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& blues



The Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise R E V I E W E D

A Full Week on the High Seas with Taj Mahal, Dr. John, Shemekia Copeland, Little Charlie & The Nightcats, Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials, Derek Trucks Band, Susan Tedeschi, Chubby Carrier, Corey Harris, Kenny Neal, Anson Funderburgh, Bernard Allison, Tommy Castro & More...Plus Special Guests!

Jazz & Blues Report

Published by Martin Wahl
Communications

Editor & Founder Bill Wahl

Layout & Design Bill Wahl

Operations Jim Martin
Pilar Martin

Contributors

Michael Braxton, Mark Cole,
Chris Hovan, Nancy Ann Lee,
David McPherson, Tim Murrett,
Peanuts, Mark Smith, Duane
Verh and Ron Weinstock.

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Address all Correspondence to....

Jazz & Blues Report
19885 Detroit Road # 320
Rocky River, Ohio 44116

Main Office 216.651.0626
Editor's Desk ... 440.331.1930

Comments...billwahl@jazz-blues.com
Web www.jazz-blues.com

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ON THE COVER



Shemekia Copeland and Phillip Walker
in a jam on the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise. Photo by Ron Weinstock



REVIEWED

By Bill Wahl

Regular readers of Jazz & Blues Report are familiar with the fact that we seldom print lengthy reviews of festivals. It is our policy to rather run previews of such events, such as last issue's feature on the Tri-C JazzFest. We feel that it is more important to give the space to events coming up so our readers can attend them, rather than telling them what they missed, or even worse, telling them what they already know because they were there. Occasionally we make an exception, and this is one of them. The Legendary Rhythm & Blues cruise turned out to be an incredibly fun experience, and we want you to know about it as a possibility for your vacation plans for 2006 or another future year. After this horribly long and snowy winter we have just come out of (or have we come out of it yet?) this cruise should sound like a marvelous idea!

Those of you who are reading this in our printed pulp issue might want to take note - this review is available for download in both e-book and print versions with lots of fine color pictures. The e-book version can be viewed on your monitor with enough magnification to make the type (which is larger than this) easy to read. The print version can be printed out, or magnified to 300% on your monitor making the pictures huge and still clear as a bell. The web versions also have Ron Weinstock's review expanding on the music alone. You can get whichever pdf you want at www.jazz-blues.com. That said - let's go bluesin'!

It is Friday, January 21 and it is snowing like mad outside. Not unusual for Cleveland, Ohio I suppose...but what is unusual is that I am going on a week-long vacation. Yes, a vacation - some-

thing that I am able to experience about once every six or seven years. I'm going on the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise aboard a Holland America Line ship. Or at least I think I am...it's all up to the weather

Having spent a week in Puerto Rico six years ago, I have been wanting to return to the Caribbean. But a cruise? That's something I've never given much thought to. Two days at sea to spend a day on an island, only to have to quickly leave...sail again...and spend a day at another...sail again...and on.... And then I had heard you have to take dress clothes along for dinner. Dress up for dinner? I usually dress up for weddings and funerals. Besides, the Caribbean is hot. Why should I make myself even hotter? And lug all that stuff on the plane...and onto the ship?

But this just seemed like too much fun to miss...experiencing a cruise and a blues festival at the same time. And no minor festival either - this one would feature 16 top rate bands - including Dr. John, Taj Mahal, Corey Harris, Shemekia Copeland, Little Charlie & The Nightcats, Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials, Derek Trucks Band, Kenny Neal, Susan Tedeschi and many more. More you say? Yes...like Zac Harmon, Rev. Billy C. Wirtz, Tommy Castro, The Phantom Blues Band (Taj's backup band for many years) Anson Funderburgh with Sam Myers, Bernard Allison and Chubby Carrier. But those were just the ones I knew about. Each of these annual cruises (this was the fourth one, although it did have a predecessor under the name Ultimate Rhythm & Blues Cruise) has a number of secret guest artists. The cruisers (as we will call the 1,800 fans aboard from now on) don't find out who these guests are until they get to their respective rooms and look at the actual schedule.

The ports of call looked pretty invit-

ing too. St. Maarten in the Dutch Upper Antilles, Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, and Turks & Caicos. That last port was new to me, but it is 39 miles southeast of the Bahamas, just north of The Dominican Republic and northeast of Cuba. I had always wanted to go to St. Thomas (I must have been inspired by the Sonny Rollins tune of the same name) and had been about 50 miles from there on the Puerto Rico trip. This time I would go well south of it, so that will be for another time. It is Cleveland...cold and snowy...downright depressing in fact...and I was going to the Caribbean on a floating blues festival!

But hold on here...we need to get back to the snow in Cleveland. The Weather Channel kept saying the horrible snow storm that was blanketing Chicago was headed towards Cleveland! All I could think of was the Blizzard of '77 when I lived in Buffalo! Could this really be happening? It was already snowing out there, and they were predicting we'd be getting somewhere in the neighborhood of 14" in the next 12 hours. Our web readers in Phoenix or Buenos Aires or other such places might think little of it. But believe me - 14" of snow is a heavy duty situation...even if you *aren't* planning to go *anywhere!*

A couple of glasses of red wine would be needed to get me to sleep. In the morning everything was white outside, but my ride got me to the airport in time for the 9:30 a.m. flight - if, in fact, there would be a flight at all. I got to the gate and we all waited. The monitor said most flights were cancelled, but mine was still listed as a go. We waited. We got on the plane only to be de-iced a number of times. Then, about an hour or so later, we started to make our way very slowly to end of the runway and waited again. Then you won't believe what happened next - because I sure didn't... *we took off.*

While airborne we heard that we were the last flight out of Cleveland and things were messed up everywhere. We were already about two hours off schedule and we might be held in a holding pattern trying to land. By the time I got to Lauderdale and into the terminal, it was around 3. I was supposed to board the ship around 1 and it was *leaving* at 5. I met a couple in the terminal who was looking for the same thing I was - the shuttle to take us to the ship. After chatting for a while, I found that I was talking to Doyle Bramhall - the drummer/vocalist/composer from Texas who has some albums of his own out and wrote some songs for Stevie Ray Vaughan. I thought he looked familiar - I had reviewed one of his albums and must have recognized him from the picture. He was on the

cruise as one of the "secret" guests. He and his wife Barb and I would become cruise buddies. I wasn't even on the ship yet and I was already meeting some interesting people. Well we got to the ship at around 4. I was so late my cabin steward thought I had missed the cruise for sure. I told him so had I!

At this point I had very little time to acclimate myself to the new surroundings before it was time for dinner at 5:30. Unlike most cruises, although you are assigned a time (either 5:30 or 8) on the first night, from then on you can go to either seating. You can also sit with whoever you want wherever you want. You can also *wear* whatever you want. That's right - no dressing up - ever! I had already found that out and happily left the suit and ties at home with the snow, the weddings and the funerals. I met up with Doyle and Barb and after one look at the menu I decided to toss out my diet for the week. Five course dinners...what a treat! As we sat down to eat the ship began to move. The party had begun.

The music had already started with Little Charlie kicking things off at 4:30 on the Pool Deck Stage. As we ate, Lil' Ed's outfit was playing in the largest venue, the Vista Lounge, nestled in 3 stories in the bow of the ship. Also at 4:30 was the Pro-Am Jam in the Crow's Nest bar. I had heard that walking completely around Deck of the 951-foot-long ship 3 three times was a full mile. I figured throwing the diet out would warrant that after each dinner. The power walk didn't take that long and the 75° weather and the sounds of the Caribbean Sea made it quite nice indeed.

The first act I got to see was Shemekia Copeland on the Pool Deck at 9. She was on fire and had me all primed for Taj Mahal at the Vista at 11:30. I was a bit tired after that and figured I'd go back to the room and take a nap. It was then that I remembered that the Pool Deck stage was *directly* above my room. I was on Deck 8 - it was on 9. No rest for the wicked - I went up to see Tommy Castro lead the Pro Jam at 1 a.m. I met some folks from Arizona and danced, drank Red Stripe and carried on until well after 3. By the way - as I did the above there was an Acoustic Jam in the Queen's Lounge at 8:30, Chubby Carrier played the Vista at 9:30, The Pro-Am Jam was at 10 at the Crow's Nest, and The Phantom Blues Band played the Pool Deck at 11. Get the idea? No normal person could see all of the performances on this cruise, although I'm sure there were some who tried.

I figured the best way to do it was to go through the week-long schedule on the first day and map out a game plan.



**Taj Mahal is on the cruise every year.
Photo by Ron Weinstock**

You can at least see a full performance or two, or three from each band and still manage to eat and sleep. But after the second day I tossed out that game plan and just winged it. That worked just fine.

