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**The Blues Foundation Announces
29th Annual Blues Music Awards Nominees
Watermelon Slim Picked In Six Categories**

Jazz & Blues Report

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ON THE COVER

Watermelon Slim & The Workers were nominated in 6 categories for the 2007 Blues Music Awards. See the story to the right and Blues Watch for more information. Photo courtesy of Northern Blues Records.



"BuffaloniouS"

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

The Blues Foundation Announces 29th Blues Music Awards Nominees

Memphis, TN – The Blues Foundation will present the Blues Music Awards for the first time in their 29-year history in the Mississippi Delta, the birthplace of the Blues. Performers, industry representatives and fans from around the globe will celebrate the best in Blues recording and performance from the previous year on May 8 at the Grand Casino Event Center in Tunica Resorts, Mississippi, just down the road from Memphis, the Awards' home since their 1980 inception.

Among those heading the list of the honorees is Mississippi favorite son Bobby Rush who garnered four nominations, including another historical first—nomination as Artist of the Year in both the Acoustic and Soul Blues categories. This singular achievement stems from the nominators' recognition of the two personas exhibited in his 2007 public performances—some shows featuring his long-running soul revue while others found him alone with a guitar and a harmonica in support of his Acoustic Album of the Year nominee Raw.

Watermelon Slim & the Workers returned in force, securing six nominations for the second consecutive year on the strength of their Album of Year candidate **The Wheel Man**. The "Queen of the Blues" Koko Taylor returns to form with four nominations, including one for her Album of the Year nominee **Old School**. The other artists with Album of the Year selections rode them to three nominations apiece, including **On the Jimmy Reed Highway** by Omar Kent Dykes & Jimmie Vaughan; Bettye LaVette's **The Scene of the Crime**; Nick Moss & the Flip Tops' **Play It 'Til Tomorrow; My Life, My Friends, My Music** by Sugar Ray & the Bluetones; and James Blood Ulmer's **Bad Blood in the City**. Lurrie Bell also was honored with three nominations, including one he shares with his late father Carey in the newly-created DVD category.

"At this time of year, releasing the list of nominees is like letting a Blues fan open a gift a little bit early," according to Jay Sieleman, The Blues Foundation's Executive Director, "and members are able to play with it right away by rushing out to purchase the nominated CDs, accessing the ballot to start marking their choices or purchasing tickets to get the best seats for the show. Looking into next year, we are really excited about the opportunities the 2008 event will offer Blues fans worldwide, the chance to soak up the deep Blues history of the Delta both before and after the Awards show itself. As the State of Mississippi continues to develop its Blues Marker Trail, you know Mississippi will be ready."

Online voting began December 13 for members and ends February 29. Voting, ticket and host hotel information can be found at The Blues Foundation's website—www.blues.org.

The Blues Music Awards are universally recognized as the highest honor given to Blues artists. The presenting sponsor will once again be The Gibson Foundation. In 2008, the State of Mississippi, the Tunica Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Grand Casino and Resort are also sponsoring the Blues Music Awards. The Blues Music Awards are also sponsored by BMI, Casey Family Programs, Eagle Rock Entertainment, FedEx, and the Sierra Nevada Brewing Company.

The Blues Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Charter Members' Dinner will be held the night before on Wednesday, May 7 at the Tunica RiverPark museum situated on the banks of the Mississippi River. The 2008 inductees will be announced early this year.

The Blues Music Awards are produced by The Blues Foundation, a non-profit organization established to preserve Blues history, celebrate Blues excellence, support Blues education and ensure the future of this uniquely American art form. The Foundation consists of a worldwide network of 165 affiliated Blues societies and has individual memberships spanning the globe. In addition to the Blues Music Awards, the Foundation also produces the Blues Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, the International Blues Challenge and the Keeping the Blues Alive Awards. It fosters education through its Blues in the Schools programming and supports the medical needs of Blues musicians with its HART Fund. Throughout the year, the Foundation staff serves the worldwide Blues community with answers, contact information and news.

For a complete list of the nominees, go to www.blues.org/bluesmusicawards/nominees.php4 or go to www.blues.org and navigate your way to the nominees and you can read about the process.



Oscar Peterson 1925–2007

Pianist/composer/bandleader Oscar Peterson, one of the most popular jazz artists in history, died on Sunday, December 23, 2007, at his home in Mississauga, Ontario, outside Toronto. He was 82.

Peterson recorded with most of the jazz greats over the years.

He played alongside giants like Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Roy Eldridge, Coleman Hawkins, Charlie Parker, Stan Getz and Nat King Cole.

Peterson was born on August 15, 1925, in Montreal. Norman Granz, his influential manager and producer, brought him to New York City in 1949 for the first Jazz at the Philharmonic (JATP) tour. Peterson went on to lead two of the most popular jazz trios in the world, one with bassist Ray Brown and guitarist Herb Ellis, the other with Brown and drummer Ed Thigpen.

Peterson had more than 200 recordings to his credit, along with eight Grammy Awards, the Glenn Gould Prize in 1993, and, in June of 1999, he received the prestigious Japanese Praemium Imperiale Award. Despite having suffered a stroke, he continued to dazzle listeners around the world.

Peterson's first recording for Telarc, *The Legendary Oscar Peterson Trio - Live at the Blue Note*, was the recipient of the 1990 Grammy Award for Best Jazz Group Instrumental Performance. Best known for his brilliant playing, he was equally accomplished as a composer. In 2000,

Peterson teamed up with Michel Legrand for *The Trail of Dreams: A Canadian Suite*. Orchestrated and conducted by Legrand, *The Trail of Dreams* premiered in April 2000 at Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto. In 2001, Telarc released *Oscar's Ballads*, a compilation focused on the hauntingly beautiful ballads written by Peterson over the past 10 years. *The Legendary Oscar Peterson Trio - Live at the Blue Note*, a historic 4-CD collection of the pianist's most treasured live recordings, was released in 2004. A 1998 recording, *What's Up? The Very Tall Band* (with Peterson, Ray Brown and Milt Jackson), was released in 2007.

