockwood play had him overdub his parts the following month in Cleveland with the exception of one track with just him, Billy Branch and Lockwood. It was mixed in May, was officially released in October and currently getting a lot of radio play. He also had a 2000 CD, **Pretty Poison** and did a live CD, **Its Bluestime**.

He moved back to Ravenna back in 1996-1997, which is where he is based now as he starts touring and doing radio gigs to support the new album. With Robert Lockwood no longer with us, Cleveland Fats is one of a number of musicians that will continue his musical legacy forward in the years to come.

Robert Lockwood Jr.



March 27-1915-November 21, 2006

Robert Lockwood, legendary and highly influential bluesman, passed away Monday November 21 at the age of 91. Born in Turkey Scratch, Arkansas, near Marvell, Lockwood started playing a pump organ when at the age of 11 a traveling blues performer named Robert Johnson started a dalliance with Lockwood's mother. Johnson showed Lockwood some stuff on the guitar and while still a teenager started playing around the Delta region with Johnson, Aleck Rice Miller (better known as Sonny Boy Williamson), Johnny Shines, Elmore James and others. For a period he lived in St. Louis where along with blues singer, Dr. Clayton, traveled to Chicago where he backed Doctor Clayton and also made his initial recordings for Bluebird including songs that became blues standards including "Little Boy Blue," "Take a Little Walk With Me" and "Mean Black Spider." That latter number, retitled "Mean Red Spider," was the first commercial recording of one Muddy Waters.

He returned to the Delta region and joined up with Miller for a new radio show, King Biscuit Time, that was broadcast at lunchtime and was heard throughout the delta region.

Lockwood was one of the earliest electric guitarists in the south so his playing inspired numerous performers including B.B. King and Muddy Waters. Lockwood left King Biscuit to do his own broadcast for a competing company, Mothers Best Flour, backed by the Starkey Brothers, a jazzy band with horns in which Lockwood could expand

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his musical repertoire to include the big band and jump numbers that could be heard on radio and in juke boxes. He was an admirer of Charlie Christian among others and songs such as "Exactly Like You" and "Chinatown, My Chinatown" were also numbers that were part of his repertoire (as well as that of Robert Johnson) busking on the streets.

Later Lockwood mentored BB King, trying to get King to improve his timing. King's timing was so bad, that Lockwood was among those who told Bullet Records to have King record with horns to cover his bad timing. Eventually he ended in Chicago where he became a session musician for a variety of labels appearing on classic Chicago blues recordings by Eddie Boyd, Willie Mabon, Baby Face Leroy Foster, Floyd Dixon, Sunnyland Slim, and most notably Sonny Boy Williamson and Little Walter. He also recorded "Dust My Broom" before Elmore James did but Mercury sat on this recording and did not release it until later. His J.O.B. recording, "Aw AW Baby" was perhaps the version of Johnson's "Sweet Home Chicago" that led to recordings by his good friend, Roosevelt Sykes and latter renditions by Junior Parker and Magic Sam that helped establish this as a blues anthem. But the bulk of his work was supporting other artists and his marvelous chord work and single note runs behind Williamson and Little Walter were integral to these classic blues recordings. Lockwood toured with both and it was with Sonny Boy Williamson that he came to Cleveland in 1960 to play the legendary club, Gleason's. He never left Cleveland and lived for the rest of his life there. 1960 was also when he was part of the legendary sessions that led to the classic Otis Spann albums, *Otis Spann is the Blues* and *Walking the Blues*.

During the sixties and early seventies he played local clubs while working delivering prescriptions for a pharmacy or as a painter. He was called on stage at the 2nd Ann Arbor Blues Festival in 1970 which was followed by his first solo album, *Steady Rolling Man* for Delmark where he was backed by the Aces. He recorded a number of very fine albums for several labels with the two Trix albums, *Contrasts* and *Does 12* both standing out. By the late seventies, he had stopped playing his Gretsch Chet Atkins model for a 12-string guitar and continued trying to come up with new sounds and songs at an age where many would retire or recreate past glories. He recorded a couple of fine albums with Johnny Shines for Rounder, although a severe stroke suffered by Shines limited the extent of the collaboration. He was honored with Handy Awards, induction into the Blues Hall of

Fame and in 1995 President Clinton presented him with a National Heritage Award from the National Endowment For the Arts.

Lockwood's influence on blues guitar is under appreciated. Guitarists Louis Meyers, Matt Murphy, Eddie Taylor and Luther Tucker are among those Lockwood touched in the fifties and sixties and more were influenced in latter years. Bob Dylan reportedly asked Lockwood to show him some tips on how to play some of Robert Johnson's songs.

I was fortunate to know Robert for over 35 years. Some folks meeting him could view him as arrogant, but if they checked out what Robert told them they would discover he was simply stating facts. I found him quite engaging with a very dry, wry sense of humor, and someone I am pleased to have known and had interviewed on several occasions. His death coming on the heels of Ruth Brown's passing is another great loss for the blues community. The sweet sound of his playing still resonates in my head and I will miss him as a performer and a person.

Ron Weinstock

Photo of Robert at the 2005 Pocono Blues Festival by Ron Weinstock

Nancy Wilson to play Cleveland's Severance Hall



Experience Turned to Blue, the eagerly awaited follow-up to Nancy Wilson's 2005 GRAMMY winning release R.S.V.P. live at Severance Hall with the Jazz Heritage Orchestra – Friday, January 19. Wilson will take the stage at 8 pm. Tickets are \$25 - \$100. Severance Hall is located at 11001 Euclid Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio.

For more information or tickets call

216-231-1111 or toll free at 800-686-1141 or you can buy tickets online to www.severancehall.com.

After the show, come join Miss Nancy Wilson at 2 pm, Saturday January 20 at Borders for a signing and discussion about her career and magic behind her new album. Borders is located at 3466 Mayfield Road in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. For more information call 216-291-8605.

Turned To Blue is a classic representation of Nancy Wilson showcasing the full spectrum of experiences that come with a five decade career in entertainment. The legendary songstress delivers a story through ballads as only she can, premieres unparalleled treatments of new songs and swings with a big band harking back to her days with Cannonball Adderley and the Billy May Orchestra.

This project marks the third collaboration between Wilson and MCG Jazz.

Finalists Announced for the 6th Annual Independent Music Awards

The 2007 finalists have been announced for the 6th annual Independent Music Awards, a program that delivers real career opportunities for indie artists, labels and releases. The awards recognize excellence in Music, Music Promotion, Packaging and Merchandise Design. Winners will be announced and all finalists will be featured in the 2007 edition of *The Musician's Atlas* — the independent music industry's most comprehensive and qualified networking directory for independent musicians and music business entrepreneurs — to be published on December 15.

A diverse panel of artist and industry judges such as Peter Gabriel, Wynonna, Ozzy Osbourne, Paul Oakenfold, Buddy Guy, Suzanne Vega, Abby White (Music Editor of *Performing Songwriter*) and Louis Meyers (Executive Director, Folk Alliance) will select the winners for the 2007 IMAs. Some of the 2007 finalists are electronic pop duo BITTER:SWEET's 'The Mating Game' for Best Pop/Rock Album; activist singer-songwriter Dan Bern's 'Breathe' for Best Folk/Singer-Songwriter Album; vocal jazz trio Dave's True Story for Best Jazz Album and Best Film/TV Song; blues guitarist

Duke Robillard's 'Guitar Groove-A-Rama' for Best Blues Album; country-rocker Miko Marks' 'Freeway Bound' for Best Country Album; singer-songwriter Kara Suzanne and the Gojo Hearts' 'Aumsville' for Best Folk/Singer-Songwriter Album; the alternative rock band Irving's "Situation" for Best Pop/Rock Song and country-pop band Moore & Moore's "L.O.V.E." for Best Country Song. For a complete list and to listen to music from the finalists go to <http://www.musiciansatlas.com/pages/IMAFinalist/>

The IMA program has created an informal "Vox Populi" vote that's a component of the IMA Album and Song Jukeboxes. Although the vote has no impact on the judges' decisions, it provides a marketing opportunity which enables finalists to promote their accomplishments to their fans and gives listeners a chance to discover other talent spotlighted in the program. Also, for first year, the IMA program features the new "Sing Out For Social Action" song category that focuses on artists who use their music as a platform to address political and social issues.

IMA winners receive year-long marketing campaigns, partnerships and distribution alliances that put them in front of millions of music fans and industry decision makers around the world. The winners' CDs will be available for sale at BordersStores.com. In addition, a compilation CD of the IMA winners music will be distributed to music fans and industry movers and shakers at music conferences, festivals and other events throughout the year and will also be promoted to college radio stations throughout North America by leading radio promotion company The Planetary Group.

Martin Folkman, publisher of *The Musician's Atlas* said, "One of the greatest challenges for independent musicians is to stand out and be heard. *Musician's Atlas* has long been regarded as the most accurate and comprehensive contact directory available. We have worked tirelessly to fully update and enhance the 2007 edition with critical contacts, resources and information to help connect the independent musician with the right people and opportunities to pave one's way towards success."

The 2007 edition of *The Musician's Atlas* has been revamped to provide independent musicians with an up to

date guide to the music industry. Due to popular demand and reader feedback the following sections have been enhanced: Clubs, US/Canadian College Radio & Booking, Conferences & Festivals, National/Regional Press, Commercial & Public Radio, Song Contests & Compilations and Tours among other opportunities.

Holiday Revival Show returning December 26 to House of Blues Cleveland



Carlos Jones

Cleveland's Little Fish Records has announced that Carlos Jones & The P.L.U.S. Band (aka The Peace, Love, Unity Syndicate) will be joined by a hot new R & B/Hip-Hop act – Ghetto Wisdom - for a dual performance at The House of Blues, 308 Euclid Avenue, on Tuesday, December 26 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10.

Scheduled for the day after Christmas, this show features two groups with uplifting, inspirational messages, and should be a boost to an audience winding down from a busy holiday season. Carlos Jones, long-time stalwart on the reggae circuit with I-Tal then First Light, will headline the show with The P.L.U.S. Band, featuring songs from their recent CD, *Roots with Culture*, on Little Fish Records. The group has released two singles off the CD: "Torchbearer," a tribute to the late Bob Marley, and "Children Unite." Jones, with his roots-based style inspired by Bob Marley, is considered a pioneer of the "American Reggae" sub-genre that fuses reggae with rock, r&b, and folk

to create a whole new sound.

The group continues to rack up awards in it's home town, recently winning awards for Best Reggae/World act in the Free Times' readers poll (February '06) and the Cleveland Scene Magazine readers poll (July '06). They were voted Best Live Act by the Cleveland Scene Magazine readers' poll in 2005, an award that encompasses all genres of music. Jones' smooth, soulful voice and charismatic stage presence have been inspiring crowds for over 20 years, and he shows no signs of slowing down. He is currently working on a new side project that will feature collaborations with other songwriters and producers, such as Mike Calhoun (former guitar player with the Grammy Award winning "Dazz Band"). There is also a new CD in the works for the PLUS Band, schedule for release in 2007.

Opening the show will be Ghetto Wisdom out of Lorain, Ohio who made a splash on the Cleveland music scene this summer when they appeared at the Little Fish Records Showcase at Market Square. In the audience that day, was Dennis and Elizabeth Kucinich, who have become big fans of the group, touting them to their friends in the entertainment world including Willy Nelson and Paul McCartney. Front man for the group, Edwin Jackson (aka E&J) spits self-penned poetry with a twist of r&b-soul, hip-hop, reggae and rock to tell stories of triumph and tragedy.

Accompanying E&J on stage is the live band Ghetto Wisdom, featuring former Dazz Band guitarist, Mike Calhoun, whose dynamic performances take the music to heights not usually seen in the R&B/Hip-Hop world. Don't be surprised to see both Mike and E&J together on stage with Carlos Jones for a special grand finale, as they have a mutual admiration for each other and a unique chemistry which they are excited to display on stage.

Little Fish Records (LFR) is a Cleveland-based record label committed to presenting the finest local and regional sounds within a wide variety of musical genres, including Reggae, World, Americana, Blues, Folk, and Rock. Little Fish Records is a division of Cross Track Music, Inc., a full-service provider of artist services, including management, promotions, distribution, bookings, publishing, and foreign

licensing.

The Little Fish Records website, www.littlefishrecords.com, hosts and sells its "Cleveland Classics" comprehensive collection of music by Cleveland-based artists from the 60's to present. The site also offers digital downloads of sheet music, through its affiliation with the *Music Notes* stores.

BLUES WATCH

By Mark Smith

If you find yourself bewildered about what to purchase your favorite blues buddy for Christmas or if you are stumped about what to put on your own list so that your clueless non-blues friends don't buy you yet another House of Blues T-shirt, consider a few of the following ideas:

- A Subscription to *Blues Revue Magazine*- \$23.95 a year (6 issues). Call 1-800-258-7388. Subscribers will also receive three Blues Revue sampler discs featuring a wide variety of established and up and coming artists.

- A subscription to *Big City Blues Magazine*- \$25 per year (six issues), \$50 for two years (12 issues) and \$75 for three years (18 issues). Send a check or money order to Big City Blues, P.O. Box 1805, Royal Oak, MI 48068-1805.

- A Subscription to *Living Blues*- \$23.95 a year (6 issues). Call 1-800-390-3527.