Waking early on Day 2 we were out at sea and it finally dawned on me where I was. Yes, I was no longer in snowy Cleveland, but rather on the m/s. Zuiderdam somewhere east of Cuba. The Zuiderdam is an 11-deck ship and the first in Holland America's new Vista Class. Carrying 1,850 passengers and a crew of 800 it weighs 85,000 gross tons and clips at a top speed of 24 knots. In other words - it is mighty big and quick for its size. Its maiden voyage was in 2002. At 10:30 a.m. there was a Virgin Party for first-time cruisers on the pool deck. We heard some tips on cruising and other good stuff, had some drinks and then we all got laid. Well, actually it was the flower necklace lei like you get in Hawaii - but it sure sounds good, doesn't it. At the same time, there was a returnee party at the Vista. Since we already had our band schedules, we now knew who the secret guest artists were. I already knew about Doyle Bramhall, and the others were Curtis Salgado, Tito Jackson (yes...Michael's quiet brother), Phillip Walker, Dave Maxwell, Mitch Woods, Aubrey Ghent, Hawkeye Herman & Fiona Boyes.

For me to give you a blow-by-blow of every day and every show would be ridiculous. On Saturday alone there were 15 separate performances at the various venues and stages throughout the ship, and many overlapped or were going on



Percussion master Ralph MacDonald.
Photo by Ron Weinstock

at the same time. Throughout the week there were several Industry Panel sessions relating to blues as a business highlighting magazines, radio, CD and band publicity, etc.

The days we were at sea there were these Musician Workshops: Gospel Musician Workshop; Essential Guitar Heroes for Modern Blues; Steel Drum Demonstration; Keyboards-The Key to Composing and Accompaniment; Rhythm of the Blues...Drums, Percussion & Second Line, and finally Classic Styles of the Harmonica Masters. Being a drummer, I enjoyed the drummers workshop where Ralph MacDonald gave us a congas demo. MacDonald is the famous studio percussionist who, along with his partner Bill Salter, wrote "Where Is The Love" for Roberta Flack and "Just The Two Of Us" for Grover Washington. He was on many of the CTI and KUDU albums in the 70s along with drummer Steve Gadd and pianist Richard Tee. Ralph was also a secret guest - so secret in fact that he wasn't even announced. Nice surprise. My man Doyle also gave a demonstration on drums and talked about being a drummer/vocalist. Also each day there were Acoustic Jams and Pro-Am Jams - often two of each, and there were many impromptu jams popping up throughout the ship as many of the cruisers who were musicians brought along their instruments. Anywhere they could find a piano - or just an open spot - they'd take it over and jam. What fun!

I caught as many of the scheduled shows and jams as I could, and always made it a point to catch the 11 p.m. shows under the Caribbean stars on the outside pool deck where I was able to see Phan-

tom Blues Band, Anson Funderburgh, Shemekia Copeland, Dr. John, Susan Tedeschi, Chubby Carrier and Tommy Castro. I would often catch earlier shows at the Pool deck as well, and in the end I'd have to say that was my favorite venue. The sound was just right, and regardless of how crowded it was you could always find a way to see the band. Many folks went up to the next deck and watched from above. And that was also the venue for the late night Pro Jams, which started at 1 a.m. hosted by a different band each night. Some of these jams went on until 5 a.m. My room, of course, was still just below the stage. But I have to tell you, if I got too tired the ship just rocked me to sleep regardless of what was going on above. Wine helped.

Some might think that a seven day blues cruise might get a bit tiresome after a while. After all, how many times can you listen to "Sweet Home Chicago?" But some very creative booking was done to make sure that does not happen. The bands on board played different styles of blues, from the traditional to Chicago, Texas, and through to modern and blues-rock. In fact, two of the bands that really got the crowds roaring aren't strictly blues bands at all. Dr. John mixes jazz and blues into his Creole voodoo swamp gumbo, and Derek Trucks, though he played some blues, was really more of a jazzy jam band. In fact, he even did a version of John Coltrane's take on "Greensleeves" that blew everyone away. Then there was Chubby Carrier with his fantastic zydeco sets. Although I never listen to much zydeco on CD - it is a perfect party music and always a gas live...and it really gets the dancers going. But, even though all the other bands were pretty much strictly blues - I don't recall hearing "Sweet Home Chicago" even once. I had seen Little Charlie and Lil' Ed, both Alligator artists, many times before and they delivered their usual style of party-time blues and also filled the dance floor. I had also seen Shemekia Copeland before, and she was so good on Day 1 I managed to catch her 2 more times. Her father, the late-great Johnny Copeland, would indeed be proud. That woman can sing the blues. Corey Harris was another one I could not get enough of. And although I'd heard Dr. John several times, the cruise sets were the best I'd heard from him. Although he played mostly songs from his latest excellent Blue Note album *N'Awlinz* (including "St. James Infirmary"), he did several old Dr. J. favorites as well, including "I Walk On Guilted Splinters" and Right Place, Wrong Time."

Tuesday was Day 3 and we arrived early in the morning at Turks & Caicos. We had to anchor off shore and those who



The Blues Imperials' Lil' Ed at work.
Photo by Ron Weinstock

wanted to go to the island would be shuttled on the lifeboats (which for this purpose were called "tenders") but it was too choppy for them to dock ashore and we had to stay on the ship. So it was more food, drink and music for us!

On Day 4 we arrived around noon at Tortola in the British Virgin Islands. As I watched the cruisers disembarking I wondered if Tortola was ready for this particular breed of visitors! Although there were a lot of tents where you could buy shirts and hats, once you got past them there was a quaint little town where people drove on the wrong side of the street. You have to be careful crossing because of the tendency to look the wrong way and get whacked, but I survived and enjoyed walking around the town on some streets most of the tourists did not seem to find. It actually felt like I was in Jamaica. As we departed Tortola, the Derek Trucks Band played a highly energized set on the pool deck. I'm sure everyone on all the sailboats in the bay heard it - as well as many, if not all, of the people in town. Some of the boats even followed us for a good while to get more of Trucks' music.

Day 5 we docked in St. Maarten and were again immediately assaulted by shops selling all kinds of stuff. A brief walk into town ended at the beach which was another quaint sight. It was lined with bars and island bands with steel drummers, but as soon as you got beyond that it was hundreds of shops and not much else. I walked around a bit and settled back at a beach bar where I found myself with a Heinekin dancing with two women from Norway who were on another cruise.



**Dr. John delivering voodoo gumbo.
Photo by Ron Weinstock**

There were other options, like go to one of the more remote beaches, or the nude beach - but I talked to some folks who went there and they said it was not a pretty site. Apparently the locals go somewhere else during tourist season and the only nude people at the nude beach are tourists you would *not* want to see nude. Glad I missed that one. After dancing a few, I went to the Bleu Peter, a little French restaurant at the end of the beach for an exquisite giant bowl of seafood chowder. As we left St. Maarten, Susan Tedeschi played on the pool deck.

Days 6 & 7 were all at sea and the party strengthened. As I mentioned above, there were no formal nights on the Blues Cruise. Instead they had theme nights. The best of these was on Day 6 - Mardi Gras Night. It started with a parade through the dining room which included the cooks, and later hundreds of cruisers dressed up for the night. Some of the costumes were quite a sight! There was also a Pajama Night as we left Tortola, and a Pillage & Plunder in the Islands Night after reboarding in St. Maarten.

On Days 3 & 6 there were autograph parties where each artist had their own table and the cruisers could meet them and get CDs, pictures, posters or guitars autographed.

As for the food - I thought it was superb. As I mentioned, the dining rooms served both lunch and 5-course dinners. You could also eat at the Lido Restaurant, which was buffet style and had many different areas so you could choose from several different styles of food. I hit the Italian section quite a few times for either fettucini and pizza later at night. There was also a high class restaurant where you could get incredible steaks - but you had to pay at that one. Other than that - the food was free - all included in the price of the cruise. Coffee and tea were also free any time of the day or night. Pop was not, but you could buy a pop card for the week. I ate like a pig all week with total

disregard for calories, fat content or what time it might be. What price did I pay? I lost 7 pounds. Figure that one out! All that walking perhaps - both on the ship and on shore - and the dancing as well.

The alcoholic drinks were not free. Could you imagine that - I could see the headlines "Cruise ship line goes bankrupt after giving free drinks to blues fans." Of course, that is the policy on all cruises. The prices are not unlike what you'd pay at a night club. You can not bring alcoholic beverages on board except champagne and wine. That is where I lucked out, as dry red wine is my preference and I bought some bottles in a Tortola grocery store that lasted me the rest of the cruise.