"To have been able to work with Oscar was a life long dream for us," says Bob Woods, Telarc's President. "That we were able to make so many exceptional recordings with him in the difficult latter years of his life was a sign of his incredible strength and passion for his special kind of music making. Our highest thoughts go out to his family at this time, and our sincerest appreciation to Oscar for being able to be a part of his incredible journey."



Joel Dorn 1942–2007

Joel Dorn, the producer behind many of Atlantic Records' most successful jazz releases, passed away suddenly December 17. He was 65.

Joel Dorn, a multiple Grammy Award-winning record producer who first made a name for himself while at Atlantic Records in the late 1960s and early

'70s, died from a heart attack in New York City at the age of 65.

Dorn was the producer behind many of Atlantic Records' most successful jazz releases. His affiliation with Atlantic spanned decades, beginning as an independent producer for the label in the early 1960s. He soon joined the company's legendary in-house production staff, and with mentor Nesuhi Ertegun, recorded some of the greatest jazz artists of the era before branching out with equal success into pop, rock, and R&B. When Rhino began to reissue the Atlantic jazz catalog in 1993, Dorn spearheaded the campaign, producing and annotating nearly two dozen titles. In addition to his work for Atlantic and Rhino, Dorn released archival recordings on his own labels Night, M, and 32 Records (including the highly successful *Jazz For A Rainy Afternoon* compilations).

Born on April 7, 1942, Joel Dorn grew up in Philadelphia and took to music at an early age, working as a disc jockey for local station WHAT-FM while still in his teens. Inspired by Ray Charles' iconic recordings for Atlantic, Dorn began corresponding with Nesuhi Ertegun, a relationship that eventually led to a job at the label's New York office in May of 1967. It was an age of musical exploration, in jazz

as well as rock, and Dorn's approach behind the boards — fashioning a framework that would allow musicians maximum freedom — brought out the best in such artists as Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Les McCann, Eddie Harris, Yusef Lateef, and Herbie Mann.

It was an approach that worked equally well in the pop and R&B arenas. In 1972 and 1973, Dorn won consecutive "Record Of The Year" Grammys as producer of Roberta Flack's hits "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" and "Killing Me Softly With His Song." Dorn was also at the helm for seminal releases from the likes of Bette Midler (The Divine Miss M), The Allman Brothers (Idlewild South), Leon Redbone (On The Track), The Neville Brothers (Fiyo On The Bayou), and many others.

"Joel bridged the worlds of jazz and pop with enormous skill and grace, never compromising the integrity of his artists and their music," remarked Edgar Bronfman Jr., Chairman and CEO of the Warner Music Group. "A great character, he loved and understood the music, and he had the rare gift of identifying genuine talent and drawing out their best work. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Joel's entire family and many friends during this very difficult time."

2007 marked Joel Dorn's 47th year in the record business. In a great loss to both American culture and music fans everywhere, it would be his last. Over the past decade, he'd produced albums by Jane Monheit, Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey, Leon Parker, Janice Siegel and The Frank and Joe Show (featuring guitarist Frank Vignola and percussionist Joe Ascione). In 2003, Dorn helped create Hyena Records. The independent label forged an identity with an intriguing mix of new and archival recordings, including those by Thelonious Monk, Dr. John and Joe Williams.

At the time of his death, Dorn was completing a five CD box set for Rhino Handmade entitled *Homage A Nesuhi*, serving as a tribute to his mentor Nesuhi Ertegun and their years together at Atlantic Records. He was also the voice of Sirius Satellite Radio's "Pure Jazz" channel and was producing a series of music infomercials for Time Warner.

"I don't know how to do anything else. It's like if I don't do this what am I going to do? Sit in the park? I love doing stuff with music, with records. I enjoy it," Dorn once said about being a producer. "I know that might not be the great spiritual answer, but I really love making records."

The Blind Boys Of Alabama to Spread the Word on 2008 Tour

Four time Grammy Awards winners The Blind Boys of Alabama are plotting a national tour in support of their new album 'Down In New Orleans' (Jan 29/Time Life - to be reviewed in our February issue). To kick off the tour, the group will join an all-star lineup of Gospel music legends including The Dixie Hummingbirds, Chuck Campbell, and the McIntosh County Shouters in the National Heritage Masters: Gospel Caravan concert January 25. The tour also sees the band sharing bills with Mavis Staples and Taj Mahal.

Blind Boys' concerts are joyous celebrations. The Boston Globe observed earlier this month, "In concert, the Blind Boys of Alabama still raise up their bluesy hallelujahs to rarefied soul-groove highs." In a recent concert review, The

Boston Herald said, "[The] Blind Boys wow... the night was as solid as a rock." The Philadelphia Inquirer agreed, "In their own way, The Blind Boys have given black vernacular music a 21st century significance."

They may be from Alabama but they've been spending time in the Crescent City. The Blind Boys' new album 'Down In New Orleans,' their first in three years, will be released January 29, 2008 on the Time Life Music label.

The Blind Boys of Alabama are Jimmy Carter, Eric 'Ricky' McKinnie, Joey Williams, Caleb 'Bobby' Butler, Tracy Pierce, Billy Bowers and Ben Moore.

THE BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA - 2008 NORTH AMERICAN TOUR

- 1/25 New York City Center New York, NY (w/ Gospel Caravan)
- 1/26 Bearsville Theatre Woodstock, NY
- 2/6 Attucks Theater Norfolk, VA
- 2/8 Duke University Durham, NC (w/ Mavis Staples)
- 2/10 Carnival Center Miami, FL (w/ Mavis Staples)
- 2/12 Oberlin College Oberlin, OH
- 2/13 The Kent Stage Kent, OH
- 2/15 Michigan State University East Lansing, MI
- 2/16 Mayo Civic Center Rochester, MN
- 2/22 Jacoby Hall Jacksonville, FL
- 2/23 Jacoby Hall Jacksonville, FL
- 3/7 Knitting Factory Los Angeles, CA
- 3/8 Coach House San Juan Capistrano, CA
- 3/9 Belly Up Solana Beach, CA
- 3/14 Humboldt State University Arcata, CA
- 3/15 Stanford Lively Arts Stanford, CA
- 3/16 Gallo Center for The Arts Modesto, CA
- 3/20 Savannah Music Festival Savannah, GA (w/ Adolphus Bell)
- 5/23 Burton Cummings Theatre Winnipeg, MB (w/ Taj Mahal)
- 5/24 Esplanade Center Medicine Hat, ALB (w/ Taj Mahal)
- 5/25 Winspear Centre Edmonton, AB (w/ Taj Mahal)
- 5/26 Jack Singer Concert Hall Calgary, AB (w/ Taj Mahal)
- 5/28 Royal Theatre Victoria, BC (w/ Taj Mahal)
- 5/29 Centre for Performing Arts Vancouver, BC (w/ Taj Mahal)
- 5/30 Casino Regina Regina, SK