- David Dalton's wonderful book *Been Here and Gone- A Memoir of the Blues* (Morrow, 2000) which brings the key figures of blues history such as Charlie Patton, Lightning Hopkins, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Sonny Boy Williamson, Leadbelly, Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey to life. Using a fictional bluesman, Coley Williams, who grows up with the blues and meets these artists and many others along the way, Dalton adds three dimensions to the dry historical facts about their lives and times. Gamblers, con artists, drunks, divas and poets all found their way into the blues and over the course of 395 pages Dalton introduces us to all of them. You'll never hear these artists the

same way after they come alive for you through Coley Williams' recollections of their times together. An indispensable book for anyone with any interest in the characters who created the blues.

- *Rollin' and Tumblin'*—edited by Jas Obrecht- A 480 page collection of essays and interviews detailing the careers of 25 electric blues guitarists including Lightnin' Hopkins, Hubert Sumlin, Jimmy Rogers and Freddie Albert and B.B. King.

- Membership in the Blues Foundation. \$25 per year for membership gives voting rights in the annual W.C. Handy competition, discounts on merchandise, the Foundation's newsletter and other benefits. Call 1-800-861-8795.

- A membership in your local blues society.

- *The Blues Highway- New Orleans to Chicago*- is a road trip through the cradle of musical innovation in America. This travel and music guide follows Highway 61, the Illinois Central railroad and the Mississippi River to explore the roots of jazz, blues, Cajun, zydeco, country, rock & roll, soul and gospel music from Congo Square in New Orleans to down-home Delta juke-joints and on to South Side Chicago clubs. Exciting features include: detailed city guides; extensive listings on where to stay and where to eat; where to find the best music clubs and bars; historic landmarks; who's who of jazz and blues; when and where to find music festivals and events; and the people, culture and cuisine of The Blues Highway. I can speak from personal experience- this book took me straight to such historic sights as the Stovall Plantation where Muddy Waters took his first steps and countless other stops on a recent journey from New Orleans back to Michigan. A must have

- A piece of highly cool art for the blues lover can be scored at www.primitivekoolart.com.

See ya next year !

Monterey Jazz Festival now accepting applications for Next Generation Festival

MONTEREY CA - The Monterey Jazz Festival, a leader in jazz education since its inception in 1958, is pleased to announce the 3rd Annual Next Generation Festival, featuring the nation's most talented middle school, high school and college jazz musicians and vocalists. The Next Generation Festival, which includes MJF's 37th Annual National High School Jazz Competition, will take place in historic downtown Monterey from March 23 - 25, 2007. The Competition is accepting applications from middle school, college and high school big bands and from high school combos and vocal jazzensembles through January 24, 2007.

Application forms may be downloaded at the Monterey Jazz Festival's website, montereyjazzfestival.org. The application process is free.

The weekend-long event will include performances and competitions, with awards going to the best groups for College, High School and Middle School Big Band divisions; and for High School Combos and Vocal Ensembles. The event also includes a Composition Competition open to high school composers, with the winning piece to be debuted at the 50th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival.

Auditions will also be held for chairs in the Monterey Jazz Festival's Next Generation Jazz Orchestra, which tours internationally and is a featured ensemble on the Festival's Sunday afternoon Arena/Lyons Stage.

The Next Generation Festival is an expansion of the Monterey Jazz Festival's Annual National High School Jazz Competition, now in its 37th year. The High School Jazz Competition is open to superior rated big bands, combos, and vocal ensembles. The non-competitive middle school category is open to superior rated big bands. The Next Generation Festival is also open to all college level big bands. "At the Next Generation Festival we emphasize the 'festival' aspect of the event and offer students, teachers, and jazz fans the opportunity to come together to share and enjoy this wonderful music called jazz," says Dr. Rob Klevan, the Director of Education of the Monterey Jazz Festival.

Happy Holidays!

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THE RUDY VAN GELDER EDITIONS

From 1953 to 1967, Alfred Lion produced a body of work that ranks as the most innovative series of recordings in modern jazz. Almost all of these masterpieces were documented by the extraordinary Rudy Van Gelder; a self-taught engineer who more than set a new standard. Devoid of caution or timidity, he captured the full power and rich sound of jazz ensembles with dazzling clarity. His contribution to the focused approach that Blue Note took at every stage of any album was immeasurable. Decades later, Rudy agreed to take a second look at the original recordings, bringing them into the digital domain with the same skill and focus. More RVG Editions have just been released. If you think you've heard these gems before, listen again.



Royal Flush, Donald Byrd



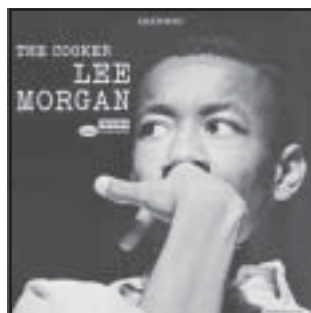
Trompeta Toccata, Kenny Dorham



The Congregation, Johnny Griffin



Another Workout, Hank Mobley



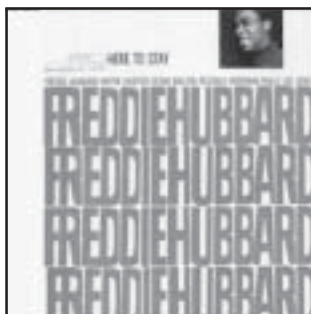
The Cooker, Lee Morgan



It Might as Well be Spring, Ike Quebec



Off to the Races, Donald Byrd



Here to Stay, Freddie Hubbard



Happenings, Bobby Hutcherson



Demon's Dance, Jackie McLean



City Lights, Lee Morgan



Doin' the Thing at the Village Gate, Horace Silver

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The 2006 Holiday Gift Guide
Part 4 begins on page 13

SONNY ROLLINS

Sonny, Please
DOXY RECORDS

On his first studio recording in five years and on his own label, tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins performs seven tunes with his cohesive working band featuring trombonist Clifton Anderson, guitarist Bobby Broom, bassist Bob Cranshaw, drummer Steve Jordan and percussionist Kimati Dinizulu.

A month after returning from a sold-out Japanese tour in November 2005, the band went into the studio and, on five dates from December to February 2006, recorded three standards and four Rollins originals. Rollins is in peak form on this recording, demonstrating the expressive, flowing, imaginative chops and warm tonalities he's been long known for. His playing is especially noteworthy on ballads such as the Noel Cow-

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"John has a deep understanding of the blues tradition that comes from hanging with the classic Chicago bluesmen, but he's created his own sound and style from these roots."
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"Self-Made Man is terrific...A+"
-- WMHB Waterville, ME

ard standard, "Someday I'll Find You" and the warhorse 1930s tune "Stairway to the Stars." Yet, it's his own compositions such as the "Sonny, Please" (quoting his late wife Lucille), "Nishi" (named for a bassist friend in Japan) and "Park Palace Parade" (citing the now-defunct Spanish Harlem dance hall where calypso bands played) that pack the most vitality. His waltzing "Remembering Tommy," first written 15 years ago for a session with Tommy Flanagan, pays tribute to the late pianist.

This attention-grabbing recording captures Rollins at his best and his team mates individually and collectively match his mastery.
Nancy Ann Lee

JUNIOR WELLS

Live at Theresa's 1975
DELMARK

News of this previously unissued live Junior Wells recording from 1975 came as a wonderful surprise to blues fans as Delmark has issued **Live at Theresa's 1975**, taken from recordings made for broadcast on Chicago station WXRT-FM. Theresa's was a small neighborhood bar that was Wells' home base until it closed. Wells was supported by a band that included Phil Guy on guitar and Earnest Johnson bass. On the two dates from January 1975, Byther Smith or Sammy Lawhorn are on guitar and Vince Chapelle or Levi Warren are on drums.

There are some fine performances of songs that were staples of Wells' repertoire until his death, such as *Little By Little*, *Come On in This House*, *It Hurts Me Too*, *What My Mama Told Me* and *Messing With the Kid*. Smith takes a vocal on *Help the Poor* from B.B. King's repertoire. The music is solid, and there is plenty of banter from Junior including singing *Happy Birthday* to photographer Mark PoKemper and acting as PoKemper's pitchman. Junior and the band were in terrific form and Phil Guy and Earnest Johnson were also regular members of Wells' touring band when he joined up with Buddy Guy at the time. This is a marvelous addition to his discography and certainly a must for fans of his music and post-war Chicago blues.
Ron Weinstock

LYNNE ARRIALE TRIO

Lynne Arriale Trio Live
MOTEMA MUSIC DVD/CD SET

Pianist Lynne Arriale performs with her trio in this spectacular 2005 performance recorded live Germany. This DVD/CD set is her tenth recording as leader and her sixth release with bassist Jay Anderson and drummer Steve Davis, together as a band since 1993.

Although she didn't begin playing jazz until her mid-twenties, Arriale has evolved into a dramatic player whose approach is full of passion and creative spirit. There are hints of Keith Jarrett, Bill Evans, and McCoy Tyner in her playing and she loves the Beatles' music, but Arriale has a style her own that's full of striking melodies and unexpected harmonic touches, artfully supported here by Anderson and Davis.

The DVD contains 10 tunes (the CD, nine) and features pop/jazz standards and Arriale originals.

The added DVD performance, a haunting version of "Alone Together," finds Arriale in a true Jarrett-mode, stretching to the outside edge while Davis and Anderson spur her on. After bass and drum solos, Arriale brings the tune full circle to the melody head. It's one of the best tracks on the

album. Other renderings include Arriale originals such as the African-themed "Iko Iko," the sonorous "Home," and the lively "Braziliana." The trio also delivers refreshing takes on the John Lennon/Paul McCartney classic "Come Together" and a percolating version of Thelonious Monk's "Bemsha Swing."

DVD production quality is first rate. Camera operators and production crews seem to know jazz and add significantly to making this an exciting viewing experience. Extras on the DVD include an engrossing 25-minute PBS video "Profile of a Performing Artist" which features Arriale expressing her thoughts on jazz and performing with her trio; an interview with Woomy Schmidt; and band bios. Coupled with the main performance, the DVD extras make the project an example of how to do things right.

This first-rate DVD/CD project could become a benchmark performance for piano trios. I've been admiring Arriale's recordings for awhile. To see and hear her in action on this DVD is a genuine treat. Visit www.LynneArriale.com for more info or to purchase this set.

Nancy Ann Lee

CLEVELAND FATS

The Way Things Go

HONEYBEE RECORDS

I first met Mark Hahn when he was playing guitar with the late Robert Lockwood, Jr. for over a decade (and he is on several of Lockwood's albums including the classic *Does 12*). His last gig as part of Lockwood's band at the Blue Bayou Festival that took place in 1991 or 1992 at the Prince George's Equestrian Center, after which Hahn started leading his own band using the name Cleveland Fats. This new release is, I believe, his fourth album since starting his solo career and was produced by Earwig Music's Michael Frank with an excellent band that includes veteran bassist Aaron Burton; pianists Aaron Moore and Ariyo; drummer Dave Jefferson; saxophonist Doc Thomas; and organist Vince Willis. Billy Branch adds his harp on four tracks and Lockwood himself appears on four tracks which are among the final studio recordings on which the legend played.

This was recorded in Chicago, with Lockwood's contri-

butions overdubbed a month later in Cleveland. Hahn himself started getting into blues after catching B.B. King on a Cleveland TV show. The next day the local store was out of B.B.'s albums and so he picked up an Albert King album. Both Kings, T-Bone and a host of others, especially Mr. Lockwood, shaped his strong urban blues guitar playing. Echoes of Lockwood phrasing heard on his solo on "Don't Call Me," one of the tracks with Branch's remarkable harp artistry. The opening bars on "Invisible Man" echo Lockwood's intro to Lockwood's 1960 recording "This is the Blues," before Hahn launches into some nice slide as Branch embellishes with fine harp. These tracks feature Hahn's solid singing that to these ears suggest the late Louis Myers and Chris Cain. And these numbers, like most of the selections, are Hahn's originals that deserve to be picked up by others. "Cell Phone Blues" has an amusing lyric as Fats sings "Don't want no cell phone hanging around with me, cause I may go to places I ain't supposed to be."

Lockwood first appears on the solid updating of Sonny Thompson's easy tempo shuffle "Long Gone," taking the second solo. Hahn's fine original "Blues Time" is a slow blues with Hahn's playing nodding a bit to T-Bone as well as Lockwood with Lockwood taking another fine solo that would have been at home on any of Robert's albums. Just Fats, Branch and Lockwood are heard on Lockwood's "Dead or Alive," which Fats sings nicely as the three provide a relaxed, swinging performance.

This is marvelously recorded and performed and with Robert Lockwood now gone, this disc indicates that others will be helping keep his musical legacy alive by their own music. Highly recommended.

Ron Weinstock

ERNEST DAWKINS'

NEW HORIZONS ENSEMBLE

The Messenger: Live at the Original Velvet Lounge

DELMARK DVD (OR CD)

Building on the Chicago tradition begun by the AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Music) and other Windy City forerunners, saxophonist Ernest Dawkins leads an inventive (pianoless) group consisting of trumpeter Maurice

It's More Than Just a Club

December

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SAT 16 SWAMP BOOGIE BAND
FRI 22 CITY HEAT
SAT 23 THE CHOSEN FEW
FRI 29 DENZON AND THE ROADDOGGZ
SAT 30 COLIN DUSSAULT & THE BLUES PROJECT



MONDAYS EDDIE & THE EDSLS

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5 THE GEEZECATS	19 MOJO STREET BLUES
12 BRENT HOPPER & BRITTANY REILLY	26 STONE BERMUDEZ

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6 ACOUSTIC JOYRIDE	20 LAWLESS
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Brown, trombonist Steve Berry, bassist Darius Savage and drummer Isaiah Spencer.