The ship had many amenities to enjoy. There was a spa where cruisers could enjoy (for a fee) exotic skin, body and hair treatments including hot stone massages. The spa's fitness facility included exercise equipment and exercise professionals for personal training. There was also a casino, a coffee bar, swimming pool and a duty-free gift shop where a wide variety of items could be purchased without paying tax or duty. The prices were extremely reasonable. But if you buy liquor, you can't take it to your room. You get it at the end of the cruise.

The Blues Bazaar had all kinds of blues or Blues Cruise related stuff. The musicians on board brought their own items which were sold at the bazaar, including shirts, hats, CDs, DVDs, posters, photos and the like. Although I brought my laptop, I decided the first day out that I would not touch a computer for the week. I took notes the old fashioned way - *like writing by hand* - and thus had no reason to use the internet room. But I did walk through it - and it was packed with cruisers checking their email or whatever. It also had a nominal fee, or you could buy a pass for the week.

I talked with several members of the Zuiderdam's crew and every one told me we had the wildest, craziest, most party hearty group they had ever seen assembled on one ship. Hey...that's one hell of a compliment to the blues cruisers. Oddly enough, the same ship had been used the week before for the Smooth Jazz Cruise and the week before for Delbert McClinton's Cruise. The crew members and another guy I met who actually was a paid cruiser for all three (talk about sea legs!) said the smooth jazzers were boring by comparison, and McClinton's crowd partied, but were nowhere near as much fun as our lot.

Oh yes...and what about sea legs? I was told I should get some kind of patch to avoid sea sickness, but I didn't. I figured if I got sick, I'd go to the ship's doctor. It took a little while to get the sea legs,

and many of us walked a little funny sometimes, but that ship is so big and with the stabilizers and all it was really no problem. If you have a tendency to get seasick - have your doctor write you a prescription for the patch as I hear it works great and some of the cruisers had them.

As far as cash money goes, you don't need much. When you sign in they'll swipe your credit card and issue you an Ms. Zuiderdam card. You'll use this to get into your room, charge your drinks and buy stuff in the Duty Free Gift Shop and the Blues Bazaar. You also have it swiped when you disembark at the ports and again when you embark again. At the end of the cruise you'll be issued a bill listing everything you bought. Save all your receipts and check it carefully. There were a couple of drinks on mine I wouldn't even put in somebody else's mouth, but I went to the office and they took care of it with no hassles.

On the first day of the cruise I had the pleasure of meeting Roger Naber, the mastermind behind the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise. Naber has worked in the music industry for 25 years and was the owner, talent buyer and promotional director for The Grand Emporium in Kansas City since 1985 until he recently sold the club. I wanted to meet him as we had some things in common. I was the national talent buyer and show manager for Peabody's DownUnder in Cleveland during the same period in the 80s, and we did a lot of the same acts. I knew much of what had to be done to pull off shows like these - but the thought of organizing over 80 performances plus workshops, autograph signings and all - and on a ship at sea to boot - was mind-blowing to say the least.

Roger told me there were people from nearly every state in the U.S. and from 11 other countries on board for this cruise...countries like Germany, England, Singapore and Australia. He said there was even a group that drove to Fort Lauderdale from Anchorage, Alaska in an RV. This was the biggest cruise yet. It had originally sold out and they moved it to a larger ship, which sold out as well.

I wish I had bumped into Roger at the end of the cruise to congratulate him and his staff on what certainly appeared to be a flawless production (I would think that something just *had* to go wrong somewhere, but I sure didn't notice anything) and on such a grand scale. One thing I noticed on the very first day was that all the shows I went to started on time, which can happen only if the ones coming before them end on time. The traffic management in this department was something I'd not seen at many small festivals, let alone a mammoth festival at sea with

so many different venues, musicians, sound systems, etc. Kudos definitely go out to Roger and his gang in Kansas City.

One of the big differences between the Blues Cruise and other landlocked festivals is that the musicians and the cruisers are able to meet and mingle. As its website says "Everyone has a backstage pass." I rode the elevator once with Derek Trucks and Susan Tedeschi, and another time with Lil' Ed. I spoke with Dr. John briefly in the Lido Restaurant, Kenny Neal by the Taco Bar, and Little Charlie and Taj Mahal by the pool, where I also had a long conversation with Australian guitarist/singer Fiona Boyes.

After another long day of nonstop music on Day 7, the party culminated with a blowout in the Vista Lounge featuring Derek Trucks at 11:30 p.m. followed by the Open Jam Finale from 1:15 until God knows when. I stayed as long as I could hold up and watched the rest on TV in my room until I passed out. Throughout the cruise one station had a live feed from the Vista and another had blues documentaries. About the only place I didn't notice anything about the blues was in the shower, but perhaps I simply missed it.

Day 8 is a short one. I woke up rather early again and we were already docked in Lauderdale, right next to the brand new Queen Mary 2, another monstrous ship. From there on, it's pretty much disembarkation starting around 10, going to the airport and returning to reality. Mine was SNOW, COLD and CLEVELAND!

I've got to tell you, if you like the blues and have even had a remote interest in going on a cruise, I strongly recommend the Blues Cruise. I can't guarantee that you can eat like a mindless pig and lose 7 pounds. I don't even know if I could pull that off again. But I can guarantee you'll have a vacation you'll never forget. And if you have a pirate's outfit, an outstanding pair of pajamas or some Mardi Gras duds - by all means bring 'em along!

The 2006 Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise is now booking for January 8-15 on Holland America's Ms. Westerdam. From what I can tell, it appears to be exactly like the Zuiderdam except that it is 2 years newer as it was brought into service in 2004. The ports of call look even more interesting than the 2005 cruise, and there will be 4 of them.

For more information, and to book your spot on the cruise, go to www.bluescruise.com or call 888-BLUESIN' (816-753-7979). And don't worry about the late night stage being above your room -they won't do that to you unless that's what you want. One final word though - don't procrastinate - the rooms are going fast and judging by the lineup of bands (see below) which was

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just announced - it will no doubt sell out fast.

The 2006 Itinerary:

Jan 8 - Ft. Lauderdale, FL

9 - Key West, Fla

10 - Bluesin' At Sea

11 - Cozumel, Mexico

12 - Georgetown, Grand Cayman

13 - Ocho Rios, Jamaica

14 - Bluesin' At Sea

Jan 15 - Ft. Lauderdale, FL

2006 Lineup: Taj Mahal, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Little Milton, Buckwheat Zydeco, Rod Piazza & The Mighty Flyers, Bob Margolin with The Chicago Legends (Hubert Sumlin, James Cotton, Pinetop Perkins, Willie "Big-Eyes" Smith & More), Tab Benoit, Jimmy Thackery, John Hammond, Joe Bonamassa, Kenny Neal and Billy Branch, Anthony Gomes, Ronnie Baker Brooks, René Austin, Phillip Walker, Corey Harris & The 5 x 5, Ana Popovic, Diunna & Blue Mercy (2005 IBC Winners) PLUS SURPRISE GUESTS!
www.bluescruise.com



The Rockin' Jake Band will be at Savannah Bar and Grill in Westlake on Wednesday, May 18.

Rockin' Jake at the Savannah

Rockin' Jake has been hailed by many as one of the premier harmonica players in the country. His original sound is a hybrid of second line, swamp funk, blues and zydeco with influences from Paul Butterfield, Big Walter Horton, James Cotton, Muddy Waters, J. Geils Band, and the Fabulous Thunderbirds. Jake has conjured up this formula that is blowing crowds away from coast to coast. Widely known as a touring juggernaut among his peers, his schedule of over 200 performances per year include clubs, concert venues, and festivals.

Originally from the East Coast, the "blues bug" bit at an early age for Jake. He immersed himself in the thriving re-

gional blues scene, which boasted such talents as Roomful of Blues, Ronnie Earl, Duke Robillard and Sugar Ray. Primarily self-taught, Jake briefly studied with Jerry Portnoy, harmonica player for Muddy Waters.

In 1990, Jake moved to New Orleans where he began to work with such notable New Orleans mainstays as: blues diva Marva Wright, Mem Shannon, Coco Robicheaux, Little Freddie King, Tommy Ridgley, Eddie Bo and other local legends. During this time Jake also toured nationally with G. Love & Special Sauce, blues and pop legend Maria Muldaur as well as logging international miles with bluesman T.J. Wheeler. He was selected to perform in an all-star band featuring blues legends Pinetop Perkins and Hubert Sumlin at the Howlin' Wolf.

In 1995 he formed the Rockin' Jake Band as an outlet for his original music and his unique swampy sounds. One year later Jake recorded his debut CD, "Let's Go Get 'Em" (on Rabadash Records) which earned him national recognition.

He is a five-time winner of Off Beat Magazine's coveted "Best of the Beat" award for best harmonica player.