LIVE BLUES ON THE HIGH SEAS



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Canada's Seventh Annual National Jazz Awards set for April 8 at The Palais Royale, Toronto

Toronto, Ontario – The National Jazz Awards, presented by Galaxie, CBC's Continuous Music Network and generously supported by FACTOR, salutes "The Next Generation". Executive Director Bill King has assembled an amazing line up that will feature many of this country's young jazz artists who will share the stage in performance and celebration.

Hosted by two of Canada's highly regarded young artists, Kellylee Evans and Michael Kaeshammer, the awards will also feature performances from: The Mike Ruby Quartet, 13 year-old Nikki Yanofsky, Brandi Disterheft Quintet, Elizabeth Shepherd Trio, Laila Biali Trio, Alex Bellegarde, October Trio, and of course Evans and Kaeshammer.

Kellylee Evans has enjoyed a productive, groundbreaking year receiving nominations for a Gemini award, a Juno award and Toronto Independent Music award. She also won the 2007 Canadian Smooth Jazz award for Female Vocalist of the Year. Kellylee's star is on the rise. Visit www.kellyleeevans.com

Michael Kaeshammer has just released "Days Like These," his long awaited follow up to "Strut," and is receiving only positive reviews. He has melded his deep affection for New Orleans and its music with his fast growing songwriting and singing skill. Expect his droll humour to shine through as a co-host. Visit www.kaeshammer.com Also confirmed as Musical Director is Shuffle Demons founder Richard Underhill.

Founder and Executive Director of the awards, Bill King, says, "We can all be proud of the artists who have paved the way and music programs that are now in place to support and nurture this next generation. The success is obvious with young artists from all regions of Canada advancing the art form. It's about new faces, new sounds and a fresh take on the music we all hold dear."

National Jazz Awards (NJA) Executive Producer, Patrick Taylor added that, "While the National Jazz Awards will continue to recognize all of our Canadian jazz artists, this show promises to be one for the history books, as we witness some of the brightest young stars on the scene today. An evening not to be missed."

Tickets are \$65 and are on sale through Ticketmaster 416.870.8000 or www.ticketmaster.ca

Jazz composer/arranger Don Sebesky & wife receive Grammy nomination for children's album

Philadelphia, PA – It's understandable that one of the most highly respected composers and arrangers in jazz would be honored with a Grammy nomination for his first composition in children's music, as it was written as a tribute to his family. Inspired by his wife, Janina Serden's narration of Margery Williams' *The Velveteen Rabbit* as she read this favorite book to their (then) baby girls, Sebesky packaged his love for them into one of his most beautiful compositions, which was released in album format by Brown Barn Productions in 2007 and submitted for a Grammy.

With lyrics by award-winning lyricist Gloria Nissenson and narration by Serden, Tony and Grammy Award-winning Sebesky released "*The Velveteen Rabbit – Love Can Make You Real*" this year. Serden marvels at this nomination and is sentimental about its significance to their family. "It's a mini-miracle that it was nominated. After all, the album was not produced by a big label, as Don is accustomed to. But it was born out of love, was a labor of love and is based on a story of love. Our music is very much like the main character of this book – the Velveteen Rabbit – who comes to life through love."

"*The Velveteen Rabbit – Love Can Make You Real*" is being presented in a children's production with a national tour that was launched in late November, 2007 and is running through 2008. This unique production features life-size puppets, masked actors and magic and will be on tour in February, during the time of the 50th Annual Grammy Awards, which is broadcast live from Los Angeles on Sunday, February 10 on CBS TV. The new CD may also be purchased at performances of Enchantment Theatre Company's "*The Velveteen Rabbit*" and online, where more information is available at: www.TheVelveteenRabbitCD.

Sebesky is one of the more talented and respected composer-arrangers in music today. His sensitivity and versatility have enabled him to produce an enormous body of work, wide in scope ranging from jazz to symphonic to pop. As a recording artist, and through his collaborations with other artists he has received 29 Grammy nominations (three time winner), three Tony nominations (winner 2000), two Drama Desk Awards, three Emmy nominations, and four Clio Awards. He is the author of the best selling orchestration text book "*The Contemporary Arranger*".

As a composer and arranger, he has worked with many artists such as Chet Baker, Paul Desmond, Wes Montgomery, Barbra Streisand, Tony Bennett, George Benson, Christina Aguilera, Vanessa Williams, Britney Spears, Barry Manilow, Bette Midler, Rod Stewart, Cyndi Lauper and Kevin Spacey. As a composer, arranger and conductor, he has worked with the London Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Boston Pops, Royal Philharmonic of London, New York Philharmonic and the Pittsburgh Symphony. In television, he has received three Emmy nominations for his work on shows such as *Allegra's Window/ Nickelodeon*, *Edge of Night/ ABC* and *Guiding Light/ CBS*.

Janina Serden has performed as a solo singer and pianist and as a featured artist with symphony orchestra in concerts such as "*Symphonic Sondheim*" and "*Hope Takes Flight*." Janina was music director for the Emmy-nominated children's series "*Allegra's Window*" on Nickelodeon. She has sung on many radio and television commercials such as G.E., Kraft, Pepsi, and DHL ("*What the World Needs Now is Love*"). Her CD of original songs about love, hope and transformation called "*Small Inspirations*" is a tribute to motherhood as well as the inspiration for a one-act play "*Small Inspirations and Great Love*." Songs from "*Small Inspirations*" are featured in a new greeting card line at WithaCardandaSong.com. She has also written music and lyrics for the new musical, "*Chick Soup: A Musical Recipe for Friendship*."