Captured in a video set at the old Velvet Lounge, the boisterous ensemble (founded in 1979) generates a big inside-out sound on six tunes, launching with "Mean Ameen," a nearly 11-minute spree named for the band's first recruit (Ameen Muhammad) who died prematurely on 2/27/2003. Others tunes include the groovin' title tune; a drawling "Goin' Downtown Blues" (featuring Dawkins' vocals); the restless, riffing 17-minute "Toucouleur"; an AACM-sounding space traveler, "The Brood"; and a rowdy fun-filled, New Orleans-tinged romp, "Lookin' for Ninny."

This July 14, 2005 gig (also available on CD) shows that Dawkins continues to create innovative, accessible music and has plenty of stage charisma. The set rolls and rumbles with deep grooves, solid front-line improvs and sterling musicianship on a mixture of blues, bop, swing, Afro-Latin and tinges of avant-garde. Extra chapters on the DVD version include quick takes of Dawkins' story about "The Boute" in Paris and a closing chant, "Go Fred" for owner Fred Anderson.

Dawkins, born November 2, 1953 on Chicago's South Side, began his musical journey at age 12. He first studied bass, played congas, and finally by age 19 got turned onto reeds and took his first lesson at the AACM's center. He later formed his own band but has also performed with other Chicago bands as well as national acts. He holds a Masters in Music Education degree.

Excellent camera work captures the action in detail, moving in for close-ups on the soloists and documenting the ex-

citement and audience appreciation. Sound production is superb. I've caught Dawkins' New Horizons Ensemble in live performance at the Chicago Jazz Festival and this DVD aptly catches the band in an intimate, benchmark performance that will be long-treasured by fans of Dawkins and the AACM aura.

Nancy Ann Lee

JOHN MOONEY

Big Ol' Fiya
LML RECORDS

Its been four years since John Mooney had a new album out, and he has produced his latest on LML Records (Live Music Lives, which should satisfy fans of his unique musical gumbo of Son House-influenced delta blues with Crescent City grooves.

This album also includes the keyboards of Jon Cleary along with the bass of the late Jeff Sarli, percussionist Alfred 'Uganda' Roberts and drummer Raymond Webber although Bernard 'Bunche' Johnson is on two tracks and engineer Mark Bingham picks up the bass for one track. Opening with a hot groove on *2 Get 2 Heaven*, the band kicks into high gear as Mooney sings "I didn't come here, to preach & pray; I ain't here to soothe you; 'Cause you works all day; I ain't here, to kiss & tell; I'm just tryin' to getta out this hell." as Mooney adds some driving, crying slide. The title track follows as the tempo slows a bit with Cleary on organ as Mooney adds some nice slide runs with a lyric about what was love at first sight and how she is on his mind all day long but she left him and broke his heart. Voice and slide are in harmony as Mooney starts *Dig My Way 2 China*, how his woman left him so low he is digging his way down to China.

Few attempt to rework Son House songs, but Mooney's interpretations carry an authority that in part reflect what he learned directly from the archetypal blues legend. Here he provides us a strong small band rendition of House's *Louis McGhee*, with Sarli, Roberts and Webber providing the strong complimentary backing for Mooney. A Mooney original, *Do You Love Me*, is another strong performance rooted in the delta blues of House and his friend Willie Brown.

The remainder is in a similar vein and is a most welcome addition to Mooney's strong discography. For more information can check Mooney's website, www.johnmooneylive.com which will link you to www.cdbaby.com which is where your reviewer obtained this strong release.

Ron Weinstock

CHARLES MINGUS

Charles Mingus at UCLA 1965
Mingus Big Band Live in Tokyo 2005
MINGUS MUSIC/SUNNYSIDE

Although the late composer-bassist Charles Mingus died in 1979, his music lives on not only on his authentic recordings but also through performances and recordings organized by his widow, Sue Mingus, for the Mingus Dynasty, the Mingus Big Band, the Mingus Orchestra and the Epitaph Orchestra.

These two separate recordings, *Music Written for Monterey, 1965 Not Heard...Played Live in Its Entirety at UCLA* and *The Mingus Big Band Live in Tokyo at the Blue Note, 2005* were released simultaneously in the fall of 2006. The two-disc 1965 set documents the jazz giant with his band and the other captures the big band bearing his name 40 years later.

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) gig fea-



tures Mingus leading his octet through 11 compositions. Mingus had performed at the 1964 Monterey Festival and returned the next year to debut a collection of difficult material. However, his set was cut to one half hour and most of the set list was scrapped. A week later, he premiered and recorded the material in a “workshop” concert at UCLA. Since the masters were destroyed when Capitol cleaned its vaults in 1971, the stunning performance was expertly remastered from the original vinyl. The band included trumpeters Hobart Dotson, Lonnie Hillyer and Jimmy Owens; alto saxophonist Charles McPherson; French horn player Julius Watkins; tuba player Howard Johnson; drummer Dannie Richmond and Mingus on bass. Tunes include “One Upon A Time, There Was A Holding Corporation Called Old America” (a later version was titled “The Shoes of the Fisherman’s Wife Are Some Jive-ass Slippers”), “Meditation On Inner Peace,” “The Arts of Tatum and Freddy Webster,” and some tunes that provide rare opportunities to hear Mingus perform on otherwise unavailable compositions. A 20-page liner booklet describes events leading to the performance and the performance itself, unavailable on CD until now.

The 2005 Tokyo Blue Note set showcases the current 14-piece Mingus Big Band playing rousing newly-arranged compositions from the Mingus songbook. Musicians include trumpeters Eddie Henderson, Jack Walrath and Alex Sipiagin; saxophonists Abraham Burton, Craig Handy, Wayne Escoffery, Seamus Blake and Ronnie Cuber; trombonists Ku-umba Frank Lacy, Conrad Herwig and Earl McIntyre; pianist Dave Kikoski; bassist Kenny Davis and drummer Johnathan Blake playing Mingus classics such as “Opus 4,” “Meditations,” “Ecclusiastics,” “Free Cell Block 8,” and other numbers that exude explosive energy.

These dazzling discs capture the melodiousness, energy and spirit of Mingus’ music and add nicely to existing recordings by both the ingenious Mingus and the faithful Mingus bands formed after his passing.

Nancy Ann Lee

SPECIALTY PROFILE SERIES CONCORD RECORDS

Concord Music Group’s release of six initial Specialty Profile budget reissues hopefully will introduce some to the great music that has been issued by Fantasy Records prior to Concord’s acquisition of the label last year. Originally called Juke Box, Specialty was one of the independent labels that emerged after World War II that was central in the release of so much rhythm’n’blues, gospel and blues as well as some of the most important pioneering rock’n’roll recordings. These releases have 14 performances by the featured artist and a second bonus CD with ten performances by Specialty artists.

Roy Milton, inspired by the big bands led his Solid Senders, the prototypical jump blues band, that in its tight, punchy sound captured some of the flavor of the bigger bands on a program of blues and jump numbers. Milton was a swinging drummer and an ingratiating vocalist with a terrific band that featured the wonderful pianist Camille Howard. Milton had many charting records, which became staples of the emerging rhythm and blues music. Two of his recordings *Milton’s Boogie*, his version of Count Basie’s *Boogie Woogie* and Milton’s *Hop Skip & Jump* were recorded by Elmore James pianist Little Johnnie Jones while such numbers as *R.M. Blues* and *Information Blues* still appeal with the strong driving swing

and superb musicianship. This is terrific stuff.

John Lee Hooker recorded prolifically between the late forties and early fifties for a variety of labels including Specialty who acquired sides produced by Bernie Besman in Detroit. The 14 selections presented by Specialty capture Hooker on his driving one-chord boogies such as his revisiting of his first hit, *Boogie Chillen*, his slow brooding lament about a cheating woman which he would later visit for Vee-Jay, *I’m Mad*, and the hot duet with harmonica player Eddie Burns, *Burnin’ Hell*, where he proclaims “Ain’t no heaven, ain’t no burning hell” as he lays down a hot boogie guitar riff. “There is a small combo version of Rosco Gordon’s *No More Doggin’*. This is this writer’s favorite period of John Lee Hooker’s recording with some of his most powerful recordings to which this disc is an excellent introduction.

After Fats Domino, probably no New Orleans artist had the impact of one **Lloyd Price** whose recording *Lawdy Miss Clawdy* was one of the first rhythm and blues hit recordings to cross over to a white audience in a massive fashion. Price went on to a celebrated recording and performing career. The 14 selections here come from two CDs of his music and is a reasonable sample of his earliest recordings, dating from 1952 or 1953 with the exception of 1956’s *Rock ‘n’ Roll Dance*. Price’s earliest recordings for Specialty had him backed by Dave Bartholomew’s legendary studio band with Fats Domino on piano for the *Lawdy Miss Clawdy* session while later sessions included pianists Edward Frank and Huey ‘Piano’ Smith and such horn players as Wallace Davenport and Herb Hardesty. These tracks are classic New Orleans R&B with tracks like *Mailman Blues*, or *Where You At?* being hot rockers. Price’s youth perhaps leads to some vocals sounding as a bit overwrought (*If Crying Was Murder*).

Larry Williams was Lloyd Price’s second cousin, and born in New Orleans although his family moved to the West Coast in his youth, returning to the New Orleans a couple of times, including stints with his cousin as driver and valet and then briefly with Fats Domino. He joined Specialty around the time Little Richard had quit music and with hits like *Bony Moronie*, *Short Fat Fanny* and *Dizzy Miss Lizzy*, which also influenced an imaginative John in Liverpool. He was a solid pianist, pounding out his boogie rocking licks backed by some of the best studio bands in Hollywood with transplanted New Orleans drummer Earl Palmer anchoring things. These were splendid rock and roll recordings. There is a nice rendition of his cousin’s *Just Because* along with Sonny Bono’s *High School Dance* and *She Said Yeah*, the coupling *Bad Boy* and *Slow Down*, covered by the Beatles, and *Little School Girl*, a reworking of the blues classic *Good Morning Little Schoolgirl*. Williams could not handle success leading to drug problems and an early death, but his legacy is these terrific recordings.

Percy Mayfield was labeled The Poet Laureate of the Blues, for his wonderfully crafted sophisticated blues. As a performer, he sang with an intimacy that matched the sophistication of his lyrics. Until disfigures in an auto accident he had the looks to make him a major star and still remained an major songwriter (hired by Rat Charles) as well as a performer who continued to make thoughtful and sophisticated recordings until his death. His songs, including *Please Send Me Someone to Love*, *Strange Things Happening*, *The River’s Invitation*, *Lost Love (aka Baby Please)* and *Lost Mind*, have become blues standards and his original recordings are terrific. Given that only 14 selections were chosen, Mayfield’s early demo of *Hit*

the Road, Jack, might have been omitted along with the duet with Joy Hamilton, *Sugar Mama-Peachy Papa*, as they are below the level of these other included recordings.

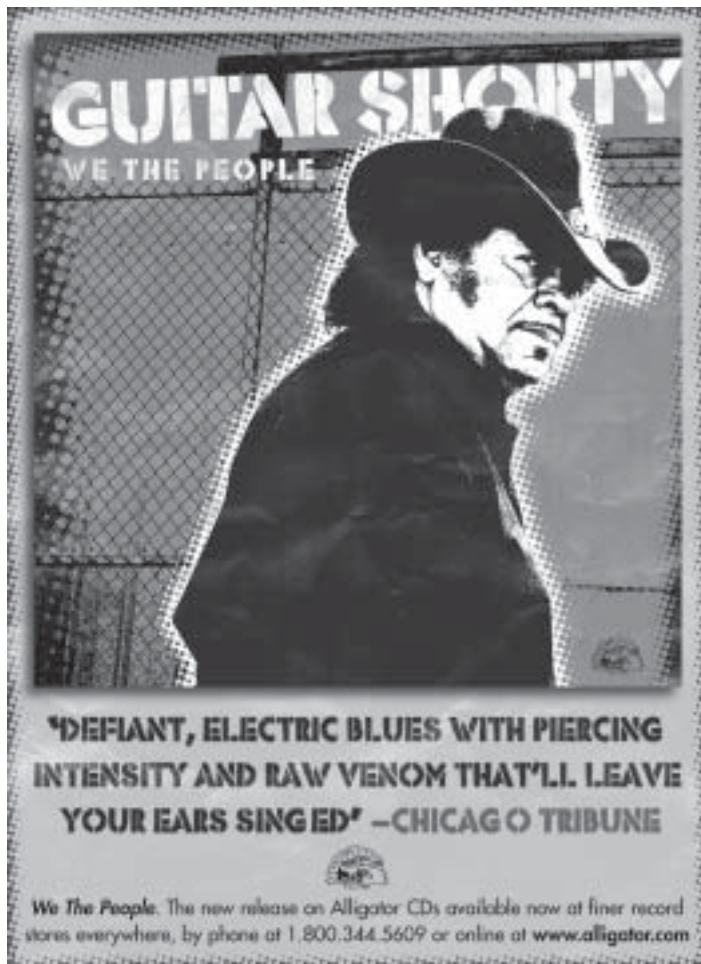
The last of the reissues is devoted to the legendary **Sam Cooke** with the *Soul Stirrers* and includes of a nice sampling of his early gospel recordings along with several of his earliest pop recordings. Nine of the selections are Cooke as a member of the Soul Stirrers in which he shares the lead with Paul Foster whose vocals are as remarkable as Cooke's. Listen to the closing *I'm Gonna Build Right on That Shore*, where Foster takes the first lead with Cooke taking the lead mid-song and then the two trade lead verses. Its a remarkable performance but just one of several classic gospel recordings here including renditions of Thomas Dorsey's *Peace in the Valley*, Cooke's *Touch the Hem of His Garment* and *Jesus Gave Me Water*. The five pop performances by Cooke include *I'll Come Running Back to You*, *Lovable* and *I Don't Want to Cry*, but Cooke's mostly are overshadowed by his later pop recordings. Still, this is a fine overview of early Sam Cooke and the Soul Stirrers recordings sound fresh even today.