In his spare time Jake managed to snare some culinary kudos in New Orleans, taking the trophy for "Best Barbequed Brisket" at the 1999 New Orleans Musicians Barbeque Competition, and launching his own line of signature hot sauce: "Badmouth" (the edible version)... "man it's hot!"...just like the band! Jake also takes time to give back to his New Orleans community with Project Prodigy Music Camp for children as well as the Blues in the Schools programs in New Orleans and other cities in the US.

Trio! at Cain Park



Jean-Luc Ponty will be appearing with banjo master Bela Fleck and bassist Stanley Clarke in a band billed as Trio! at Cain Park on Wednesday, June 22



**We only bring you the
Cream of the Crop!**

MARCIA BALL

**Live! Down The Road
ALLIGATOR**

On her previous release, *So Many Rivers*, Marcia Ball sometimes flirted with more “uptown” lyric sets and a persona fixed upon emotional reflection. This time around she reminds us all what a dyed-in-the-wool party girl she is with a “live” club set strong on good-time tunes and Ball’s signature two-fisted bayou-boogie piano romps.

Those who have caught her show will be right at home with punchy renditions of Ball favorites such as “That’s Enough Of That Stuff”, “La Ti Da” and “Louella”. The bandleader is in fine vocal and instrumental form and her backup is solid. Guitarist Pat Boylan gets off his own share of crowd-pleasing choruses as well.

Departures from the frolic include a soulful ballad duet with guest Angela Strehli, “It Hurts To Be In Love” and Ball’s understated take on Randy Newman’s “Louisiana 1927”. This one will likely remain a top choice for a spin when selecting from your Marcia Ball collection. *Duane Verh*

CARIBBEAN JAZZ PROJECT

**Here And Now: Live In Concert
CONCORD PICANTE**

This two-disc set by the Caribbean Jazz Project was recorded in a series of concerts in Pittsburgh’s 350-seat Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild theater. Featuring vibist Dave Samuels with Diego Urcola (trumpet, flugelhorn), Dario Eskenazi (piano), Oscar Stagnaro (bass), Mark Walker (drums) and Robert Quintero (congas, percussion), the set features seven tracks on each disc.

Disc one highlights include a spectacular Latinate reading of Oliver Nelson’s “Stolen Moments,” a fresh take on Thelonious Monk’s “Bemsha Swing” containing a lengthy vibraphone melody head/solo and Urcola’s expert trumpet solo, and five originals by Samuels. Disc two includes exhilarating remakes of classics such as John Coltrane’s “Naima,” Dizzy Gillespie’s “Night In Tunisia,” Duke Ellington’s “Caravan,” as well as two expressive Samuels originals, and others. On both discs, Samuels gets plenty of solo time to showcase his splendid chops and he frequently yields the spotlight to his cohorts.

Maybe it’s the live concert setting or perhaps it’s this particular version of Caribbean Jazz Project, but this 2-CD set features impressive individual and collective musicianship and some of the best and most inspired and inventive renderings on record by any version of the CJP bands. *Nancy Ann Lee*

JOYOUS ENCOUNTER

The Newest Masterwork From

JOE LOVANO



Joyous Encounter, Joe Lovano’s 17th recording for Blue Note, is an anomaly in his extraordinary career, as it marks the first time that the saxophonist has returned to the studio with the same band to record a sequel of his last outing. The new disc is part two of his celebrated 2004 quartet record, *I’m All For You: Ballad Songbook*, a masterwork featuring Hank Jones on piano, George Mraz on bass and Paul Motian on drums. Lovano, whose discography is expansive both stylistically and thematically and who regularly changes ensemble configurations from one album to the next, decided to revisit the quartet magic, this time with a broader range of tempos, rather than rev up another one of his projects waiting in the wings for documentation.

It’s extremely rare that a band of this caliber has the experience of playing together before the recording session. Joe, Hank, George, and Paul are without a doubt a gem in the jazz community, having played as a collective for nearly two years now, familiarity and simplicity shine brightly on every track. Joe has produced yet another classic for Blue Note Records.

Look for it May 10 at all fine record stores, or buy it online at www.bluenote.com



OTIS CLAY
Respect Yourself
BLIND PIG

Blind Pig has just issued this new live Otis Clay CD recorded at the famed Lucerne (Switzerland) Blues Festival. Clay is a veteran soul singer who made some classic recordings for a variety labels including the legendary Memphis based Hi label.

His **Live in Japan** recording, issued originally on vinyl by Rooster Blues and later on c.d. at different times by Bullseye Blues and Rooster Blues (I am not sure of its current availability) is a classic live recording where he was backed by a great band anchored by the legendary Hi Rhythm section.

On this more recent live outing his band certainly comes off solid enough if not as strong as the earlier cd, but this has more than enough pleasures. Clay remains one of the preeminent soul and blues vocalists alive today and while there are a few songs in common between the two live recordings (O.V. Wright's *A Nickel and a Nail*

and Al Green's *Love & Happiness*), the renditions here are fresh and stand on their own. In addition he handles the country ballad, *For the Good Times* that Al Green previously made his own, and there is a medley of *Amen* with *This Little Light of Mine*. The rendition of *Love & Happiness* segues into the Parliament classic, *I Just Wanna Testify* before Clay closes this album with a number he tells us he sometimes had the pleasure of singing with Pops Staples, *Respect Yourself*. Perhaps my favorite tracks is *When Hearts Grow Cold*, about living together after the relationship has grown cold, and even living together one is still alone.

It has been a few years since Otis Clay had a new release out and this one, if not classic, will certainly please his many fans and make him some new ones. Thanks go to Blind Pig for making this available.

Ron Weinstock



Joe Lovano

JOE LOVANO
Joyous Encounter
BLUE NOTE

Saxophonist Joe Lovano's new disc, recording number 17 for Blue Note, is touted as "part two" of his 2004 quartet record, *I'm All For You: Ballad Songbook*, featuring the tenor player with pianist Hank Jones, bassist George Mraz and drummer Paul Motian. Lovano has said this is the most creative quartet he's ever played standards with and his fans may agree.

Lovano's quartet kicks off the 11-tune album with a warm, woody reading of the melodious ballad, "Autumn In New York" which not only emphasizes his peak talents but highlights each of his illustrious team mates. Along with standards such as the 1932 Arthur Schwartz ballad "Alone Together," Thelonious Monk's "Pannonica" and "Crescent," three Thad Jones tunes ("A Child Is Born," "Don't Ever Leave Me," "Quiet Lady"), and Oliver Nelson's "Six and Four," Lovano and crew introduce two of his originals, the bopping "Bird's Eye View" and, performed without Jones, the title track. Lovano switches to curved soprano for a swinging reading of the Steve Lacy tune, "Consummation."

This lyrical foursome is a match made in heaven. Lovano's at his finest with this team. Jones, one of most ear-appealing pianists ever, offers scintillating solos, melody heads, and support that sparkle with radiance and imagina-

tion. Motian and Mraz are equally matched with Jones and Lovano, making this quartet one of the all-time best, especially for reinventing standards. Keep your fingers crossed that the group continues to record future "joyous encounters."

Nancy Ann Lee

SONNY LANDRETH
Grant Street
SUGAR HILL RECORDS

Sonny Landreth is certainly an astonishing slide guitar player who gets to stretch out this new live disc on Sugar Hill.

Landreth has enlivened a number of blues and roots recordings by the likes of Junior Wells, John Hiatt, Bobby Charles and Beausoleil, certainly coming quite a distance from a young 17 year old mentored by the late King of Zydeco, Clifton Chenier. In fact, Landreth played with Chenier when Grant Street opened in Lafayette, Louisiana and it's his favorite watering hole as he goes through a set of his originals including a lengthy romp through

Congo Square, perhaps his most famous composition, which has become a staple for Tom Principato as well as the Nevilles. This is a lively recording of blues-tinged rock and roll with some spectacular displays of his slide mastery, which never lapses into empty displays of virtuosity. His vocals do not approach the level of his slide playing, but are more than adequate.

Supported by bass and drums, one can sense the bodies moving with the hot tempoed grooves as his solos take off. Having seen Landreth, I certainly can appreciate him for his superb musicianship, his songwriting and the hot rock and roll he produces which is displayed on **Grant Street**.

Ron Weinstock

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RANDY JOHNSTON

Is It You? HIGHNOTE

On his fourth outing for HighNote, guitarist Randy Johnston delivers a 10-tune mixture of standards and originals performed with Xavier Davis (piano on five tracks), Dwayne Burno (bass) and Gene Jackson (drums).