For more information about *The Velveteen Rabbit* performances by Enchantment Theatre Company, visit www.enchantmenttheatre.org.

New Orleans Cultural Ambassador & Trumpeter Irvin Mayfield to tour with New Orleans Jazz Orchestra

Irvin Mayfield, the consummate New Orleans musician, is a man on a mission. Although only 29 years old, the versatile trumpeter, bandleader, composer and arranger is driven to spread the word about the rich history and cultural significance of jazz and the city that birthed it. Appointed the Cultural Ambassador of the City of New Orleans in 2003 by the United States Senate, Congress and other governmental agencies, his name has become synonymous with the still-unfolding legacy of America's only indigenous music.

Even after Katrina—especially after Katrina, which took the life of his father, Irvin Mayfield, Sr.—this tireless Renaissance man considers jazz nothing less than the manifestation of all that American democracy represents. Within the freedom that is so intrinsic to jazz, Mayfield sees the story of America. In its myriad rhythms and personalities, he finds the oversized soul of New Orleans.

Mayfield, whose extensive discography stretches back nearly a decade, is rooted firmly in the present, but he has benefited enormously from studying that which came before. He has absorbed the music of the giants; particularly the trumpeters who have helped define the course of jazz over the decades and set Irvin on his own journey of exploration: Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Clifford Brown, and Dizzy Gillespie. He considers Wynton Marsalis—another promoter of the great heritage of New Orleans—a mentor. Irvin was only 9 years old when Wynton was at the height of his career, but Irvin's relationship with the Marsalis family goes way back. Ellis Marsalis performed on Irvin's debut album and now the pair has collaborated again, this time on Irvin's new exquisite solo album, to be released on April 1, 2008, titled *Love Songs, Ballads and Standards*. The recording, on Basin Street Records, features the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra and spotlights Irvin's interpretations of classic songs made famous by the Beatles, Thelonious Monk, Norah Jones, Stevie Wonder, Duke Ellington and others.

In addition to his solo albums, Irvin performs with his renowned New Orleans Jazz Orchestra (NOJO), the spirited, swinging, 16 piece band steeped in the tradition of New Orleans jazz, blues, swing and spirituals. Irvin who founded NOJO is also the Artistic Director. Ronald Markham, is President and CEO of the permanent organization which is headquartered at NOLA's Tulane University, educating the public about the role of jazz, provides employment opportunities with the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra (NOJO).

In 1998, along with percussionist Bill Summers, co-

founded Los Hombres Calientes, a Latin-jazz outfit that has released five CDs and a DVD thus far. The group's debut album won Billboard's 2000 Contemporary Latin Jazz Album of the Year, and their Vol. 3: *New Congo Square* CD was nominated for a Grammy.

For Irvin, all of this activity has never simply been about making a living. It's all part of a greater picture that finds him carrying on the great traditions of New Orleans and elevating the music's profile. One might think that the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina would have changed all of that, dampened Irvin's spirit. But if anything, the disaster has only strengthened his resolve and recharged him.

Now, more than ever, Mayfield has renewed his dedication, and toward that end, he has increased his presence as a representative of his beloved city. Mayfield was among the artists featured at Lincoln Center's 2005 Higher Ground benefit concert that aided victims of the hurricane, and he recently became the recipient of an immaculate hand-crafted trumpet created by David Monette of Portland, Oregon. Called the Elysian Trumpet, in honor of Irvin's father, whose body was found on Elysian Fields Avenue in New Orleans months after the storm, the instrument is truly a thing of beauty. Inlaid with jewels and images of New Orleans and the hurricane itself, the trumpet is insured for \$1 million. "They did not make this trumpet for me. This is for my father, for all those who died in Katrina and the people of New Orleans," Irvin said at the trumpet's unveiling. The instrument has been blessed by representatives of three of the world's largest religions, most recently by the Archbishop of Canterbury during his historic visit to New Orleans in September.

Irvin is currently recording and touring with the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra and performs on the Elysian Trumpet, a traveling emblem of the vibrancy of New Orleans, and will serve to honor the lineage of jazz in America and of all who perished in Katrina.

Since he first picked up the trumpet as a child, Irvin Mayfield has been New Orleans music personified. As *Jazz Times Magazine* once put it, Mayfield is "holding the torch for the port city's past trumpet kings." But now, as the Crescent City reawakens and redefines, Irvin is doing everything within his power not just to build awareness of New Orleans' past, but to help create New Orleans' future.

Irvin Mayfield with NOJO 2008 US Concert Tour

- 1/26: Alys Stephens Center @ University of Alabama - Birmingham, AL
- 1/27: Georgia Institute of Technology - Atlanta, GA
- 2/20: Coronado Theatre - Rockford, IL
- 2/21: Grand Theater - Wausau, WI
- 2/22: Minnesota Orchestra Hall - Minneapolis, MN
- 2/23: Holland Performing Arts Center - Omaha, NE
- 2/26: Krannert Center - Urbana, IL
- 2/28: Overture Center - Madison, WI
- 3/16: Tulsa Performing Arts Center - Tulsa, OK
- 4/11: Chicago Symphony Orchestra Hall - Chicago, IL
- 4/24: Max M. Fisher Music Center, Orchestra Hall - Detroit, MI
- 4/26: Indiana University Auditorium - Bloomington, IN
- 7/3: Amphitheater at Stanford University - Palo Alto, CA

For updated information and more concert dates, visit online at www.thenojo.com.

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7th Annual Ponderosa Stomp confirmed for April 29 & 30 at House of Blues in New Orleans

In its seven year history, The Ponderosa Stomp has grown from “two nights of insane rock & roll” into a revered, year-round institution and leading advocate for the great unsung heroes of American Music. The 2008 Stomp will be the biggest and best to date, promising an expertly curated line-up of performers, daytime panel discussions (a Stomp first), and surprises galore.