Ron Weinstock

RICHIE COLE & THE ALTO MADNESS ORCHESTRA

Risë's Rose Garden
JAZZ EXCURSION

Dedicated to alto saxophonist Richie Cole's late wife, Risë (Ree-sah), this two-disc set containing 18 tunes was recorded in April 2006 after they performed eight sold-out sets at the



Jazz Standard in New York City.

Recording shortly after his wife's death, Cole produced, arranged and conducted all the tunes in this studio set featuring Bobby Howell (tenor sax), Nathan Eklund, Chris Jaudes, and Jack Walrath (trumpets on various tracks), Rick Stepton (trombone), Vic Juris (guitar), Don Friedman (piano), Rick Crane (bass), Wayne Dunton (drums) and percussionist Ray Mantilla on two tracks. The combined discs feature Cole's band in formations from quartet to full ensemble performing an array of Cole's enjoyable originals as well as pop and jazz standards such as "There Will Never Be Another You," "Canadian Sunset," "Speak Low," "Town Without Pity," "Blueberry Hill," and more.

Cole's fluency and expressiveness, his talents as composer-arranger, and his ability to tag a team of talented musicians makes this a first-rate listen that bops, swings, and sways majestically.

Nancy Ann Lee

CHICK WILLIS

Cookin' the Blues:

A Tribute to Albert King featuring Chick Willis
OLD SCHOOL PRODUCTIONS

Its been close to forty years since this writer acquired a 45 by one Chick Willis that included a solid rendition of Guitar Slim's *The Things I Used to Do*. Shortly thereafter, Chick recorded another single that would generate his career defining song, *Stoop Down Baby*. Such a song can be a blessing and a curse because it does provide work but it is also an albatross that prevents folks from appreciating just how good and varied a blues performer he is as opposed to be limited to bawdy double entendre numbers. Jacques 'Saxman' Johnson and Dr. Bill Clark had Chick come in to the Washington, D.C. area for a gig at Blues Alley as well as a recording session. The result is this new Old School Productions CD.

As the album title suggests, Chick is heard on a number of songs associated with the late blues giant including *Can't You See What You Are Doing to Me*, *I'll Play the Blues For You*, *Angel of Mercy*, *Laundromat Blues*, and *What the Blues is All About*. Willis sings and plays his distinctive guitar in a straightforward fashion and Johnson leads a punchy and brassy horn section supporting Willis' fine performances. Four of the ten tracks are instrumentals that give the Saxman a chance to stretch out, including a rousing rendition of *The Hucklebuck*, with Bill Clark getting some space to show his Hammond B-3 skills and Johnson's son, Jacques Jr. being featured quite admirably on guitar.

In summary, *Cookin' the Blues* is a delightful blues treat with solid Willis interpretations of classic Albert King recordings mixed in with the Saxman's tenor sax features for an added treat. For information on how to order, contact Old School Records at Jacques Johnson's website www.jacquessaxmanjohnson.com or email sax251@aol.com. A website that carries some of the Old School Records and hopefully will have this one is www.rightonrhythm.com.

Ron Weinstock

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Jazz & Blues Report

32nd Annual Holiday Gift Guide – Part 4

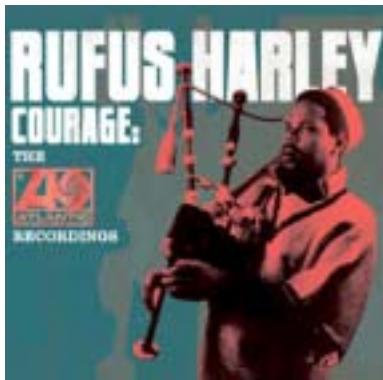
As is the case every year at this time, this section will give you some ideas on holiday gifts to pick up for a friend...or to drop hints on for yourself!

As usual, most of these are boxed or 2-CD sets and DVD concert or documentary videos, although we have chosen some single CDs as well. Most are very new, some a bit older titles that we have just recently latched on to. None have been previously reviewed. As has been our custom, we have included several items in other genres for those folks with diverse tastes, or those who are not into jazz or blues as such. This year we started the Gift Guide in the September and October issues...so this is Part 3. Around the middle of November you can download the standalone Gift Guide from jazz-blues.com to get each installment all together, plus the entire Gift Guide from 2005 to give you even more ideas. Happy shopping!

RUFUS HARLEY

Courage
RHINO HANDMADE

Finally! Boy, I wish I had a dollar for every time I've stated "I wonder what ever happened to Rufus Harley." Well Rufus passed away in July of this year, but thanks to Rhino Handmade, his music lives on.



So, who is he? Well, he is the first black jazz bagpipe player. Let's face it, he's probably the only jazz bagpipe player, unless you know of others. Harley was born in 1936 and started playing the sax at 12, later adding flute, clarinet, oboe and trumpet to his arsenal. After seeing the bagpipe players at Kennedy's funeral, he thought he'd try something different. You got it...jazz bagpipes!

Harley picked up his first set of pipes after quite a search, started playing jazz on them, somehow hooked up with producer Joel Dorn and put out his first album on Atlantic Records in 1966 titled *Bagpipe Blues*. He offered varied stuff, like the blues title track with a drone opening, the traditional Irish song "Kerry Dancers," the ballad "Who Can I Turn To," "Chim Chim Cheree" played along the lines of Coltrane's version and "Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child."

Harley plays bagpipes throughout this 2-CD set, but also plays tenor & soprano saxes and flute. And he was a very good player on all of them. After his '66 debut, he released *Scotch & Soul* later the same year, followed by *A Tribute To Courage* in '67 and *Kings/Queens* in '70. All four albums were produced by Dorn for Atlantic Records. Harley had a great sense of humor – let's face it, you would have to play jazz bagpipes – check out his version of The Byrds "Eight Miles High" for example, with his pipes replacing Roger McGuinn's twelve string guitar and the vocals, along with a little help from Eric Gale. That's only one example of many found here. And he would dress up in Scottish garb, sometimes with a kilt and a viking helmet with horns and all. He sure would have been a great subject for a filmed documentary! But Harley

projected that humor through his music, which is no doubt part of why it is so much fun to listen to. Back in the 70s I did a radio show on WBFO in Buffalo and would occasionally play a pipes heavy Harley song. The phones would never fail to light up. Most folks loved it, but of course a few squares would say "what the hell are you doing up there...are you high?"

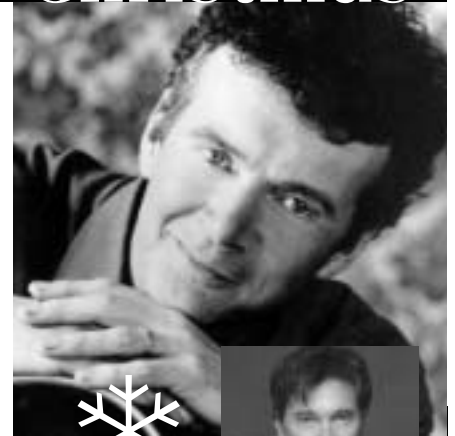
This set not only brings together all four of his albums in their entirety, but also includes two previously unreleased

A Peter White Christmas

FEATURING

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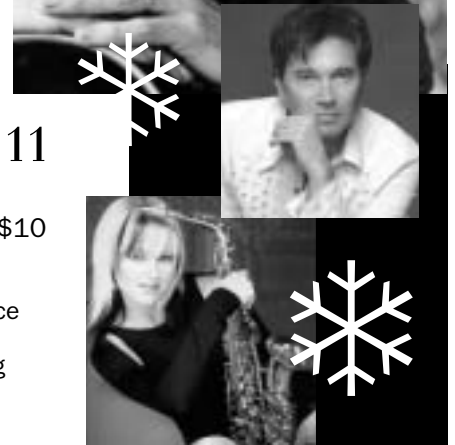
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bonus tracks – “Pipin’ The Blues,” which he recorded on a Sonny Stitt album, and a version of Pete Seeger’s “Where Have All The Flowers Gone, a previously unreleased track from the *King/Queens* sessions. While the first three albums are more in the modal, straight-ahead, traditional (and other stuff) veins, the funky direction on much on the last disc is a fun listen, to say the least. And the last two songs “King” and “Queens” are the icing on the cake, featuring only Harley on pipes and Nadi Quamar on mamalukembia, which sounds to me like a mbira (or kalimba or African thumb piano) and Madagascar harp.

So, in closing...if you know a jazz fan with a sense of humor you can turn him or her onto something *really* different with this Harley set. And I can pretty much guarantee you they will not already have it. Or...perhaps that person is you? This is available for 39.99 in a limited edition of 3,000 numbered copies only from Rhino Handmade at www.rhinohandmade.com.

Bill Wahl

WHAT IT IS! Funky Soul and Rare Grooves RHINO BOXED SET

The past decade of acid-jazz, trip-hop and all variants of re-mixology has inarguably made the case of the undying importance of “da groove”. If one can nod one’s head to it or sway side to side to it, there’s something fundamentally right about a track. This king-of-anthologies label has quite possibly surpassed its own typical brilliance with this most imaginative four-disc collection of mostly obscure and consistently funky fare.

Culled from Atlantic and Warner Brothers vaults, the great majority of the ninety-one gems on *What It Is!* hail from the glorious late 60’s and early 70’s boom times for r&b. Known soul quantities like Aretha Franklin, Clarence Carter and King Curtis are represented as are jazz figures including Junior Mance and Wade Marcus. It’s the droves of lesser-knowns and obscure sides, however, that make this collection the intriguing set that it is. Bands such as Rasputin’s Stash, Harlem River Drive and Little Sister may not now be on the tip of your tongue but that may be just because you haven’t yet checked them out. While reliably funky at the bottom a good number of tracks are unexpectedly inventive, ranging from psychedelic to undeniably jazzy on top.

If you had a buddy that could entertain you ‘til the wee hours with all sorts of crazy 45’s, this is the package that could put you in his league. Add a lava lamp or two and

What It Is! also makes for world-class party music- platform shoes optional.

Duane Verh



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VAN MORRISON

Live at Montreux 1980/1974

EAGLE VISION DVD

There are thousands of Van Morrison fans scattered throughout the world who have been long awaiting a live performance DVD. Well, folks, here it is. Anyone who is unfamiliar with Van has probably been living in a cave for the past 40 years or so and are not even reading this, so we’ll dispense with historical and biographical data and get right to the point.

This 2-DVD set is a marvelous collection of 24 Morrison performances live at Montreux, now aged over 25 years. To say it is Van in his prime is not quite true...he is still in his prime. But these “vintage” concerts certainly find him in much younger years singing many of his better-known songs plus many more obscure writings. This is not unlike attending one of his concerts today, where you leave the theatre saying “that was a great concert! Too bad he didn’t play...” I saw one in Chicago where he didn’t play “Mondance,” which may have bummed some people out but was fine by me since many radio stations think that’s the only song he has. He does do it here though, along with such favorites as “It Stoned Me” (done in a bit of a reggae style, “Tupelo Honey,” “Wavelength,” “Street Choir,” “Listen To The Lion,” “Wild Night” and “Satisfied.” And there are many more not as well known songs to feast upon.

His penchant for mixing genres is evident throughout, as it is in all his concerts. After his Blue Note CD, his show leaned more towards jazz and blues. I’ve heard that after his recent country album his concerts leaned in that direction. Here one show is livelier and more in a rock vein, where the other is more laid back leaning more toward jazz & blues. His bands on both are top notch, and the horn section of Pee Wee Ellis and Mark Isham on the ’74 date deserves special mention. Although he is not known as a showman, Van certainly seemed to be having a good time here and also played quite a bit of guitar back in those days.

Van, who has played many shows at Montreux over the years, had a lot to do with the release of this material and is in fact the producer. Both the sound and video quality is first class, and the 2-1/2 hours are all about the music rather than special effects. It’s been a long time coming, but worth the wait. This would be a perfect gift for any Van Morrison fan, and I’m sure we all know some of them.

Bill Wahl

THE HEATH BROTHERS

Brotherly Jazz

DANSUN PROD. DVD

The Heath Brothers have long been one of the most famous families in jazz. Their story is well told on this new documentary DVD which also features some fine performances.

Set around a 2004 concert in a California amphitheater, the 70-minute video features a slew of stories told by the brothers, friends, family and fellow musicians including Sonny Rollins, Herbie Hancock, Taj Mahal, Jack DeJohnette, Christian McBride, producer Orrin Keepnews, George Wein and the late news anchor Peter Jennings.

Some of the topics include bassist Percy Heath’s tenure as a Tuskegee Airman, bass lessons from Ray Brown and his longstanding work as a member of the Modern Jazz Quartet. Saxophonist Jimmy speaks of his rebound and blossoming career after serving in prison, and one of the things drummer

Tootie speaks of is that if it were not for his older musician brothers he might have become a doctor or lawyer. Boy...he's a great drummer...what aummer that would have been!