The quartet serves up a catchy, island-beat remake of the public domain classic, "Careless Love," a bopping version of Johnston's "The Jump Back," and a melodious bossa reading of the lesser known gem "I Miss You," composed by New York based pianist Sayuri Goto, as well as three others. Davis, who stinted with Betty Carter, Tom Harrell and other groups, enhances with his lyricism.

However, Johnston's playing best stands out in the trio setting with Burno and Jackson, as he proves on a lush reading of the ballad, "Nancy (With the Laughing Face)," and a lightly swinging remake of the warhorse tune, "Who Can I Turn To," one of two Gus Kahn compositions, as well as three more tunes.

Johnston's at his most expressive on this disc, showing that he can play in peak form at any tempo and improvise with skill, clarity and warmth. This is a first-rate, engaging listen from start to finish.

Nancy Ann Lee

HUBERT SUMLIN

About Them Shoes TONE COOL/ARTEMIS

This disc is a tribute within a tribute. The first level of tribute lies in the selection of tunes which focus on cuts written or performed by Muddy Waters. The second level of tribute lies in the "A" list players who signed onto this release in order to cut a disc with guitarist Hubert Sumlin who has blues roots that run back to Howlin' Wolf with whom he waxed such blues classics as *Wang Dang Doodle*, *Shake for Me*, *Three Hundred Pounds of Joy* and *Killing Floor*. With the likes of Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, Levon Helm, Bob Margolin, Paul Oscher, David Maxwell and David Johansen trading lead vocals and contributing plenty of instrumental muscle Sumlin is free to concentrate all of his efforts on creating guitar licks that draw their inspiration from the original recordings without letting reverence for history drag them into mere mimicry.

While the quality runs high from beginning to end, stand out tracks include the bone crunching *Still A Fool* featuring Keith Richards and *I'm Ready*, featuring Clapton on guitar and vocals which makes his recent tribute to Robert Johnson seem positively polite and restrained by comparison. The guests give Sumlin the best possible tribute: they cut him no slack whatsoever and do their best to push his still considerable skills to the limit. Muddy and the Wolf would have expected no less.

Mark Smith

NEW BIRTH BRASS BAND

New Birth Family VALLEY ENTERTAINMENT

Bass drum player Cayetano "Tanio" Hingle leads the New Birth Brass Band on this 10-tune album.

The New Orleans band was initially formed in the 1980s in the living room of the mother of trumpet player Kenny Terry, one of the original band members who appears on this reunion album that brings many former players together again. The other leader, also a founding member, is snare drummer Kerry

Hunter. Other players include Kenny Hunter and Troy Andrews (trumpets), Darryl Adams (alto sax), Cory Henry and Glen David Andrews (trombones), Kerwin James (tuba) and others. (For brevity's sake, I've left out all of their nicknames.)

Highlights include their joyous celebration of Ray Charles' "I Got A Woman" and Hingle's lengthy (12:26) finale, "Cell Block Nine" which features fine solos and a rousing tempo. Included are original band compositions as well as traditional tunes such as "Gloryland" and "Old Time Religion."

Compared with Rebirth Brass Band's current album reviewed in this issue (under Kermit Ruffins), this band sounds less bright and brassy, more cadent and full of group vocals and shouts. Yet, musicianship doesn't take a back seat here. Players seem to be having a lot of fun and it pays off for the listener.

Nancy Ann Lee

DAVE SPECTER & STEVE FREUND

Is What It Is DELMARK

Both Dave Specter and Steve Freund have developed reputations as guitarists working in Chicago's vibrant blues scene. Freund has worked with countless blues greats including a long tenure with Sunnyland Slim, while Specter played with Son Seals and Floyd McDaniel.

Specter is a bit jazzier a player than Freund, but both are authoritative modern Chicago blues guitar stylists who have built up solid catalogs. Delmark has issued their joint new recording, *Is What It Is*, that gives both a chance to display their considerable skills on a selection of blues and some interesting covers of



pop songs. It is not too long into the opening track, Freund's rocking shuffle *My Little Playhouse*, where the two start exchanging choruses on the second break. The title track, a collaboration between Freund and Specter, is a funky instrumental with fine organ by Rob Waters bridging the two guitarists' features. In addition to the two tackling *People Get Ready*, surprising choices for interpretation include George Harrison's *While My Guitar Gently Weeps*, and Peter Green's *Albatross*. On *People*, the two take the melody at a slow tempo before taking off with a gospel revival frenetic tempo near the end. Wes Montgomery's influence on Specter is evident on *While My Guitar*. Freund's *Hoverin' Hawk*, is a slow blues with strong guitar (including Specter on slide) by the two complementing Freund's vocal.

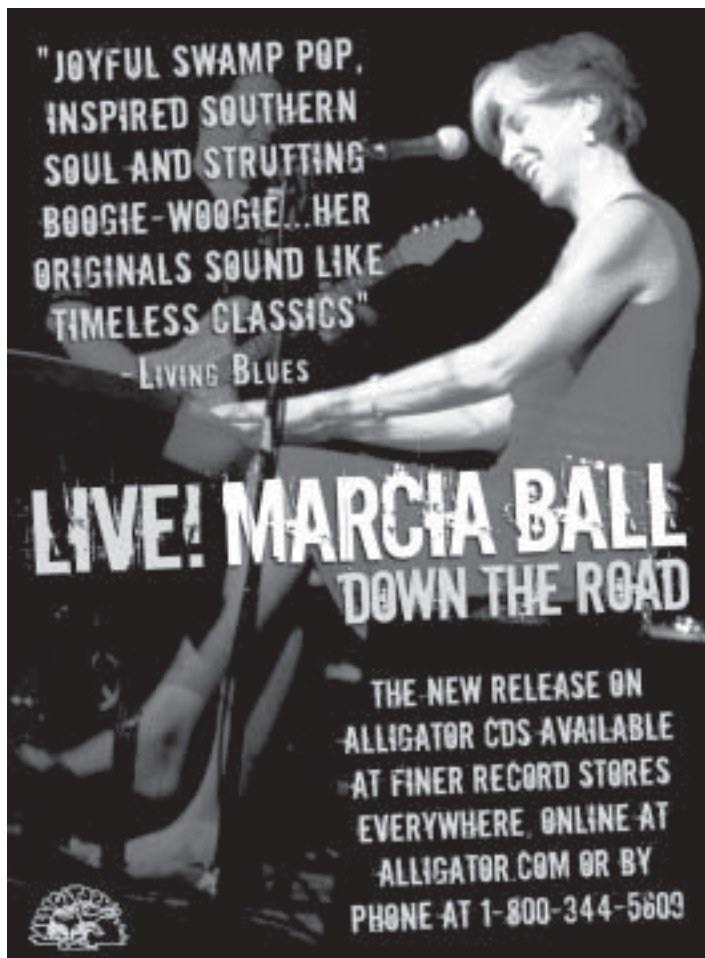
Freund and Specter complement each other and are ably supported by Walters' organ and the strong rhythm of Harlan Terson on bass and Marty Binder on drums on a strong release that adds to the growing catalogs of both. **Ron Weinstock**

DIZZY GILLESPIE

The Music of John Birks Gillespie

VERVE

Just released by Verve Records, this single disc compilation is a collection of 11 of Dizzy Gillespie's best known Verve recordings. All the tracks were recorded for the label between 1950 and 1964, except for two instances. The opener, "Bloomdido" and the closing track "Leap Frog" were recorded with Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, Curley Russell and Buddy Rich in 1950. Why they were placed first and last is beyond me - I guess no one was thinking about chronological order. The



other case is the "I Can't Get Started/'Round Midnight" medley and "Bebop," which were done in 1963 with James Moody, Kenny Barron, Chris White and Rudy Collins...and these are separated by "Blue Moon" which was recorded in 1963. All the rest are different bands for each track - mostly quintets and sextets with a few big band cuts. Some of the other musicians heard are Sonny Rollins, Sonny Stitt, Stan Getz, Oscar Peterson, Herb Ellis, Max Roach, Phil Woods, Quincy Jones, Roy Eldridge and Lee Morgan.

This is a fine set of recordings from the late trumpet master which should please most fans. The only exception would be all the chronological order people out there, although most of them don't buy single disc collections anyway. But in any case, that is the only fault with this otherwise excellent set from the late great trumpet master which showcases the many facets of his music.

Bill Wahl

SUGAR RAY & THE BLUETONES

Hands Across The Table

SEVERN RECORDS

A theme that pervades a number of the songs on the new Sugar Ray and the Bluetones disc is betrayal in relationships ranging from Ray's woman's denial that she has been cheating on the title track, *I Done Got Wise*, where he leaves his cheating mate, to *Livin' a Lie*, a rocking shuffle where Sugar Ray laments that he would rather live the lie of a happy relationship than leave his unfaithful lover. Of course not everything is topically sour.