Bookended, as is tradition, by the two weekends of Jazz Fest, the 2008 Stomp will take place April 29 and 30, on three stages at the House of Blues in New Orleans, with marathon sets that in years past have run from sundown to sunup.

The New York Times has hailed the Ponderosa Stomp as “a dream” that “plunges into the obscure byways of rock’s past.” Next year’s line-up is the Stomp’s most eclectic and ambitious to date, with performances ranging from pillars of ’60s female pop, Ronnie Spector of the Ronettes and Mary Weiss of the Shangri-Las, to garage rock pioneers The Green Fuz (reuniting for the first time in 40 years!); from soul deep R&B innovators The Mighty Hannibal, Syl Johnson, and The Hi Rhythm Section, to children of the universe Roky Erickson and Question Mark & The Mysterians; plus many architects of the New Orleans groove like Eddie Bo, Zigaboo Modeliste and Wardell Quezergue, and so much more. As in years past, the 2008 Ponderosa Stomp will be sponsored by The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, The House of Blues, and New Orleans’ Fine Hotels.

New to the Ponderosa Stomp next year will be the first Ponderosa Stomp Music Conference, a full slate of daytime panel discussions and oral histories set for April 29 and 30 at the historic Cabildo on New Orleans’ Jackson Square. Featured speakers include Ponderosa Stomp-certified performers Sonny Burgess, Barbara Lynn, Lazy Lester, Dale Hawkins and Roy Head, acclaimed authors Peter Guralnick, Holly George-Warren and Robert Gordon, and music biz legends Joe Bihari (founder of RPM and Modern Records), and Bob Sullivan (original engineer for the Louisiana Hayride) among others. The conference is presented by the Ponderosa Stomp Foundation and will be co-sponsored by The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Louisiana State Museum.

The Ponderosa Stomp Foundation’s primary mission is to celebrate the unsung heroes of American music. The Foundation’s programs, including the now-famous Ponderosa Stomp, illuminate the indelible cultural footprint left by some of the pioneers of rock & roll, soul, country, blues, jazz, reggae, swamp pop and beyond. Many performers have seen their careers revitalized by the Stomp and its ever-expanding list of initiatives. In 2007 alone, the Ponderosa Stomp Foundation sponsored a showcase at the South By Southwest music conference in Austin, drew nearly 5,000 fans to a Stomp-curated show at Brooklyn’s McCarren Park Pool, launched a monthly concert series at the Ogden Museum of southern Art in New Orleans, and created a music-in-the-schools program for children in under-served communities, starting with a partnership with New Orleans’

groundbreaking Good Shepherd School.

The Ponderosa Stomp Foundation is a project of MK Charities Inc., a 501 (c)(3) non-profit educational organization. All contributions are tax-deductible in accordance with IRS Code Section 170. MK Charities Inc., is supported by a grant from the Louisiana Arts Council through the Louisiana Division for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tickets to the 2008 Ponderosa Stomp go on sale January 19 through Ticketmaster’s website (<http://www.ticketmaster.com>) and the House of Blues box office in New Orleans (225 Decatur St., New Orleans, LA, 70130). Visit www.ponderosastomp for updates and more details.

The Montreal Guitar Show set for June 27 to 29

Montreal, Quebec - Renowned far and wide as the largest guitar show in Canada, the Montreal Guitar Show takes place next year throughout the first weekend of the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, from June 27 to 29, 2008. Guitar lovers, come on down to admire, test-drive and even purchase beautiful guitars hand-made by true artisans of the instrument who often themselves become celebrities to players and collectors. The 2008 edition of the event welcomes one hundred exceptional guitar luthiers hailing from Canada, the United States and France-as well as more concerts, workshops, sound-proof studios and activities to tempt every six-string fanatic. All this in a larger and more accommodating space at the Hyatt Regency Montreal. It’s the must-see rendezvous for real fans of acoustic, classical, archtop or gypsy guitars, and the world’s greatest luthiers.

The Montreal Guitar Show has become an internationally-renowned event thanks to the establishment of an advisory committee gathering some of the world’s finest luthiers, whose passion for guitar rivals our own. This guitar nirvana would not exist without the support, ideas, judicious input and, simply, the combined expertise and devotion of luthiers Mario Beauregard, Bill Comins, Rick Davis, Sergei de Jonge, Charles Fox, Oskar Graf, Michael Greenfield, Peter Hopkins, Michael Lewis, Linda Manzer, John Monteleone, Tom Ribbecke, Ervin Somogyi and Jeff Traugott. It’s a committee of major figures offering ample indication of the exceptional craftsmen, artisans and artists participating in the event.

Thanks to them, the MGS has been a runaway blockbuster success since its inception. That popularity, illustrated by the long lines of fans on hand to discover these musical and artistic masterpieces, offered ample testimony of the need for a show of this kind.

The Montreal Guitar Show, presented in parallel with the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, offers its thanks for the support of its partners: the Government of Canada, the Government of Québec, Tourisme Montréal, Acoustic Guitar, Fingerstyle and Guitarist Acoustic magazines, as well as the Official Luthiers Forum (OLF), Acoustic Voice (AV), laguitare.com and guitarscanada.com.

Make it a date-the first weekend of the Festival, from June 27 to 29, 2008. To whet your appetites, visit online at www.montrealguitarshow.com.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Announces Its Inductees for 2008

Little Walter honored in Sideman Category

Cleveland, OH- The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation today announced its inductees for 2008. The inductees will be honored at a ceremony on March 10 at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City.

"The 2008 inductees are trailblazers - all unique and influential in their genres," said Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation President/CEO Joel Peresman. "From poetry to pop, these five acts demonstrate the rich diversity of rock and roll itself. We are proud to honor these artists and celebrate their contribution to rock and roll's place in our culture."