You'll also see some rare vintage footage of Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker and others. To give an idea of some of the topics covered, some of the chapter titles are "Philadelphia" (their hometown), "The Brothers Beginnings," "Drugs and Jail," "Cabaret Card," "Dizzy Gillespie" and "Segregation." The 2004 concert footage of the brothers once again reminds us that they are among the classiest musicians in jazz.

This is a well put together DVD produced by longtime concert producer Danny Scher (at whose home this 300 seat venue was at - must be tough!) and directed by Jesse Block, who has been video director for the Monterey Jazz Festival since 2003 and worked for BET for its jazz programs before that.

The concert performances here were one of the last times they performed together before Percy's 2005 death at 81. Jimmy just turned 80 October 25 and has a full schedule performing and teaching. Albert has been working with an all-percussion en-

semble, The Whole Drum Truth, with fellow drummers Ben Riley, Ed Thigpen and Billy Hart. A fitting tribute to the Heath Brothers, this would be a nice treat for a true acoustic jazz fan. *Bill Wahl*

MUDDY WATERS Classic Concerts UNIVERSAL MUSIC DVD

Three classic performances- Newport 1960, Copenhagen 1968 and Molde (Norway) 1977- showcase Muddy in three very different phases of his career with very distinctive band lineups. In his midlife prime at Newport, Muddy's solid, businesslike set becomes all fun and games as he and guests (including Count Basie vocal star Jimmy Rushing) cut up during the encore. Enjoying his "second life" with a more youthful following, Muddy still cuts a virile figure in Copenhagen on a set further highlighted by features by pianist/half brother Otis Spann. As the grand old man of the blues sitting in a chair at Molde, Muddy is backed by the group that would carry on after his passing as the Legendary Blues Band.

All three are quality sets and the Newport footage in particular is capti-

vating stuff. Shot in black and white, Muddy's no-nonsense, straightforward delivery contrasts well with the cutaways to the casual summertime Newport audience. A goodly number of visibly younger white folk look like precursors to Woodstock Nation. This is must-have material for Muddy's fans. *Duane Verh*

WYNTON MARSALIS

In this House, On This Morning GENEON ENTERTAINMENT DVD

This DVD documents a July 1992 live performance by the Wynton Marsalis Septet at the Munich Philharmonic Hall. The work initially premiered on May 22, 1992 in Avery Fisher Hall at Manhattan's Lincoln Center and was released in a two-CD set by Columbia in 1994. It was not available on DVD, until now.

Although the original work was composed as a three-part suite, the tray liner shows it as 21 tracks on a "Song List" yet it's listed as 14 chapters on the DVD menu. Marsalis' suite follows the structure of an African-American church service (usually in 12 parts) with tunes titled, "The Devotional," "Call To Prayer," "Processional," "Representative Offerings," "The Lord's Prayer," and so on until the final piece, "Pot Blessed Din-

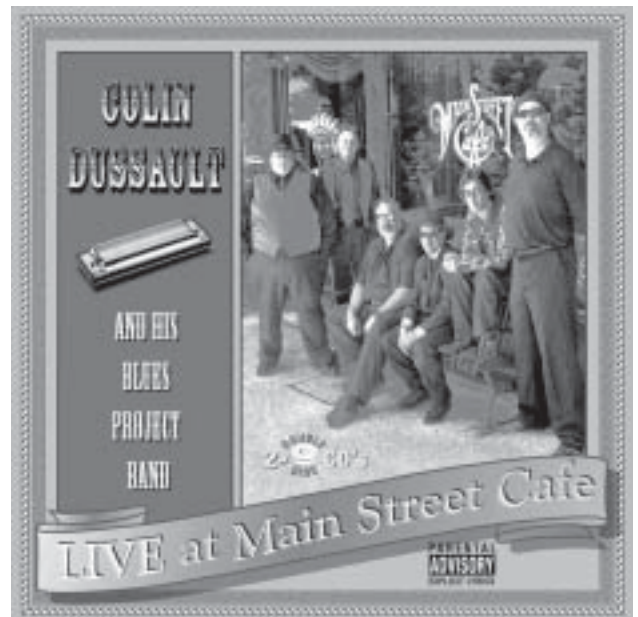
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ner.”

Musicians include Marsalis on trumpet, Wess Anderson (alto sax), Todd Williams (tenor/Soprano sax), Wycliffe Gordon (trombone), Reginald Veal (bass), Herlin Riley (drums), and Eric Reed (Piano). This band broke up by 1995, although the musicians still occasionally collaborate.

When the CD came out, critics lamented that it takes awhile for the music to get going and that this Marsalis work nods to influences of Ellington. Still, the suite was especially hailed for the ear-pleasing final section, “In the Sweet Embrace of Life,” which begins with a bluesy bass melody head.

Camera work and sound quality are superb and the DVD brings the performance to life. There are plenty of close-ups on the drummer, bassist and pianist as well as collective and individual shots of members of the four-horn front line. Performance run time is about 123 minutes and it’s presented both in Dolby 5.1 Surround and PCM Uncompressed Stereo and includes a Wynton Marsalis biography, band member bios and program notes.

It’s a treat to witness the performance as if you were in the wings. Why it took so long to come out on DVD is a mystery but it’s a treat to see one of my favorite versions of the Marsalis band in action, particularly for Wessell Anderson’s playing and for their collective bluesy interpretations, expressiveness, and brilliant improvisations.

Nancy Ann Lee

BUDDY GUY

CLARENCE “GATEMOUTH” BROWN

BOBBY PARKER

Carlos Santana Presents Blues at Montreux 2004 EAGLE VISION DVD

First up..this is not a Santana DVD. In 2004 Carlos Santana produced a series of blues concerts at the Montreux Jazz Festival featuring three blues legends who were an early inspiration to the guitarist - Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown, Bobby Parker and Buddy Guy. His musical contribution was to join each of them for some songs or jams at the end of their shows.

The first disc features Bobby Parker, whose set is less on show and more on roots than that of Guy’s. On first watching he seemed almost pedestrian by contrast to the other featured bluesmen in the set, but upon return the way he attacks his guitar is a treat and his interchanges with Santana are fun to watch. I will say that his band is not up to the level of Guy’s or Brown’s, and that may have been the problem I had with the first viewing, especially since I watched Brown’s set first.

Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown, who passed away in 2005, delivered a masterful set with the finest band of the three concerts here. Alto sax player Eric Demmer and keyboard man Joe Krown are absolute standouts. Gatemouth is one of music’s most notorious genre jumpers, and he takes you on a trip through blues, jazz and country with equal finesse as he’s heard on vocals, guitar and violin. As opposed to Santana’s appearances on Parker’s set (where he pretty much sounded like Santana) he goes into more of a straight blues mode on his four guest spots here, one of which, “I’ve Got My Mojo Working,” also features Guy.

The final disc is Buddy Guy. He starts off with some solo acoustic numbers but his stage command and witty humor come up right away. Both are turned up several notches when

the band comes out as he grabs one of his polka-dot guitars and cuts loose. From then on out it is all action as one of the biggest showmen in blues lets it all hang out, and has a hell of a good time doing it. In addition to some blistering playing from Guy throughout, plus Santana on the last four cuts (two of which are jam sessions), another highlight on his set is the appearances of sassy singer Barbara Morrison. She’s very much at home in blues and jazz and her tradeoffs with Guy on “Stormy Monday” are fantastic. Needles to say, Guy and Santana plus Parker on the closing four songs is pretty much all out guitar-o-rama. I was going to drop some of Guy’s humorous lines on you, but it is better to hear them from him.

Throw in the fact that the video and audio quality is first rate and you have four hours of live blues to feast on over and over again. My only complaint is that some of the camera work should have focused on the soloists at times when it strayed, but other than that, this set should please almost any blues fan many times over and would make a most welcome gift.

Bill Wahl

KEITH JARRETT

The Carnegie Hall Concert ECM RECORDS

Long being a collector of Keith Jarrett’s solo recordings it was a nice surprise to see this new live concert released. This is his first solo concert in North America in 10 years, and one of the first since his late 90s bout with chronic fatigue syndrome. His U.S. solo return is not only most welcome, it is a masterpiece.

Jarrett, who is equally respected in both the worlds of Classical and jazz music, has taken a new approach to the solo ventures. While most, and especially the earlier ones, were very long pieces where he would come up with a new idea and change direction without stopping, he now finishes off the piece he’s on...stops...waits...and starts a new piece. Thus, instead of two or three very long pieces over these two CDs, we instead get 15 running anywhere from 3 to just over 9 minutes. The breakdown is “The Carnegie Hall Concert” Parts I-X spread over Disc 1 and half of Disc 2, and five more songs with actual titles finishing off the second disc. Those who have heard his solo albums will find this to be a sort of history lesson. Over the years we’ve heard some free, angular improvisation, blues, sweet balladry and the trancelike, or hypnotic and very lyrical pieces such as heard on the **Koln Concert** and parts of **Sun Bear**. On **Carnegie Hall** we hear them all in one concert and the flow is perfect. Highlights abound throughout this 100 minute performance, complete with 5 encores. Two of the five titled encores were actually improvised at the concert and titled later. The other three were previously written Jarrett compositions. The third encore in fact is a reprise of the ballad “My Song,” from his mid 70s **Belonging** album with his Scandinavian quartet (with Jan Garbarek). What a treat!

The applause before each encore has been left in uncut at Jarrett’s request as he felt the audience was particularly tuned in to what he was doing and was an integral part of the electrifying atmosphere. It is certainly electrifying on CD, and one can only imagine what it was like to sit in Carnegie Hall that night in September of 2005. A great addition to anyone’s collection, and a fantastic gift choice as well for any occasion.

Bill Wahl

J. J. CALE
To Tulsa & Back
On Tour With J. J. Cale
TIME LIFE VIDEO DVD

J. J. Cale, one of the most prolific songwriters of our time, is well known to be much more than just a bit of a recluse. Well, I don't know what came over him, but he sure talks your ears off throughout this close to 3-hour long documentary DVD, and he obviously has a lot to say.

Many may only be familiar with Cale via the fact that he wrote two of Eric Clapton's biggest hits, "After Midnight" and "Cocaine." But those are only a small sampling of his many tunes, and his musical style and guitar work is admired by a host of musicians, including people like Clapton, Mark Knopfler, Carlos Santana, Neil Young and Brian Ferry. His laid back Tulsa sound is a clever mix of blues, jazz and country and has an infectious mid-tempo groove. Now we get to see what makes him tick.

You'll travel with Cale and his band to a variety of areas, but the focal point is his return to his hometown of Tulsa. He takes you to his childhood home, the clubs he played and tells some tales to behold. His longtime bandmembers interject their thoughts on their fearless leader as well, as does Eric Clapton, Cale's sister and many others. I am not going to tell you any more than that....don't want to spoil your fun.

While documentaries are not something most people watch over and over again, this one has a feature that warrants repeated viewings. After the documentary there is a bonus section with new songs, acoustic performances and concerts. This part is exceptionally long and offers many intimate performances from Cale from venues scattered all over the place. Again, I must admit I was really impressed with just how long this section went on. I watched this DVD on vacation in San Diego, and the next day my friend and I drove to Escondido (where Cale lives) a short trip to the north hoping he'd happen by while we were at the coffee shop. It didn't happen.

This new DVD is simply a must-have proposition for every fan of J. J. Cale. There are absolutely no excuses.

Bill Wahl

DIANA KRALL
From This Moment On
VERVE

Since 1993 when she emerged on Canada's Justin Time Records, singer/pianist Diana Krall had been releasing albums of standards, and steadily building a larger and larger fanbase. She followed with releases on GRP and Impulse before signing to Verve seven years ago. By then, her career was really taking off, the awards were coming in and she was hitting the top of the jazz charts. She had become one of the most, of not *the* most, successful recording artists and concert draws in jazz.

She married Elvis Costello and in 2004 she released a fine disc titled **The Girl In The Other Room**, changing direction from the standards fare and featuring six songs she co-wrote with Costello and other non-standard material. But her fans who missed the standards need not worry, as she's returned to that fold with **From This Moment On**.

I believe that she was pregnant with her first child when this was recorded, and this set of 11 standards might just be

her best effort yet. She is accompanied by the Clayton/Hamilton Jazz Orchestra for eight of the tracks, and the other three find her at the helm of a quartet with Anthony Wilson/guitar, John Clayton/bass and Jeff Hamilton/drums. Diana co-produced this with her longtime producer Tommy LiPuma – who is definitely someone who has contributed to her incredible success. With every new release she is constantly sounding more secure both in her vocals and piano work, and some of the songs here are much more uptempo than we normally hear from her. But there are a number of sweet, laid back ballads on tap, including "Little Girl Blue" and "Willow Weep For Me," plus the Antonio Carlos Jobim bossa nova "How Inensitive."

If you have a Diana Krall fan on your gift list, you won't have to worry about whether they will like this one. You just have to worry about whether they have already scarfed one up!

Bill Wahl

MARVIN GAYE
Live in Belgium 1981
MOTOWN/UNIVERSAL DVD

I a recent review of the late Marvin Gaye's "The Real Thing: In Performance 1964-1981" I mentioned that Gaye DVDs were rare. Well, they still are, but by golly here is another one. This companion DVD to that one has just been released here in the States and features the late R&B singer in a live concert in Ostende, Belgium in 1981, adding another perspective to the mostly videos collection of the Real Thing.