They redo an old torch song *My Desire* that is associated with Frankie Laine whereas guitarist Paul Size's *I Wanna Marry You Girl* provides a more upbeat mood. Throughout Sugar Ray and the Bluetones lay down some superb blues. Ray Norcia's harp and smooth vocals are supported by guitarist Size and longtime Bluetones pianist Anthony Geraci, bassist Michael 'Mudcat' Ward and drummer Neal Goivin, with Carl Querferth and Doug James adding horns to several tracks including the moody *Dark Roads Callin'* - a track that permits Size to stretch out with some blistering guitar. When I refer to Norcia's smooth vocals I should point out that smooth does not mean bland as it does with smooth jazz. Norcia's vocals are in the tradition of such legendary blues and ballad crooners as Leroy Carr, Lonnie Johnson, Charles Brown, Joe Williams (the vocalist associated with Count Basie not the Mississippi bluesman), Junior Parker and Jimmy Rogers and he sings marvelously throughout. *Cloud Cover* is a feature for his authoritative crisp full-bodied harp playing with Size providing some Buddy Guy-styled fills. It does not hurt to have a band that plays so well, and even on the up tempo rockers never rushes the tempo or comes off as frenzied.

The Bluetones are a terrific band and *Hands Across the Table* is another excellent addition to Sugar Ray and the Bluetones catalog that I would not be surprised to see on many Best Blues of 2005 lists. **Ron Weinstock**

TOOTS THIELEMANS

Do Not Leave Me

MILAN RECORDS

Unavailable for many years, this six tune (around 47 minutes) re-release featuring the Belgian-born harmonica player Jean Baptiste "Toots" Thielemans in live-recorded performance with pianist Fred Hersch, bassist Marc Johnson and drummer Joey Baron, has been digitally remastered to perfection.

The flexible, talented Thielemans is showcased in his most expressive mode and he gives his team mates ample spotlight

time. The quartet performs the Jaques Brel gem "Do Not Leave Me," a mix of romance and blues. Their 19-minute version of "Blue 'N Green" segues into an explosive reading of Miles Davis' "All Blues." They also remake two well-worn standards: a brief harmonica-piano duet version of the ballad "Stardust" and a novel nearly 10-minute take on "Autumn Leaves" that begins with a harmonica-piano melody head and evolves into a hard-swinging, bopping quartet spree containing a drum solo. Thielemann plays electric guitar on "Velas," a Brazilian tune by Ivan Lins, and acoustic guitar on an abbreviated version of his trademark tune, "Bluesette," to which the appreciative audience joins him in whistling the melody.

Originally released by Stash Records in 1986, this upbeat modern set remains imaginative and fresh-sounding. Alas, the brevity of this five-star (*All Music Guide*) album will leave you wanting more.

Nancy Ann Lee

KENNY 'BLUES BOSS' WAYNE

Let It Loose ELECTRO-FI

While the blues guitar catalog is continuously replenished with the arrival of another young hotshot, the pool of good contemporary blues piano fare seems nowhere near as deep. For those who seek a solid present-day piano set, Kenny Wayne's

new offering should fill the bill. A player possessed of a diverse resume and top-notch journeyman skills, the Vancouver-based Wayne plays mixes it up here and there on *Let It Loose* but always returns to the blues.

While he capably flirts with R&B, the one-time Mingus, Sly Stone and Billy Preston sideman sounds most at home taking on jump, boogie-blues or Charles Brown-tinged ballads. Wayne further shows himself to be respectable song-crafter as well. The rockin' lead-off track, "Blackberry Wine", promises the listener a fun ride and Wayne does not disappoint down the road.

Duane Verh

KERMIT RUFFINS

Kermit Ruffins Putumayo

Kermit Ruffins with the Rebirth Brass Band Throwback

BASIN STREET RECORDS

Six of the tunes on *Kermit Ruffins* (Putumayo), a first-rate compilation featuring New Orleans trumpeter-vocalist, are from his out-of-print Justice Records releases and five selections come from recordings for Basin Street Records, his current label (for which he's recorded five albums, including *Throwback*, reviewed below). The Putumayo disc re-introduces

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and spotlights Ruffins at his best, performing classic New Orleans and straight-ahead jazz with groups ranging from four to eight players. It's a fun-filled, spirited listen featuring his raspy-voiced lyrics, excellent trumpet solos and a bevy of talented New Orleans musicians, including Lucien Barbarin or Corey Henry on trombone, the late Danny Barker on banjo, Dr. Michael White on clarinet, Ellis Marsalis on piano, and others. Tunes include familiar gems such as "Ain't Misbehavin'," "On the Sunny Side of the Street," "After You've Gone," "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams," "When My Dreamboat Comes Home," and more.

Somewhat different in attitude, *Throwback*, his current Basin Street release, captures Ruffins in a rowdy, energetic 12-tune party-time session with the Rebirth Brass Band. Full of bubbling excitement,

May

| | |
|--------|---|
| FRI 6 | THE KINGBEES |
| SAT 7 | K. G. BLUES |
| FRI 13 | MIKE MILLIGAN & STEAM SHOVEL (FROM INDIANAPOLIS) |
| SAT 14 | SONNT ROBERSON & THE HOWARD STREET BLUES BAND |
| FRI 20 | TUMBLIN' DICE |
| SAT 21 | MARY BRIDGET DAVIES GROUP |
| FRI 27 | CHARLIE CHRISTOPHERSON BAND |
| SAT 28 | TONY KUSSA JR. BAND |

June

| | |
|--------|--|
| FRI 3 | TONY O (FROM NEW YORK) |
| SAT 4 | THE DEACONS |
| FRI 10 | BLUESTONES |
| SAT 11 | BRUCE KATZ BAND (FROM BOSTON) |
| FRI 17 | BLUE LUNCH |
| SAT 18 | E.T. KING & DETERMINATION |
| FRI 24 | MR. STRESS BLUES BAND WITH ALAN GREENE |
| SAT 25 | DAVE C & THE SHARPTONES |



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MONDAYS EDDIE & THE EDSLS

| TUESDAYS | MAY | JUNE |
|----------|---|---|
| | 3 BLUE LUNCH | 7 TBA |
| | 10 MADISON CRAWL | 14 TBA |
| | 17 ROBERT OCASIO'S LATIN JAZZ PROJECT | 21 TBA |
| | 25 BLUES DEVILLE | 28 ERNIE KRIVDA & THE FAT TUESDAY BIG BAND |
| | 31 ERNIE KRIVDA & THE FAT TUESDAY BIG BAND | |

| WEDNESDAYS | MAY | JUNE |
|------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| | 4 ROGER "HURRICANE" WILSON | 1 THE NOBODY'S |
| | 11 THE GEEZECATS | 8 WYNG IT |
| | 18 ROCKIN' JAKE | 15 KRACKER BROTHERS |
| | 25 STOKES BROTHERS | 22 DON BAKER BAND |
| | | 29 READY OR NOT |

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the album launches with "Make Way for the Rebirth," offering blended horns sounding like an approaching train, top-notch instrumental solos and Rampart Street shuffle beats. The entire album is a sizzling, brassy celebration of the New Orleans tradition, a playful polyphonic spree that draws from funk, R&B, gospel and other music. Highlights include their version of the drawling spiritual, "Just A Close Walk With Thee," featuring Ruffins' upper register trumpet solo, vocals shared with Mary Griffin and underpinning tuba lines from Philip Frazier, and their reinvention of the Ray Charles classic, "I Got A Woman," which spotlights Ruffins' trumpet solo and a call-and-response horns chorus.

Both albums are worthy listens and convey the New Orleans spirit that Ruffins strives to preserve. *Nancy Ann Lee*

DR. JOHN

The Best of the Parlophone Years

BLUE NOTE

Having just seen Dr. John several times on the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise I was glad to see this disc arrive so closely on the heels of his previous Blue Note release *N'Awlinz*. The Doctor signed with Parlophone Records in the U.K. in 1997 and has since released four albums, three of which have been released on Blue Note and the other on Virgin in the U.S. The four albums are *Anutha Zone* (1998), *Duke Elegant* (1999), *Creole Moon* (2001) and *N'Awlinz: Dis, Dat or D'Udda* (2004).

This album is a compilation of hand-chosen tracks from each of the four Parlophone albums. I had heard *Creole Moon* and *N'Awlinz*, but the only tracks I'd heard from the other two

were in his live performances. Starting out with two tracks from *Anutha Zone*, the good Doctor immediately starts mixing his gumbo of swamp funk. What a tasty groove it is as it carries right through to the end of the album, and is perhaps most appreciated on the most unique version of Ellington's "It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)" I have certainly ever heard. The Duke would love it. That is one of two tracks from the *Duke Elegant* album. The other is "I'm Gonna Go Fishin'," a song Duke co-wrote with Peggy Lee. Those two tracks are enough to make me want to track down and buy the whole album.