The performer inductees are:

- Leonard Cohen
- The Dave Clark Five (Dave Clark, Lenny Davidson, Rick Huxley, Denny Payton and Mike Smith)
- Madonna
- John Mellencamp
- The Ventures (Bob Bogle, Nokie Edwards, Gerry McGee, Mel Taylor, Don Wilson)

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame also announced the induction of Little Walter in its sideman category, and the newly named "Ahmet Ertegun Award" (formerly the non-performer category) will be presented to legendary producers, Gamble & Huff.

The 2008 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame performer inductees were chosen by the 600 voters of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation. Artists are eligible for inclusion in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame twenty-five years after their first recording is released.

In addition to being honored at the March ceremony, each inducted artist is commemorated at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland Ohio, which serves as a monument to rock and roll's impact on our culture. There, this year's inductees will be honored - along with previous year's inductees and hundreds of other artists - with exhibits, video and interactive presentations and programs that serve to tell the story of modern music. The Hall of Fame itself will include artifacts from this year's inductees, a multi-media presentation with highlights from each artist's career and their signatures permanently engraved in the glass walls of the Hall of Fame.

Presenters and performers at the induction will be announced at a later date. The induction ceremony will again air live on VH1 Classic on March 10.

Little Walter (May 1, 1930 - February 15, 1968) Although Little Walter might not have been the first person to amplify the harmonica, his pioneering use of the microphone helped establish the modern blues harmonica. With a mike clamped to his harp, Little Walter created echoing, moaning, horn-like sounds that redefined the capabilities of the instrument. Walter Jacobs had fourteen top ten hits on the R&B charts in the 1950s including two number #1 songs "Juke" and "My Babe." Little Walter toured and recorded extensively with blues great Muddy Waters in the 1950s. He also recorded with Jimmy Rogers, Memphis Minnie, Otis Rush and Bo Diddley. Little Walter's influence was pervasive, especially in England where the next generation of harp players such as Mick Jagger listened to his records over and over.

BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

New Release blues.... Here's a few new releases to burn up those music gift certificates: **Roomful of Blues- Raisin' A Ruckus;** **Johnny Winter- Live Bootleg Series, Vol. 1;** **Betty Harris- Intuition;** **Various Artists- Live at the Boston Blues Festival, Volume II;** **John Mayall- Live from Austin, Texas;** **Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson- Blues, Boogie & Bebop- Meat's Too High;** **John Lee Hooker- I'm John Lee Hooker;** **Catherine Russell- Sentimental Streak;** **Sean Costello- We Can Get Together;** **Tommy Castro, Deanna Bogart, Ronnie Baker Brooks & Magic Dick- Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue;** **Little Arthur Duncan- Love at Rosa's Blues Lounge;** **Stevie Ray Vaughan & Friends- Solos, Sessions & Encores;** **Paul Filipowicz- Chickenwire Live;** **David Evans- Needy Time;** **Sugar Blue- Code Blue;** **Mac Arnold & Plate Full O' Blues- Backbone & Gristle;** **Nick Gordon- Chronic Blues Party.** Also keep a lookout for **Janiva Magness'** debut on the Alligator Records Label which is slated for early in the year. ... **Blues Cruise Chicago Style...** Looking for something to do to shake of the doldrums of the deep winter? Look no further my friends. The City of Chicago and Blues University are hosting a blues pub crawl on January 19, 2008. Running between the legendary Checkerboard Lounge, Lee's Unleaded Blues, Linda's Place, Root Inn and East of Ryan from 6:00 pm to 1:30 the event will feature **Vance Kelly & the Backstreet Band, Johnny Drummer & the Starlighters, Fantastic L-Roy & the Bulletproof Band, Sherman "Moody" Thomas** and others. The cost is a mere \$30 including transportation and admission to the clubs. Details at tours@chicagobluestours.com or at 866-548-3258....

Award time blues.... The Blues Foundation has announced that Alligator Records President, Bruce Iglauer will receive the 2008 Keeping the Blues Alive award on February 2, 2008 at a ceremony to be held in Memphis. Speaking of Awards, The Recording Academy has just announced this years Blues Grammy nominees. In the **Best Traditional Blues Album** category the nominees were **Pinetop Perkins** for his disc *Pinetop Perkins On The 88's - Live In Chicago*, **Otis Rush** for the disc *Live...And In Concert From San Francisco*; **Kenny Wayne Shepherd Featuring Various Artists** for the disc *10 Days Out: Blues From The Backroads*; **Koko Taylor** for the disc *Old School* and **Henry James Townsend, Joe Willie "Pinetop" Perkins, Robert Lockwood, Jr. & David "Honeyboy" Edwards** for the disc *Last Of The Great Mississippi Delta Bluesmen: Live In Dallas*. In the **Best Contemporary Blues Album** category the nominees were **Joan Armatrading** for the disc *Into The Blues*; **Doyle Bramhall** for the disc *Is It News*; **JJ Cale & Eric Clapton** for the disc *The Road To Escondido*; **Robben Ford** for the disc *Truth*, and **Bettye LaVette** for the disc *The Scene Of The Crime*. The Blues Foundation has also announced nominees for this year's Blues Music Awards. Notably the Grammy nominees and the Blues Foundation nominees have only a minor overlap with the **Koko Taylor** and **Betty Lavette** discs getting nods from both groups. Speaking of multiple nods, the Blues Foundation honored **James Blood Ulmer** with **three** nominations (Album of the Year, Contemporary Blues Album of the Year, Contemporary Blues Male Artist of the Year) **Koko Taylor** with **four** nominations (Album of the Year, Blues Song of the Year,

Traditional Blues Album of the Year and Traditional Blues Female Artist of the Year), **Betty LaVette** with **three** nominations (Album of the Year, Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year and B.B. King Entertainer of the Year), **Nappy Brown** with **two** nominations (Traditional Blues Album of the Year, Traditional Blues Artist of the Year), **Omar Kent Dykes and Jimmie Vaughan** with **three** nominations (Traditional Blues Album of the Year, Song of the Year and Album of the Year), **Eugene "Hideaway" Bridges** with **two** nominations (Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year and Soul Blues Album of the Year), **Sugar Ray Norcia** with **three** nominations (Song of the Year, Album of the Year and Blues Instrumentalist- Harmonica), **Tommy Castro** with **two** nominations (B.B. King Entertainer of the Year, Contemporary Blues Album of the Year), **Bobby Rush** with **four** nominations (B.B. King Entertainer of the Year, Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year, Acoustic Artist of the Year and Acoustic Album of the Year), **Nick Moss** with **three** nominations (Album of the Year, Band of the Year and Blues instrumentalist- guitar) and, finally **Watermelon Slim** with a whopping **six** nominations (Song of the Year, Contemporary Blues Male Artist of the year, Contemporary Blues Album of the Year, Band of the Year, B.B. King Entertainer of the Year and Album of the year....More on this in this issue's cover story...Whew!! That's it for this month. See ya!