Here Marvin and his band deliver 11 songs, including



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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“Got To Give It Up,” “Let’s Get It On,” “Ain’t Nothing Like The Real Thing,” “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough,” How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved By You) and from his classic *What’s Going On* album “Inner City Blues (Makes Me Wanna Holler). Also included are two performances and an interview from the Belgian television show *Follies*.

Marvin, who also plays piano on some of the songs, is in good form at the helm of his band, which included background singers. The sound and video quality, while decidedly dated, are quite decent. This 60-minute DVD comes with an eight page booklet with text by Rob Bowman of All Music Guide and some color photos. Another choice for a Marvin Gaye fan, and at 14.98 list the price is right. **Bill Wahl**

BOBBY DARIN Seeing Is Believing HYENA DVD

This no-frills DVD features 20 clips of television appearances by the immensely talented singer Bobby Darin, including his classics “Beyond the Sea,” “Mack the Knife” and “Splish Splash.”

Among Darin’s most enjoyable performances are the bluesy “Work Song,” the heartfelt “If I Were A Carpenter,” the gorgeous ballads “Happy” and “If,” and his biggest hits mentioned above. On “Got My Mojo Working,” Darin plays harmonica and improvises on vibraphone along with band-backed vocals. He plays piano accompanying his vocals on “Splish Splash.” His swinging rendering of Duke Ellington’s “Caravan” with orchestral backing is a jazzy delight. Darin puts his own improvisational stamp on the bluesy rouser, “Come Rain or Come Shine.”

Born Walden Robert Cassoto in New York on May 14, 1936, Bobby Darin was considered to be capable of singing in a number of fashionable styles (some accused him of being a “chameleon”), as you’ll see and hear on this DVD. Influences such as Frank Sinatra, Neil Diamond, Fats Domino and other then popular singers can be heard in various songs. Darin, who suffered from ill health as a result of childhood rheumatic fever, had heart surgery in 1971 and died of a heart attack at age 37 on December 20, 1973.

There are no captions and no extras on the DVD. The clips (mostly from a 1970s TV show) are not necessarily in chronological order and there are no liner notes. As if added

as an afterthought, a sticker on the front of the DVD mentions that Connie Francis and Bobbie Gentry perform duets with Darin, but there’s nothing listed in the songlist. Sound quality is average.

There’s no telling where Darin’s career would have led him, had he lived longer. Just watch these performances and you’ll realize what a great performer Darin was (and what a job Kevin Spacey did as Darin in the film,

Beyond the Sea). Because there are no extras such as dates, bios, interviews, etc., I’d recommend this DVD for die-hard Darin fans. **Nancy Ann Lee**

CHRISTMAS CDS

Windham Hill Collection

Manhattan Transfer

Telarc Compilations

Charlie Brown Christmas

Skafish

Brian Culbertson

James Taylor

Alligator Houserockin’ Christmas

Willie Nelson

Each year we receive more Christmas CDs than we can really review, but we always like to choose some favorites and pass them on to you. This bunch offers enough of a variety that you should be able to find one to suit most of the folks on your list.

Windham Hill Records has been releasing Christmas CDs pretty much for as long as the CD format has been available, and, I believe, on LPs before that. They are always collections of the label’s artists, whether they play piano, guitar, violin, flute or whatever. But not this time. **Windham Hill Holiday Guitar Collection** from **Windham Hill/Legacy** offers up 15 very well known chestnuts played only by solo guitarists, including Tuck Andress, Alex deGrassi, Will Ackerman, Steve Erquiaga and others. Some artists are heard twice. This a very serene and quite pretty collection of holiday melodies and is probably the most universally likeable of this year’s set. It should do well in pretty much anyone’s house, making the biggest hit for any new age friends you might have. Very melodic music, and the changing styles of the guitarists makes it hold one’s interest quite well. On a related note, Windham Hill/Legacy has also just released **Sundown: A Windham Hill Piano Collection** with 14 tracks featuring many of the label’s pianists. Some of those heard are George Winston, Liz Story, Jim Brickman, Patrick O’Hearn, Philip Aaberg and Brian Culbertson. This one is not a Christmas CD, but will certainly appeal to the same audience year-round.

In our previous issue, Nancy Ann Lee reviewed **Manhattan Transfer - An Acapella Christmas**, recently released on **Rhino Records**. You can check that issue for the complete review, but Nancy gave it a high recommendation stating that it contains an “unaccompanied, improvised delivery of 10 holiday favorites, including a perky version of “Jingle Bells,” an upbeat take on Irving Berlin’s “White Christmas,” a heartwarming version of Vince Guaraldi’s “Christmas Time Is Here,” a unique and sweet reading of “Toyland,” a bluesy take on “Merry Christmas Baby” and more.”

Telarc Records has released two discs for this year’s

the dave sterner quintet

Introducing **The Dave Sterner Quintet’s** Debut CD *What’s What*, that features “Don’t Get Around Much Anymore,” “But Not For Me,” “That’s All,” “Split Kick” and 8 original compositions that showcase talented writing with stellar playing.



“Dave and his band speak to an audience young and hip, but a foundation drawn from a deep well of tradition gives the music a substance that takes it beyond the trendy.” - Ernie Krivda

Available at: Borders and Barnes & Noble (Mentor, Westlake, Cleveland Hts.), Academy Music (Noble Rd.), Skyline Music (Center Ridge Rd.) & online at www.CDbaby.com

holiday season. The first, **Christmas Break: Relaxing Jazz for the Holidays** is just what the title suggests. The even dozen Christmas songs here are extremely laid back versions by several artists, including Oscar Peterson, Ray Brown, Dave Brubeck, Mel Tormé, George Shearing and more. Some of the highlights include Jim Hall's solo guitar take on "Oh Tannenbaum," Brubeck's solo piano version of "Silent Night" and guitarist Al Di Meola's solo piece "Ave Maria. Oh, and let's not forget Brubeck and Gerry Mulligan doing an unaccompanied piano/baritone sax duet version of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town."

The second Telarc release is **Christmas Time Is Here** from **Erich Kunzel and the Cincinnati Pops**. This one is a full blown large production with the orchestra plus a large choir and guests John Pizzarelli, Tierney Sutton and others covering 14 mostly very well-known carols. This is by far the most traditional of the group reviewed here and is one you could take to the great grandparents' house and they'd love it.

Starbucks has released a version of **A Charlie Brown Christmas** by the **Vince Guaraldi Trio**. This Christmas classic goes all the way back to the original TV Peanuts Christmas special in 1965 and has been a top selling holiday recording ever since. Pianist Guaraldi's bouncy, high spirited piano playing permeates the music here as the trio covers 11 songs, namely "O Tannenbaum," "What Child Is This," "My Little Drum," the classic Peanuts song "Linus and Lucy," "Christmas Time Is Here" (two versions, an instrumental and a vocal), "Skating," "Hark, The Herald Angels Sing," "Christmas Is Coming," "Für Elise" and "The Christmas Song." This Starbucks edition, in a digipac package, will be easy to find as you can pick it up at any Starbucks company-operated location in the U.S. and Canada. It retails for 13.95 U.S and 16.95 Canada.

Just at our deadline **Concord Records** also released a version of **A Charlie Brown Christmas** with the same songs, plus "Greensleeves" and three alternate tracks. If you want this one, you won't find it at Starbucks but will have to go to your normal local or online music retailer. This one is available worldwide.

Now, for any jazzers out there who want a set of Christmas music that sounds *different*, there is **Skafish**...who has released **Tidings Of Comfort And Joy: A Jazz Piano Trio Collection** on **La Befana Records**. Jim Skafish was heavily involved in Chicago's punk, new wave, alternative and indie rock movements. But this multifaceted musician is classically and jazz trained and offers us a thoroughly enjoyable set of acoustic trio Christmas renditions - all straight ahead jazz here. He sure has fun with the songs' melodies; plus his soloing is superb and his creative use of rhythms and tempos keeps things very interesting from start to finish. This is an extremely enjoyable set of 11 traditional and two original songs and clearly among the finest, most refreshing straight jazz Christmas offerings I've heard.

This year we have only one release in the contemporary, or light jazz vein. Pianist **Brian Culbertson** has just released his first Christmas album titled **Soulful Christmas** on **GRP/Verve Records**. There are some interesting twists taking place throughout this set of twelve songs...such as "Jingle Bells," which starts out as a definite funk groove before switching abruptly to an all out

swing...with a big band sound achieved with four horn players, including Eric Marienthal, via overdubbing. That's followed by a sweet Culbertson solo piano version of "The First Noel" before the 9-piece band returns for "All Through The Christmas Night" with Michael McDonald on vocals. The mix of funk, swing, gospel, pop balladry and the holiday spirit makes this an enjoyable set, mostly recorded at Culbertson's home studio. Some of the other guests are Peter White, Jeff Lorber, Brian Bromberg, Paul Jackson Jr. and a choir - The Jason White Ensemble. Some songs also include an orchestra of 12 violins, three cellos, bass, oboe and harp. Quite a production.

Pop/rock singer **James Taylor** has chosen a jazzy direction for his holiday release titled **James Taylor At Christmas** on **Columbia Records**. Opening in a jazz vein with "Winter Wonderland" and continuing with a gospel flavored "Go Tell It On The Mountain," Taylor lends his instantly recognizable vocals to 13 songs, also including "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town," "Jingle Bells," "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas," "The Christmas Song," and the week later anthem "Auld Lang Syne," which closes the album. He also does a version of Joni Mitchell's "River." Most of the music here was produced by Dave Grusin, and some of the the band members include Grusin/piano, John Pizzarelli/guitar and Larry Goldings/keyboards. Singer Natalie Cole duets with Taylor on "Baby It's Cold Outside," Toots Theilemans lends his majestic harmonica work to "Christmas Song" and trumpeter Chris Botti guests on "Winter Wonderland." A fine offering from J.T.

While there were no new blues Christmas CDs coming our way this year, we continue to recommend **Genuine Houserockin' Christmas** on **Alligator Records**. This 2003 release contains 16 original songs about Christmas performed by 16 bands from Alligator's large roster. If you want a complete review, go to our website's database, or check out the stand-alone Holiday Gift Guide on the site. But you probably won't really need to - just combine the info above with Duane Verh's closing remarks...The originality and the strength of the tunes make this a disc that can take over a Christmas playlist...Blues people, this is holiday cash well spent.

The final entry for 2006 goes way off in a different direction, coming from **Willie Nelson**. **The Best of Willie Nelson: The Christmas Collection-20th Century Masters** released on **YMC/Universal Records** will no doubt be a treat for anyone wanting a country Christmas, as Willie covers 11 mostly well-known favorites. I must admit, I am quite enjoying this after all the jazz and jazz oriented Christmas songs I've just gone through. Nelson, who has an unmistakable voice and delivery, lends his stamp to these songs making you want to light the fire and sip some loaded eggnog. This is a budget-priced CD, so not a lot of information is inside the booklet...but it seems as though many of the songs were done fairly recently and one, "Here Comes Santa Claus," features Willie along with The Singing Cowboy - Gene Autry - who passed away in 1998. This album includes such fare as "Silent Night," "Joy To The World," "Deck The Halls," "White Christmas" and two Nelson originals, "Pretty Paper" and a standout, "El Nino." Yes, this one is fun, lap steel and all. It is easy to understand why Miles Davis liked him so much!

Happy Holidays!!

Bill Wahl

Good Stuff In Different Genres

We always love to cover interesting CDs and DVDs in other genres year-round, and it is especially helpful at the holiday season...so here are several more gift ideas!

TORI AMOS

A Piano

The Collection

RHINO BOXED SET

If you have a Tori Amos fan on your shopping list, you can make quite a statement with this 86-track, 5-CD set, recently released by Rhino Records. Amos produced this release, which collects many of her classic songs along with rarities, remixes and previously unreleased material. The discs are each in their own digipak case and packaged together in a very unique shiny black rectangular box with a lid that has two octaves of what resemble actual piano keys made of plastic. You can't play them, but they sure look real!

For a very brief overview, disc one contains an extended version of her debut album *Little Earthquakes* along with alternate mixes, four B-sides and a previously unreleased version of "Crucify." The second disc includes songs from *Under The Pink* and *Boys For Pele*, with original and remixed versions and a live song.

Disc three contains more songs from *Boys for Pele* plus songs from *To Venus and Back* and *Tales of a Librarian*. Again, these 15 cuts are original and remixed versions of album tracks as well as some alternate special versions of two songs and a previously unreleased track from the *Pele* sessions. Disc four contains 15 songs taken from the albums *From The Choirgirl Hotel*, *Scarlet's Walk* and *The Beekeeper*. Again, it's a mix of original and remixed versions of album tracks, plus four previously unreleased songs. The fifth disc offers 22 more tracks made up mostly of her B-sides and includes the exclusive 1999 digital release "Merman." Right in the middle of this set of songs is a medley of three demos with Amos unaccompanied with just her vocal and some kind of organ on two and piano on the other. She apparently wanted to show her fans how a song can go from concept to finished product, as each of the songs is found in the boxed set as the final released version. There is also an elegant 60-page hard-cover book loaded with color photos, plus an essay by music critic Lorraine Ali and extensive commentary on the albums and songs from Amos.

So, if you do want to make a statement for a Tori Amos fan who is worth it, you'll make one for sure with this set.

Bill Wahl

MOODY BLUES

Deluxe Editions

DERAM/THRESHOLD/UNIVERSAL

Universal Music has just released three classic albums from the Moody Blues in their Deluxe Edition import series. If you know of some Moody Blues fans on your holiday list, these would make some good prospects.