The Doc has some guests on several tracks to make his brew even tastier. They include Cyril Neville & The Mardi Gras Indians on "Marie Laveau," B.B. King & Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown on "Hen Layin' Rooster," Randy Newman on "I Ate Up The Apple Tree," Fred Wesley on "Food For Thot," and Mavis Staples & The Dirty Dozen Brass Band on "Lay My Burden Down." Ten of the 17 tracks were written By Dr. John (aka Mac Rebennack) and two others are traditional songs he arranged. As an extra bonus, two previously unavailable tracks are included - "Careless Love" from the *N'Awlinz* session and "Look Out," which was a bonus track on the Japanese version only of *Anutha Zone*.

If you are a Dr. John collector and have all four of the albums represented here, you won't need this. Everyone else does need it - no question about it. A Marvelous brew from the New Orleans music Doctor. *Bill Wahl*

ROY CARRIER

Living Legend

SEVERN

Roy Carrier has developed an international reputation among fans of zydeco music but until the release of this new CD on Severn has never had a release by a label with major distribution. Carrier is one of the zydeco artists whose music is heavily infused by the roots.

Roy Carrier started playing with members of his family (an uncle was the pioneering Creole fiddler Be Be Carriere) and was mentored by the great Clifton Chenier. While he had a zydeco group as a teenager and young adult, between 1973 and 1989 he worked as an offshore oil driller as well as playing his music and getting his sons Joseph Roy jr. (Chubby) and Troy (Dikki Du Carrier) and his daughter Elaine started in music as members of his Night Rockers.

He opened the Offshore Lounge in Lawtell, Louisiana where he helped the likes of the late Beau Jocque while giving Geno Delafosse his first gig. Roy himself continued to play the music, with a more blues-based sound that is close to zydeco's origins. After producing 4 CDs on his Right on Rhythm label, Wayne Kahn produced this latest recorded installment of Carrier's lively music. It opens with what Wayne calls pedal to the metal zydeco, the hot two-stepping *Put A Hump in Your Back*, followed by a nice shuffle blues, *Everybody Call Me Shoon*. Drummer Skeeter Charlot adds a bit of zydeco rap to the frenzied two-stepping *I Got Something For You Baby*. Roy goes back to the roots of zydeco with the bluesy *I Come From the Country* and the up tempo *Whatcha' Gonna Do With a Man Like That*, evoking the great Clifton Chenier on both. There's more hot two-stepping on *She Burnt the Bacon* while *You Told Me That You Loved Me* is a strong blues performance. This c.d. closes with *You Got Me Dancing*, another hot number. Longtime Night Rocker Raymond Randle is present on guitar

either helping lay down the rhythm or taking some stinging solos.

Zydeco is primarily music for dancing, though with the blues mixed Roy is heard on a varied and lively mix of moods. Wayne Kahn thanks Severn for giving Roy's music major distribution, but fans of zydeco and blues should thank Wayne for keeping the torch for Roy's music burning. **Ron Weinstock**

DAVE HOLLAND BIG BAND

Overtime

DARE2/SUNNYSIDE

In 2000, bassist Dave Holland premiered his 13-piece big band at the Monterey Jazz Festival. Since that date, the band has profitably toured Europe twice and played dates in the States, including concerts at the Hollywood Bowl and Carnegie Hall. Recorded after six weeks of touring in November 2002, this CD follows their first, **What Goes Around**, which won a Grammy in 2003 for best large ensemble jazz album.

Holland wrote and arranged seven of the eight pieces on this new disc (for his own Dare2 imprint), including the four-part "The Monterey Suite." Nearly 50 minutes in duration, the "Suite" showcases Holland's bass solos and support as well as featuring creative moments in the spotlight by excellent players (many who are also leaders) and great section work underpinned by Billy Kilson's powerful traps work. Some of the big band members have also performed in Holland's smaller groups. Familiar names among big band members include reeds players Antonio Hart, Mark Gross, Chris Potter, Gary Smulyan; trombonist Robin Eubanks, and Steve Nelson on vibes and marimba. Trumpet/flugelhorn soloists include Alex "Sasha" Sipiagin, and Duane Eubanks. Trombonists Jonathan Arons and Josh Roseman and trumpeter Taylor Haskins round on the band.

The rearranged "Ario" original appeared on Holland's quintet album, **Point of View**. The remake is a lovely, dramatic, textured Latin-tinged piece just over 11 minutes. Eubanks' composition, "Mental Images," is a modern-edged foray (9:21) full of rousing rhythms and exciting exchanges between horn players. The seven-minute-plus finale, "Last Minute Man," serves up funky grooves, builds boisterously and again spotlights fine solos.

Considering the peak musicianship, appealing melodies, superior charts and fine soloing, this CD ranks among the best modern big band recordings to cross my desk. **Nancy Ann Lee**

SEAN COSTELLO

Sean Costello

TONE COOL/ARTEMIS

Following a long term stint as guitarist with Susan Tedeschi's band, Sean Costello struck out on his own and ripped up stages from coast to coast with his guitar pyrotechnics. Yawn, just what we needed: another hot shot kid guitarist. On his Tone Cool Records debut Costello puts all of that behind him with a terrifically crafted, soulful disc that plays in the same part of the street as Tommy Castro's recent release, *Soul Shaker*.

As Castro did on that disc, Costello uses his guitar to augment rather than totally dominate the songs. And for good reason: he's accompanied here by the likes of the legendary Levon Helm on drums, Willie Weeks on bass, Steve Jordon on drums and a cast of horns, keyboards and background singers all of whom contribute just the right sugar to offset Costello's guitar spice. With self-assured vocals, Costello takes on Al Green's *I'm A Ram*, Bob Dylan's *Simple Twist of Fate*, Robert Ward's

Peace of Mind and Johnny "Guitar" Watson's *I Get A Feeling* with enough conviction to make you remember why these were such great tracks in the first place yet no make you feel the need to run for the originals.

The real accomplishment of this disc is just how easily Costello's original numbers stand tall against the gold standard of the covers. If Costello keeps his focus on crafting songs rather than hot hot guitar solos he will be in the disc racks for years to come. **Mark Smith**

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4 + Four

TELARC

In 2002, The Turtle Island String Quartet and the Ying Quartet first crossed paths while they were in residence at the University of Kansas. They exchanged ideas and performed in community venues, culminating their residency with a collaborative world-premiere performance. Out of that occurrence came this eight-tune disc recorded at Bard College in New York on April 13, 2004.

Some of the pieces on this crossover disc swing yet others lean more toward the classical tradition, injected with Eastern influences and other musical traditions. Launching with a swinging, bluesy take on Oliver Nelson's "Yearnin'," the two groups show how seamlessly they blend. Previously recorded by TISQ, "Julie-o" is a folk-tinged piece adapted from its original form as solo cello piece. The two quartets also perform three-movement suite, "Mara's Garden of False Delights," and a musically

JAZZ ATTACK

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Friday, May 6th, 2005

INTRA, The Rick Ray Band, and Syzygy

Triple Bill, Rock On!
Tickets \$5.00 - 9pm.

Saturday, May 7th.. 8:30pm.

Al Stewart

"Year of the Cat" is back....
Tickets \$25.00 - 8:30pm.

Friday, May 13th, 2005

Mr Downchild's Birthday Bash

No Cover - 9:30pm.

Saturday, May 14th, 2005

The Sultans of Bing

These Sultans are a four piece high energy jam band
Tickets \$5.00 - 9:30pm.

Wednesday, May 18th, 2005

The Jerry Garcia Band

featuring Melvin Seals

JGB is still alive and well and is now led by the
Hammond B3 legend Melvin Seals.
Tickets \$15.00 - 8:30pm.

Saturday, May 21st, 2005

A TRIBUTE TO RAY CHARLES

by Ron Shy...

You'll think Ray is sitting right in front of you!
Tickets are \$10.00 - 9pm.

Wednesday, June 1st, 2005

The Fat Ellis Band

Tickets are only \$5.00 at the door.

Friday, June 3rd, 2005

Waterband

This is their cd release party. Jam rock faithful.

Friday, June 10th, 2005

Allan Holdsworth

Allan Holdsworth returns! This is the fastest we've
every had a major artist return to the Winchester,
but here he is! The first show sold out and many
dismantled fans had to be turned away at the
door. Now is your second chance. Everything is the
same. Same band, same price, same jaw dropping
talent, same demand. See you there.
Tickets \$20.00 - 8:30pm.