SF Jazz announces artist Lineup for Spring Jazz Season

San Francisco, CA – Randall Kline, the Executive Director of SFJAZZ—the leading non-profit jazz organization on the West Coast and the presenter of the San Francisco Jazz Festival has announced the complete artist line-up for the Ninth Annual SFJazz Spring Season.

The four-month-long curated concert series will begin on March 6 with an opening weekend that includes Keith Jarrett, Gary Peacock, and Jack DeJohnette, and "The Discovery Series" with double bills featuring Travis Sullivan's Bjorkestra and Realistic Orchestra, Nik Bartsch's Ronin and The Frequency, 2 Foot Yard and Iron & The Albatross, and Third World Live with the Yaron Herman Trio. The season will continue through June 20 with will some of the most illustrious names in jazz and related music including: Wayne Shorter, Bobby McFerrin, Chick Corea & Jack DeJohnette, McCoy Tyner with Savion Glover, Taj Mahal, Charles Lloyd, Regina Carter, Joe Sample, Lee Konitz, Dianne Reeves, Mose Allison, Rosa Passos, Hiromi, Ron Carter, Lenny White, Patricia Barber, Brad Mehldau, James Moody and many more.

For full line-up and ticket information, visit www.sfjazz.org

**jazz
& blues**

From the Editor:

Some of you have noticed that a number of the reviews from the past year are not in our searchable database. We were undergoing some problems, but have been in the process of replacing reviews that "disappeared". Indeed, it is taking some time, and will continue to do so. So please, bear with us!

—Bill Wahl



We only bring you
the Cream of the Crop!

JERRY BUTLER
THE DELLS
THE STAPLE SINGERS
JIMMY REED

The Best of the Vee-Jay Years
VEE-JAY/SHOUT FACTORY

Vee-Jay was one of the most celebrated of the Chicago labels of the fifties and sixties, although since its demise in the sixties, reissues from the label have been sporadic. It should be noted that while Vee-Jay is remembered for Jerry Butler and Jimmy Reed, the label had considerable popular success with the Four Seasons and the first American releases by the Beatles before financial issues led to the label's demise. Shout Factory has apparently acquired the rights to reissue some of the classic material from the label. There is a four-disc box surveying the wide range of music from blues, classic R&B, gospel, and jazz. In addition there are several single artist CDs, all titled **The Best of the Vee-Jay Years**, that have been issued which is the subject of this brief overview.

Jerry Butler may be most familiar to some from his infomercial for classic soul collections and doo-wop specials for public TV, but he made numerous recordings that have become classics of rhythm and blues and pop balladry. With the Impressions he sang *For Your Precious Love* before making such marvelous tunes as *He Will Break Your Heart*, *Make It Easy On Yourself*, and *I Stand Accused* delivered with his warm mellow delivery. Then there is the classic duet with Betty Everett, *Let It Be Me*. This is the stuff that many of us listened and danced to in our youth and the music is still timeless as is the Iceman who continues to delight audiences.

Also timeless is the vocal group **The Dells** whose disc also features classic doo-wop and vocal harmony by a group that remained active long after Vee-Jay's demise. The opening *Tell the World* is straight doo-wop, while *Zing Zing* is an uptempo doo-wop rocker with some punchy guitar and a booting sax solo. Oh *What a Nite* is one of their most famous recordings of the period and a great date song. Its interesting to here the group's harmony evolve and show a bit more gospel call and refrain feel on *I Want to Go Home* and the rendition of *Jeepers Creepers* which is reminiscent of then contemporary Motown efforts at the pop song book. This writer is not a vocal group enthusiast, but found this a marvelous introduction to a group that continued to make many significant recordings after these

The Staple Singers first emerged on Vee-Jay and the recordings collected are built on the stark evocative guitar of Roebuck 'Pops' Staples with the passionate vocals

of Mavis and the other family members. Whereas later on Stax the production would be a bit more elaborate and the songs would often be positive message songs, the fervent gospel performances are so compellingly delivered. Staples' driving rhythmic guitar and the fervent vocals can be entrancing to the listener in the same fashion of North Country blues by the likes of Fred McDowell and Junior Kimbrough as on the powerful *Swing Down Chariot* (AKA *Let Me Ride*), the powerfully delivered *I'm Coming Home* with its dirge-like tempo, or the moving *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*, a song that they sang as a family long before the days of fame. This album collects some outstanding, compelling gospel performances.

Last but not least is **Jimmy Reed**. Perhaps the blues artist most associated with Vee-Jay, this Shout Factory release finally makes available what may be considered the essential Jimmy Reed collection. Some may quibble about omission or inclusion of a particular song or two, but this makes available such classic Reed songs as *High and Lonesome*, *I Ain't Got You*, *You Don't Have to Go*, *Big Boss Man*, *Honest I Do*, *Take Out Some Insurance*, *Hush Hush*, *Going to New York*, and *Baby What You Want Me to Do*. These are songs that crossed over, being performed by blues, country and garage bands of all stripes. And in spite of Jimmy Reed's rather deceptively simple performances (and mention also needs to be made of the contributions of the late Eddie Taylor on guitar), these songs have been screwed up by others so often. The appeal of these simple shuffles and Reed's unvarnished vocals and harp still remain over four decades later. Jimmy Reed's music belongs in any decent blues collection and this is simply the best collection of his music available.