All three feature the original albums with great sound which will play in on a normal CD player, and two offer a

Dolby 5.1 Surround Sound mix that will only be heard on an SACD player with a surround system. All three are 2 CD sets.

Their 1967 album *Days Of Future Passed* on Deram/Universal is one that offers the SACD 5.1 option. The set includes the original album in its entirety – which included "Nights In White Satin" and "Tuesday Afternoon" – plus a second CD (not with 5.1) which contains four alternate versions and outtakes of four songs, including "Tuesday Afternoon," six mono single masters, including "Nights In White Satin," two '67 studio recordings unreleased until '77, and seven BBC Radio sessions recorded in '67 and '68, which include "Nights In White Satin" and their version of "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood."

The following year they released *In Search Of A Lost Chord*, also on Deram/Universal, which included "Ride My See-Saw" and "Dr. Livingston, I Presume." This is the one that is not available with the 5.1 surround option. In addition to the original album in its entirety, the second disc gives you 15 more songs. The first nine are alternate takes or different mixes, the next five are BBC Radio performances and the last is a 1968 single "B" Side.

The third Deluxe Edition is thought by many to be their best album, *To Our Children's Children's Children*, on Threshold/Universal. Released in 1969, this well produced album included many favorites, including "I Never Thought I'd Live To Be A Hundred," "Gypsy," "The Eyes Of A Child" and "Candle Of Life." This one does offer the 5.1 mix for the original album, with a second disc containing another 11 songs. The first three are alternate versions and outtakes, while the last eight are previously unreleased 1969 BBC Radio concert performances, including a reprise version of '67's "Nights In White Satin."

These three packages should please all those baby boomers who listened to the Moody Blues decades ago as well as younger classic rock fans, and will offer a whole bunch of extras on the second discs. In addition, anyone who happens to have an SACD player and the right system will have all kinds of fun. No doubt there will be more coming in this series.

Bill Wahl

PAUL McCARTNEY

The Space Within US

A&E VIDEO DVD

Most all of us have a Beatle fan or two on our gift list, and this brand new McCartney DVD might just be something they don't have yet. Recorded during his world tour in 2005, this disc contains just under two hours of concert footage showcasing the McCartney with a solid band on a long list of songs from his 40-year career. The last McCartney video I saw, and I don't remember when it was, was a VHS of some concert where he played mostly songs from his solo years. This one is the exact opposite, which is why I mentioned Beatle fans rather than McCartney fans in the opening statement. There are somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 songs (there is no listing with numbers, just a block text run-on list of some of the songs) and many, many Beatle songs here, which certainly brought back memories from my teenage years. Instead of only doing the big ones like "Yesterday" and "Hey Jude," he performs a wide array of many I'd not heard in years, such as "Till There Was You," "Good Day Sunshine," "I'll Follow The Sun," "Fixing A Hole," "Penny Lane," "I Will,"

“Eleanor Rigby” Magical Mystery Tour,” “Got To Get You Back In My Life” and more. Must be Mr. Paul has returned to his roots, so to speak. He does, of course, play some of his Wings and later solo career material as well. There is also footage of pre-concert and road crew stuff.

The audio and video are very good, but one detriment is the fact that there are a lot of commentary clips from people like Bill Clinton and others, and some thing about astronauts drinking tea in space. There are many DVDs coming out this way these days, making them more concert/documentaries rather than straight concert DVDs. But, you can use the skip button to bypass the commentaries and go to the next song.

But that aside, there are some very nostalgic moments here from one of the two living Beatles, and the only one who can pull something like this off.

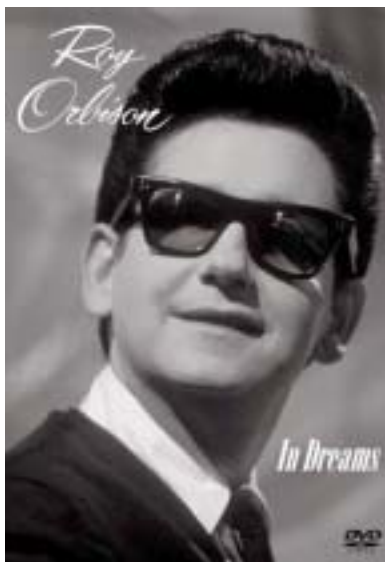
Bill Wahl

ROY ORBISON

In Dreams

ORBISON/LEGACY DVD

This just-released documentary chronicles the life and music of one of Americas 20th century musical masters. Roy was on camera much of the 90 minute DVD telling his story from his childhood, through first picking up a guitar and his early days in the 50s and eventually signing to Sun Records.



Orbison recorded a slew of big hits which he talks about, including “Only The Lonely,” “Dream Baby,” “Crying,” “It’s Over” “Blue Bayou” and Oh, Pretty Woman, and performance clips are seen throughout. It also covers the fact that later in his career he was a member of the Traveling Wilburys with Bob Dylan, Tom Petty and George Harrison. He was inducted in the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame in 1987 and recorded the concert film “Black & White Night” in late ‘87, and clips from that concert are viewed in segments throughout this documentary.

Orbison died in 1988 at the age of 52, but the next year he would become the first singer other than Elvis to have two Top 5 albums in the charts at the same time.

Also included are song clips with guests such as Emmylou Harris on “That Lovin’ You Feelin’ Again” and his beautiful remake of “Crying” with k.d. Lang. You’ll also hear many other musicians with words to say about Orbison, including Johnny Cash, Chet Atkins, Willie Nelson, Robert Plant, Bruce Springsteen, Bernie Taupin, Bill Wyman, Bono, Chris Isaak and others.

This DVD provides a fine insight into Orbison’s life, times and music. Keep in mind that this is strictly a documentary and not a concert video. This would make a great companion with the recent 2-CD release *The Essential Roy Orbison* and/or the recent rerelease of the single CD *Black & White Night*, both of which are also on Orbison/Legacy Records.

Bill Wahl

RHYTHMS DEL MUNDO

Cuba

HIP-O/UNIVERSAL

This one came as a bit of a surprise. Looking at the cover one might think it is a Buena Vista Social Club album. It is not really, but rather a set of songs from artists in many areas of music reworked by BVSC musicians in Havana. Starting off with Colplay’s “Clocks,” the Buena Vista treatment is immediately apparent with the Latin rhythms and horns over Coldplay’s vocal tracks. It is followed by Jack Johnson’s “Better Together,” Arctic Monkeys’ “Dancing Shoes” and pop singer Dido with her brother’s band Faithless on “One Step Too Far.” Then you get the last recording featuring Cuban Bolero singer Ibrahim Ferrer, who died in 2005, covering “As Time Goes By.” Another Cuban singer, Omara Portuonda, resurrects Roberta Flack’s hit “Killing Me Softly” as they mix in some songs recorded entirely for the project. Some, like U2’s “I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For,” have a singer, in this case Coco Freeman, adding his own lead to the original chorus vocal tracks. Ferrer, Portuonda and Freeman all sing in Spanish. Another standout using the original lead vocals is Maroon 5’s “She Will Be Loved.” Sting and Radiohead also have songs given the RDM treatment, and several other Latin singers are featured, such as Vania Borges covering Norah Jones’ hit “Don’t Know Why” in Spanish.

I played this CD at a Thanksgiving dinner party with people ranging from 28 to 58 and everyone loved it – and kept picking up the cover as every new song would come on. That is a good sign for any album. I’m sure some purists on both sides of the coin will hate it, but my guess is that they will be in the minority. Quite a trip!

The enclosed booklet gives the song and artist information, but mostly covers things we can do to save the world. It includes short essays such as “Climate Crisis” and Al Gore’s “An Inconvenient Truth.” The album is in aid of Artists Project Earth (APE), which lends support for natural disaster relief and climate change awareness, and Universal Music will donate a portion of the proceeds of sales in the U.S. to Music Rising, which is an instrument replacement fund for musicians of the Gulf Coast. That, along with the enjoyable music makes this a good purchase all the way around.

Bill Wahl

INDIA.ARIE

CORINNE BAILEY RAE

SHAWN COLVIN

MOZELLA

Singer Songwriter Shorts

If you are looking for some nice singer-songwriter CDs for someone, here are a few worth checking out.

India.Arie has just released *Testimony Vol. 1, Life & Relationships* on Motown/Universal. I believe this is the third full length album for India, who consistently offers some of the most intelligent and well performed music coming out today in the R&B vein. The arrangements are always interesting and the musicianship is tops throughout. Her original songs are serious and she knows how to deliver them. One getting airplay is her sweet version of Don Henley’s “The Heart Of The Matter,” but the following cut “Good Mourning”

is simply wonderful. It is one of her 11 originals out of the 15 tracks. There is a lot to like about India Arie.

Music listeners have been recently blessed with a newcomer from England named **Corinne Bailey Rae**. Her self titled debut album on Capitol Records sold over 2 million copies worldwide in less than six months and has already won a slew of awards. She's another unclassifiable singer/guitarist who mixes soul with jazz, blues and folk with seamless ease and has come up with a set of 11 original gems. Her delicate voice grabs you and keeps you where she wants you until she is all finished with you. Though many PR people love to compare their singer to Billie Holiday and I never see it, Rae really does remind me of Billie in some ways on a few of these songs. No doubt you have heard some of these tunes, such as her hit "Put Your Records On," but there are many even better songs to feast upon here. Exquisite music that will appeal to a wide array of people, including all who like Norah Jones, though I'm not making a comparison as Rae has a style of her own.

Veteran singer/songwriter/guitarist **Shawn Colvin** can never be accused of allowing herself to be over saturated. While many artists release an album a year, it has been around 5 years since her last album of new material. **These Four Walls** has just been released on **Noneshuch Records** and will probably have to satisfy her fans for several more years. No matter, sometimes less is best and Colvin certainly proves that. She brings us a blend of folk music with country and pop with 13 sweet songs, all but two of which are originals - mostly co-written by John Leventhal who also produced the album. One cover is The Bee Gee's "Words." The band here is small, with Colvin on guitars, Leventhal on bass, guitars, keyboards, percussion, mandolin, dobro and pedal steel, and Shawn Pelton on drums. Guests are heard on a few songs. The creative multitracking Leventhal came up with is perfect for Colvin's rather soft voice. Very nice indeed.

A new singer/songwriter named **MoZella** has a debut release that sounds like it might do quite well. Just released on **Warner Bros. Records**, Mozella's **I Will** is underpinned with a lot of programmed hip hop drumbeats on many of the songs, and others feature a live drummer. All are quite interesting, and some of the synth and guitar work (such as on "Killing Time" adds to the success. She is rock with a bit of folk and a bit of jazz and a lot of variety, and her music - all originals - brings to mind such singer/songwriters as Fiona Apple and Rachel Yamagata, as do her vocals and delivery to an extent, though she is not a copy of either by any means, her voice is higher and her music has more catchy hooks. A very nice debut.

As a final note, I still have to recommend **Lizz Wright**'s excellent album from last year **Dreaming Wide Awake** on **Verve Records**. If interested, you can read the review on our database on our site, or go to www.lizzwright.net and click "news."

Bill Wahl

ROBERT PLANT

And The Strange Sensation ZOE/ROUNDER DVD

No, he doesn't hit those high notes like he used to, but Plant proves here that he can still front a band and deliver a solid set. The one-time quintessential Brit blues-rock shouter draws from likely folk and blues roots and his very capable five-piece backup unit provides varied settings from acoustic to electronic.

Subtle standouts include the swampy funk workup of the Led Zeppelin staple "Black Dog" and a most moody encore take of "Hey Joe". Plant & Co.'s onstage delivery is quite straightforward and the video presentation is sympathetically unobtrusive and devoid of directorial flash.

Don't worry Zep fans, he closes the main set with "Whole Lotta Love."
Duane Verh

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

WES MONTGOMERY

J.J. CALE

RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVISITED

Stocking Stuffers

Universal Music Distribution has released several CDs, mostly at a budget price, which would make great stocking stuffers for a variety of folks in jazz and other arenas.

Know someone who might enjoy **Louis Armstrong**? **Gold**, just out on **Hip-O/Universal**, contains 40 of Satchmo's recordings spread over two CDs. This compilation works in reverse...starting out with 1967's "What A Wonderful World" and working backward all the way to "Heebie Jeebies," recorded in 1926. Covering his ABC Paramount, Mercury, Verve and Decca years, this set collects many of the hits the majority of people associate with Louis Armstrong, such as "Mack The Knife," "Hello Dolly," "Mame" and many more. Plus...the remastered sound is very good.

The Best of Wes Montgomery: The Millennium Collection is part of Universal's 20th Century Masters Series. Released on **Hip-O/Verve/UM** this set of 11 songs from the latter years of Wes' short life focuses on his more commercial "hits" from the albums he did with Creed Taylor on the Verve and A&M labels. Some of the songs here are "The Shadow Of Your Smile," "Going Out Of My Head," "Tequila," "California Dreaming," "When A Man Loves A Woman," "Road Song" and "Fly Me To The Moon." While from a pure jazz standpoint, the great guitarist's best work was on the Riverside label, as well as a Verve Album titled **Smokin' At The Halfnote**, these later songs made Wes some commercial success along with some money before he passed away in 1968 at 43. Those who enjoyed his pop/jazz period will like this. Those into his pure jazz recordings should get the above mentioned **Halfnote** disc on Verve for sure.