Saturday, June 11th, 2005

Country Joe McDonald

This is Country Joe and the Fish except with no
Fish! Country Joe will be performing solo. Known
for his exciting performance at Woodstock and his
"1-2-3 what are we fighting for, don't ask me I don't
give a damn, my next stop is Viet Nam!" "A largely
forgotten giant of psychedelic rock, Country Joe
and the Fish towered over their contemporaries and
left behind one masterpiece album, their first -
Electric Music for the Mind and Body - one of the
definitive albums of American acid rock." Music
Hound Essential Album Guide.
Tickets \$15.00 - 8:30pm.

mixed "Variations on an Unoriginal
Theme," both originals by TISQ members.
Darius Milhaud's somber "La Creation du
Monde" and a sweet version of John
Lennon's "Because" round out the session.

Founded in 1985, the TISQ has be-
come known for blending with the classi-
cal idiom influences of folk, bluegrass,
swing, bebop, funk, Eastern music, R&B,
new age, rock and hip-hop. On a two-year
grant from the National Endowment for
the Arts, the Ying Quartet began 11 years
ago in the rural community of Jesup, Iowa
and has continued to maintain a full con-
cert career with a repertoire that ranges
from Haydn and Mozart works to commis-
sioned quartet pieces. They are the fac-
ulty quartet-in-residence at the Eastman
School in Rochester, New York.

This is a lovely album that should
appeal to jazz fans who also enjoy classi-
cal music.

Nancy Ann Lee

LITTLE CHARLIE AND THE NIGHTCATS

Nine Lives

ALLIGATOR

For fans of Messrs. Baty, Estrin & Co,
more of the same is a good thing. Nine
Lives is not only that but probably one of
the strongest batch of Rick Estrin lyric sets
in the quartet's entire catalog. The har-
monica ace is in top verse-crafting form
here, dropping pungently funny commen-
tary on the usual jive-talking, game-run-
ning denizens, both male and female, that
inhabit Planet Estrin. A potent mood-
change arrives when Estrin uses his
smoky, spooky vocalizing in a serious vein
and delivers a chilling obituary for love on
"Quittin' Time".

The blowing, as might be expected,
is top notch. Estrin shines chromatically
on the opening choruses of "Handle With
Care" and guitarist Baty's multiple mo-
ments are highlighted by his feature track,
"Tag (You're It)". The rhythm boys- drum-
mer J. Jansen and bassist Lorenzo Farrell
provide solid propulsion.

Longtime followers should be pleased
and first-timers will score one of the
Nightcats' very best.

Duane Verh

ANN RABSON IN A FAMILY WAY EMIT DOOG MUSIC

On her third side trip from her normal
gig with Saffire-the Uppity Blues Women,
Ann Rabson grabbed her daughter, her
sister, her brother in law, her nephew and
her brother and put together this wide

ranging effort. In the family band's hands,
old chestnuts like Ma Rainey's *See See
Rider*;

Willie Dixon's *Three Hundred Pounds
of Joy*, Huey "Piano" Smith's *Little Chickee
Wah Wah* and LeRoy Carr's *Midnight Hour
Blues* get off of life support and breathe
on their own with unique arrangements
and instrumentation. While Rabson's
trademark wit and barrelhouse piano are
present in ample doses, her sister's violin
and brother in law's trombone add an in-
teresting twist that rescues the disc from
plowing old blues ground. In addition to
the covers, Rabson has included a num-
ber of self-penned numbers that lead the
listener through a gamut of emotions from
despair, *I Can't Get My Mind Off Of You*, to
anger and disappointment, *Blind* and
double entendre laden exhilaration, *I Want
to Hop On Your Harley*.

With mostly pleasing results it appears
that if her gig with Saffire ever comes to
an end, Rabson can simply gather the clan
and never miss a commercial beat.

Mark Smith

DVD-VIDEO

BRANFORD MARSALIS Coltrane's A Love Supreme Live in Amsterdam MARSALIS MUSIC (DVD)

All of the elements come together to
make this a scintillating live-recorded DVD
performance of the Branford Marsalis
Quartet performing John Coltrane's "A
Love Supreme" suite.

Marsalis leads a tight, talented unit
featuring Joey Calderazzo on piano, Eric
Revis on bass, and Jeff "Tain" Watts on
drums. Collectively, this band delivers an
energized, enthralling performance for
viewers. Marsalis and his colleagues con-
tinue in peak form throughout, serving up
exhilarating solos and displaying intricate
teamwork. Camera close-up shots reveal
beads of sweat building up as the musi-
cians vigorously work through the piece.

Not only does this quartet put its own
stamp on the famous suite, but because
the performance at the Bimhuis Jazz Club
in Amsterdam on March 30, 2003 is ably
captured by filmmaker Piere Lanoureux,
who is known for his expertise at filming
musicians, the excellent lighting effects
and camera angles enhance the viewer's
experience, conveying the essence of the
intimate club and adding drama to the
music.

This is one of those DVD performances you'll want to view more than once to see and hear all the nuances. The two-disc set also features the audio-only (CD) version of the same performance, available only with the DVD package. The CD is a portable bonus that allows you to take the music on the road. Other features on the DVD include musician interviews about Coltrane and his renowned composition as well as an informal 30-minute conversation between Branford Marsalis and Alice Coltrane, John's widow.

Nancy Ann Lee

C. Andrew Hovan nominated for the Excellence in Photography/the Lona Foote-Bob Parent Award

New York — The Jazz Journalists Association (JJA), representing more than 400 writers, broadcasters, photographers and new media professionals worldwide, announces final nominees in 40 categories of achievement for the Jazz Awards 2005, its ninth annual ceremony honoring jazz musicians and their supporters. The Jazz Awards is a benefit for the Jazz Foundation of America's Musicians Emergency Fund, and for the Jazz Journalists Association's educational initiatives.

Jazz Journalist and Photographer C. Andrew Hovan joins a distinguished cast of nominees including Jimmy Katz and Jack Vartoogian in vying for the Excellence in Photography/Lona Foote-Bob Parent Award. Recently signing on as a contributor to the Plain Dealer, Ohio's largest daily newspaper, Hovan's writing and photos have appeared in numerous publications including The Cleveland Free Times, Jazz and Blues Report, Down Beat and on the web at The Jazz Review and All About Jazz.

Hovan regularly contributes liner notes to releases from Holland's Criss Cross Jazz label and his work was also included in the notes to a recent reissue of Lou Donaldson's Blue Note classic Say It Loud! His writing will also appear in an upcoming release from drummer Mike Melito and his photography will be part of the accompanying artwork for a new disc from Toledo vocalist Ramona Collins.

Hovan's photography can be seen at the Visual Arts Center at All About Jazz (www.allaboutjazz.com) and he also has many galleries posted at The Jazz Review (www.jazzreview.com). Check out his own web site for more information at www.geocities.com/homemadejazz.

BLUES WATCH

By Mark Smith

New Release Blues... Here's the soundtrack to your spring break: **Solomon Burke- Do With What You Got; James "Jimbo" Mathus- Knockdown South; Bill Wyman and the Rhythm Kings- Just For A Thrill; Jay Geils- Plays Jazz; Duke Robillard and Ronnie Earl- The Duke Meets the Earl; Tab Benoit- Fever for the Bayou; Al Green- Everything's Ok; Los Lobos- Live at the Fillmore; Los Super Seven- Heard It On the X; Sugar Ray & The Bluetones- Hands Across the Table;**

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Louis Jordan- Jumpin' and Jivin'; B.B. King- Ultimate Collection; Buddy Guy & Junior Wells- Play the Blues (Expanded two disc re-issue of classic 1972 release with 12 previously unreleased cuts. Available only through Rhino Handmade on the Web); **Jimmy LaFave- Blue Nightfall; Brad Davenport- Maroon Cocoon; Serena Ryder- Unlikely Emergency; Teresa James & the Rhythm Tramps- The Rhythm Method; Rory Block- From the Dust; Mac Arnold & Plate Full O' Blues- Nothin' To Prove; Bernard Allison- Higher Power; Charlie Musselwhite- Deluxe Edition; Wayne Baker Brooks- Mystery; Jimi Bott- Live Vol. 1 Cheap Thrills; Blind Boys of Alabama- Atom Bomb; Steve James & Del Rey-Tonight!; Mem Shannon- I'm From Phunkville; ...Festival Blues...** Make sure to reserve the weekend of June 9th -12th for the **22nd Annual Chicago Blues Festival** and the weekend of July 7th -9th for the **12th Annual Kalamazoo Blues** Info on the Chicago Festival is available at www.cityofchicago.org. Info on the Kalamazoo event is available at www.kvba.org. Well, with all that on tap, it's time to hit the road. That's it for this month. See ya!!!

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