J.J. Cale is a living legend, although many people don't even know who he is. But they do know some of his songs, such as "Cocaine" and "After Midnight," and those plus 18 others are packed into **The Definitive Collection** on **Mercury/Universal**. Oklahoma native Cale is one of the most prolific songwriters in music today, and his songs have been recorded by Eric Clapton, Santana and a slew of others. His laid back,

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medium groove Okie singing and guitar style is always a joy to hear, and this compilation is a perfect introduction to his music for anyone. This disc contains four songs from 1975's *5...my* vote for his best album. The November 7 release of his joint effort with Clapton, **The Road To Escondido** (see our November issue), will surely stir some new interest in Cale's earlier recordings. Pick this one up for yourself or a friend to get a good sampling of J. J. Cale.

As we go genre jumping, the last two are also part of UM's 20th Century Masters Series.

The Best Of The Righteous Brothers: The Millennium Collection on Polydor/UM harkens back 40 years to rock & roll, doo wop and R&B with a collection of 14 songs from the hit vocal duo. Beginning in 1963 with "Little Latin Lupe Lu" and closing in 1974 with "Rock And Roll Heaven," this set offers up the hits the pair was known for. And, the two 1965 recordings most will be looking for are, of course, included... "You've Lost That Lovin Feeling" and "Unchained Melody," the latter of which became a hit all over again when it was featured in the movie *Ghost* in 1990. Although they had been achieving success with their renewed career, Bobby Hatfield passed away in 2003 while on tour. But before he passed, he and Bill Medley were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. And they are two that definitely belong there. A very nice, nostalgic collection.

The Best of Creedence Clearwater Revisited: The Millennium Collection on Hip-O/Universal. This one has a tricky title. Note that it is "Revisited" and not "Revival." This is a CCR tribute band featuring two of the original members, drummer Doug "Cosmo" Clifford and bassist/vocalist Stu Cook. John Fogerty was the lead singer and songwriter and his brother Tom played rhythm guitar and piano. Tom passed away in 1990, and John had long pursued his own solo career. CC Revisited has been touring and carrying on the music of CCR with John Tristao doing Fogerty's lead vocals, and Elliot Easton (of The Cars) playing lead guitar. Two guys to do one's work. Oh well... As much as this might be a criminal offense to some died-in-the-wool CCR fans, this band actually pulls it off quite well. Tristao has a somewhat similar voice to Fogerty, and Easton's guitar work is a

surprisingly good fit (and not Cars-like at all). So, for anyone who can forgive Fogerty's absence, and wants to hear live versions of 10 CCR songs with today's recording technology, this set from a 1997 Calgary, Alberta Canada concert might be just the trick.

All of the releases in the 20th Century Masters Millennium Collection series, namely Wes Montgomery, The Righteous Brothers and CC Revisited are only \$9.98 list. The J.J. Cale is 13.98 list - all good values. The 2-CD Louis Armstrong set is 19.98 list.

Bill Wahl

books

THE HOUSE THAT TRANE BUILT: THE STORY OF IMPULSE RECORDS

by Ashley Kahn

W.W. NORTON & CO. 2006

Ashley Kahn is an award-winning journalist and radio essayist who authored *A Love Supreme: The Story of John Coltrane's Signature Album*. Thus, it seems fitting that Kahn would write this historical account about the 15-year saga of Impulse Records, the popular recording label that signed the legendary saxophonist as its first exclusive artist.

The House That Trane Built reveals the story of the label with the distinctive orange-and-black logo, balancing tales of artistic passion, label vision, corporate politics, and commercial incentives. Kahn weaves a fascinating story gleaned from extensive research and hundreds of interviews with the insiders—label executives, producers, jazz journalists, and musicians.

Founded by renowned jazz producer Creed Taylor as an imprint of ABC-Paramount records, Impulse Records cut an innovative swath through the 1960s and 1970s, offering swing to the avant-garde jazz that defined its musical and spiritual identity. Taylor's rein was short, but before he was recruited to overhaul Verve Records, he signed Coltrane, who, through his endless musical forgeries, recommendations of other artists and status as the label's bestseller, would help define Impulse's sound. Despite its penchant for avant-garde jazz, the label also released timeless titles by

Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Johnny Hartman, Benny Carter, Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Johnny Hodges and others.

Bob Thiele followed Taylor to become the major driving force at Impulse, heading the label from 1961-69 during a period of explosive musical creativity amid violent social change. He supported Coltrane through the saxophonist's prolific, often perplexing musical experimentation and also produced records by other influential artists such as Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp, and McCoy Tyner.

Kahn's writing style may force you to read slowly (perhaps with a dictionary at hand), yet *The House That Trane Built* is a riveting chronicle of the jazz label that shaped an era during the age of rock 'n roll. Thiele's departure following a 1969 corporate clash came two years after Coltrane's premature death at age 40. Kahn's account continues with Impulse's 1970s stay in Los Angeles, where the label briefly flourished under Ed Michel, who issued classic recordings by saxophonist Gato Barbieri and pianist Keith Jarrett before Impulse was sold to MCA in 1977.

Annoyingly interspersed and breaking the flow of the main story in the chronologically ordered chapters are 38 two-page album reviews with black-and-white photos of album covers and session photographs. Rich with illustrations and photographs, this book should certainly satisfy jazz historians. The 338-page book also contains an extensive notes section and a detailed discography from 1961-1977.

To coincide with Impulse's 45th Anniversary celebration and the book release are 10 "*Best-of Impulse*" single CD compilations and a four-CD, multi-artist label overview featuring many key Impulse recording artists mentioned above. Also available is a nine-track compilation CD (available from Amazon at \$4.98) featuring recordings by Oliver Nelson ("*Stolen Moments*"), Art Blakey ("*Alamode*"), Charles Mingus ("*Theme for Lester Young*," aka "*Goodbye Pork Pie Hat*"), John Coltrane ("*A Love Supreme*"), Archie Shepp ("*Los Olvidados*"), Albert Ayler ("*Our Prayer*"), Earl Hines ("*Black and Tan Fantasy*"), Alice Coltrane ("*Journey in Satchidananda*") and John Handy ("*Hard Work*"). Containing some classic tracks, it's a bargain for the price.

Nancy Ann Lee

PAGE TWENTY THREE

Griffin Technology iPod Accessories

Griffin Technology makes a wide array of accessories for the Apple iPod, as well as others for handling MP3 files. Here are a few we have come across this year.

Griffin iTrip FM Transmitter - This is the second version of an Griffin iTrip FM Transmitter I've owned, and it offers some significant improvements over the original version. On the original, the tuning procedure was to find a "dead" frequency on the FM dial, then navigate through the iPod menus to find the frequency list and lock in your station with a bizarre dance on the iPod control buttons. On the new version, one simply finds the dead station, play a song on the iPod and tune to the frequency using a tuning wheel on the right side of the unit. The frequency is shown on an LCD display on the front on the iTrip. It's nice to be able to see the frequency when you power up rather than having to navigate the menus to find it. This model plugs into the dock connector on the bottom of the iPod and features a mini USB jack, which allows you to update and power the iPod through your computer during use. Another new feature is the ability to switch to mono-audio broadcast for a stronger signal when necessary. I do have the impression that the new model is more sensitive to distance and placement than the original, but once position is established with good clarity it will play all day. All in all the iTrip is a very useful accessory for those times when it's impossible or inconvenient to hardwire your iPod into a sound system in a car, at home or elsewhere. *Dave Wahl*

Griffin PowerDuo Charging Kit - Griffin's Power Duo, AC Adapter and Mobile Charger Power Pack makes keeping your iPod or mini-USB device all charged up and ready to go easy. The kit includes both wall and car chargers and cabling for both regular and mini-USB connectors. Both the car and wall chargers are simple to use. The Power Block Wall Charger is compact and has hinged prongs that allow

it to fold flat. It's a well balanced power pack that does not fall out of the outlet under the strain of its own weight like so many other wall adapters do.

In the car, the PowerJolt Vehicle Charger gets the job done and has a replaceable 2 amp fuse to protect your equipment. The styling is clean and practical and you can even listen to your iPod while it's being charged.

I used my iPod Nano to test these chargers. Charging up was quick and painless. These devices work with all iPods and the Shuffle plugs directly in to either unit with out the need of an additional cable.

The Griffin PowerDuo Charging Kit lists at \$39.99 but we've seen it online for considerably less. Both items are also sold separately but the kit is the best value. *Wanda Simpson*

Griffin iFM Radio and Remote for iPOD - The idea of the Griffin's iFM, Radio and Remote for iPOD is just what we need in the, "Walkman what??" day and age. This transmitter gives you the capability of listening to FM radio stations through your iPOD plus contains a remote control.

Fairly easy to use and just about the size of a Zippo lighter, there are 3 states: 'Off', 'FM', and 'Remote' located on the left side of the device. I am still fairly young, and it was extremely hard for me to even read these labeled states. Although once using the device a few times, you should know where the slider should go without looking.

I first chose FM. You are able to preset up to 6 stations, which is pretty cool. The process of tuning was very easy, but difficulty came when trying to push down on the very small E.Q. button in order to preset a station. Tuning and volume control were no problem at all.

I was so excited about the remote option that this transmitter has, although to my great disappointment, the one with my unit didn't work. I sat there for about an hour trying everything I could to get it to work...but no luck.

The Griffin iFM Radio and Remote lists at \$73.78 but I've seen it online for considerably less. All in all, it is a brilliant idea, and fairly easy to use. But the fact the remote did not work is very disappointing. Perhaps in the next year or so these issues will be fixed and improvement in usability will take place, if not already. *Emily Wahl*

Griffin iMiC Hi Resolution USB Audio Capture and **Griffin Clear Choice Turntable Grounding Cable** - Taking a tip from Apple, economy of design and simplicity of use, makes Griffin's iMiC Hi Resolution USB Audio Capture a handy little tool for both Apple and PC users.

A free USB port is all you'll need to add CD quality stereo input and output to ANY computer (laptops also). The compact unit (2" round) takes a standard 1/8th inch mini jack stereo in & out and comes with a stereo RCA to 1/8" adapter cable. The only control you'll need is on the unit, a slide selector for line-in or microphone. There are no additional drivers needed if you are running Windows XP or Mac OS 10.2.8

Plug a cassette, record or cd player to the unit and archive your favorite songs on your computer or convert to MP3 format for transfer to a portable player. If you plan to archive a lot of old LPs I would suggest investing a few dollars in the Griffin Clear Choice Turntable Grounding Cable to use with the iMiC unit, all the cables are well shielded, but adding the ground will help with any magnetic interference inherent with older turntables.

An added bonus for Apple users the FINAL VINYL Audio Recording Software available FREE on line. Sorry PC'ers you'll have to Google a bit for a freeware PC program.

Compact design, a very reasonable price and ease of use - you won't find a better deal than the iMiC USB Audio Capture if you want to unite all your audio devices with personal computer.

Michael Braxton

Griffin iFill - Wow! Now, this is a really cool piece of software! Griffin's iFill enables the user to choose from what seems like hundreds, of Internet radio stations and download the ones to your liking directly to your iPod.

The iFill was extremely simple to set up. The application came on a CD with the license key ready to install right to your computer. Once downloaded, the station selection was also just as effortless. iFill allows you to choose multiple stations to record. I am not sure of the max #, but I choose 6 simultaneously. Once, the 6 stations were selected, I hit 'Record'. I was able to see what songs were being recorded and could listen to them one at a time. The unfortunate part was I could not stop

recording a song and have the rest of the songs keep recording. In order to stop a song, I had to stop all songs. This kinda stinks because there were a few songs that came on that I did not want on my iPod. In the end, this is not that big of a deal, as you can go into iTunes afterward and just delete the songs you don't want. The other thing that I did not like was the fact that when you choose songs to record, it is very difficult to get them to record at the very beginning of the tune. Most all of the songs that were recorded, I only got around 1-2 minutes of the song. The answer to this I suppose is to choose stations that you like the majority of the songs played and record all of them. You can then go in to iTunes and delete the few that you do not like.

Overall, I really enjoyed Griffin's iFill. In just under 5 minutes, I was able to record 27 songs! Granted, like I said above, the entire length of many songs were not recorded, but I think once you get the hang of the recording process, this shouldn't be an issue. *Emily Wahl*

Editor's Note: Keep in mind that all Griffin Accessories do not necessarily work on ALL iPods. At this point there are several iPod versions and while Griffin appears to be constantly updating its compatibility features, I'd suggest that you go to the Griffin site at www.griffintechology.com where you can choose your iPod and see what accessories are available for you. There is also a compatibility list on the page for each accessory should you choose to follow that route. Our reviewers tested these units new, and did not include long-term results.



A shot from **Hubert Sumlin's** 75th birthday hosted by **Libby Johnson** in New York recently and coinciding with a screening of "Before the Music Dies." Both Libby and Hubert performed, and he said of her "She's going to the moon. That girl can really sing." The word is that Hubert smoked on "Killing Floor" and "Sitting On Top of the World." Libby Johnson is a singer-songwriter currently set to release her first solo album. She was featured on three albums as a founding member of the band 22 Brides.

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE STAND ALONE GIFT GUIDE ON THE SITE WITH LOADS OF REVIEWS FROM 2005 & 2006 PLUS THE LAST-MINUTE REVIEWS ON PAGE 30!

jazz-blues.com

JOE LOVANO ENSEMBLE
Streams of Expressions:
Featuring *The Birth of the Cool Suite*
by Gunther Schuller

Hailed by *New York Times* as "one of the greatest musicians in jazz history," saxophonist Joe Lovano reunites with the great composer, conductor, and musicologist Gunther Schuller on *Streams of Expression*, and draws upon everything from the cool school to late-era Coltrane, offering a holistic take on jazz, present and future.

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