Ron Weinstock

CHAMPIAN FULTON WITH DAVID BERGER & THE SULTANS OF SWING

Champion

SUCH SWEET THUNDER RECORDS

Born in Norman, Oklahoma in 1985, Champion Fulton was influenced by her father, a renowned jazz trumpeter. Learning piano as a youth, she has been playing and singing jazz since she was little and has been devoted to jazz piano and vocals since 1998. In 2006 she met David Fulton, leader of the Sultans of Swing at the New York club, Birdland, and she eventually joined Berger's band. Berger, a conductor and arranger for Jazz at Lincoln Center, is well-respected authority on the music of Duke Ellington and the swing era (having transcribed 700 or so classic works including 500 from Ellington and Strayhorn) and the Sultans of Swing is a marvelous big band that lives up to its name.

Such Sweet Thunder has just issued their collaboration, **Champion**, a marvelous journey through the American Songbook on some classic standards such as *I Can't Give You Anything But Love*, *Get Out of Town*, *He Ain't Got Rhythm*, *Too Close For Comfort*, and *Just One of Those Things* along with such intriguing choices as *The Gypsy* (a number I believe Dinah Washington recorded) *Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens* (a classic associated with Louis Jordan), and Lil Green's *Romance in the Dark*. She really projects the lyrics in a lively, natural fashion per-

PAGE TEN

haps suggesting the late Etta Jones with a touch of Ella thrown in. Her performances benefit from the superb Sultans of Swing and Berger's arrangements, with their Ellingtonian accents (particularly evident on the wonderful performances of *The Gypsy* and *Romance In the Dark*). Two of the performances feature her own piano, including *You Turned the Tables on Me*, with trio backing, and the solo, *Never-The-Less*.

In summary, this is a marvelous debut by Champion Fulton with David Berger & the Sultans of Swing. Champion is a singer from whom we undoubtedly shall hear more from in the future. This is available from cdbaby.com as well as from the Sultans of Swing website, www.sultansofswing.com.

Ron Weinstock

DOWNCHILD

Live At The Palais Royale

LINUS

This 11 cut live disc of all original material reveals that the blues don't stop at the border between the United States and Canada. A Canadian blues institution, the Downchild Blues Band has numerous discs to its credit and regularly performs to packed houses. A quick listen reveals why: this band is versatile and performs with passion.

While there are ample dose's of Donnie "Mr. Downchild" Walsh's guitar, vocalist/harmonica player Chuck Jackson, keyboardist Michael Fonfara, and the horn section of Pat Carey on saxophone and Peter Jeffrey on trumpet get equal billing and, equally important, push him to excel lest he be left in the dust by their well oiled chops. Featuring everything from the rocking (*I Got Everything In Need*) *Almost*, which received international attention by virtue of the Blues Brothers' performance of the tune, to the slyly sarcastic spoken word blues of *I've Been A Fool* to the jump blues of *When I Say Jump* this disc never lets the energy wane.

There's not a weak track in the entire set. If you are looking for a smoking blues party on a single disc throw this one into the player, grab the beverage of your choice and get ready for some fun.

Mark Smith

JOSH NELSON

Let It Go

NATIVE LANGUAGE

Los Angeles-based pianist/composer/arranger Josh Nelson makes his official recording debut with this 10-tune studio set of mostly originals, performed in various configurations with bassist Darek Oles, drummer Matt Wilson, tenor saxophonist Seamus Blake and guitarist Anthony Wilson.

Nelson's musical maturity is immediately evident and particularly notable on one of three standards, "Love Letters," which also features fine soloing from Blake. Equally adept as performer and composer, Nelson delivers a fine array of tunes with his crew, including his personally reflective ballad, "Leaving Here," with lyrics sung by sweet-voiced Sara Gazarek and augmentation from the Supernova String Quartet, which also performs on "Colors," an angular piece Nelson says was inspired by Greg Osby's music. "Tears in the Morning," a Beach Boys tune, is re-



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San Rafael Desert, Utah © David Muench

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made as a lyrical, waltzing number and is soulfully enhanced by Blake. A gorgeous piano-sax duo performance of Nelson's "Abandon Post" has a sweeping, melodious feel.

Born in Long Beach and raised in Los Angeles, Nelson (age 28 at the time of this recording in early 2007) was an award winner during his high school years and at subsequent music competitions. He attended Long Beach State University where he studied with pianist Cecilia Coleman and, while enrolled at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, studied with Neil Olmstead, Tiger Okoshi and Kim Steiner. Nelson actively tours, performs and records. He plays regularly with his own group around L.A. and accompanies various vocalists.

This is an extraordinary debut not only for all-around musicianship, but as a showcase for Nelson's compositional skills as well. For his wide-ranging interests, including performing and arranging film scores, he is an expressive artist and certainly a talent to watch.

Nancy Ann Lee

VARIOUS ARTISTS: NASHVILLE RHYTHM & BLUES

Bullet Records Rhythm & Blues

The Rogana Story: Hossman's Blues

The Champion Records Story:

Volume 2 Rockin' R&B

The Champions of R&B

SPV BLUE RECORDS

SPV Blue is continuing its releases of recordings that document the rich rhythm and blues history of Nashville. The reissues of some classic, some rare, as well as some more contemporary recordings show that Music City produced more than simply country music.

Bullet Records Rhythm & Blues is the second reissue of the important Nashville label, this one focusing more on jump blues and blues shouters. In fact it opens with four selections by one of the greatest shouters, Wynonie Harris, and in addition to his vocals, these cuts include the first recordings of pianist Herman 'Sonny' Blount (better known as Sun Ra). Fred James speculates that it's tenor saxophonist Buddy Tate's band backing Max Bailey, whose tune includes an exhortation to the troops on

Drive Soldiers Drive. Alto saxophonist Sherman Williams' selections feature pianist-shouter Skippy Brooks, who would later be a mainstay in Nashville for Excello, singing six strong tracks including *Baby Don't You Want to Go*, a reworking of *Kokomo Blues*, a song that was the model for *Sweet Home Chicago*. Two tracks by The Bobby Plater Orchestra feature members of Lionel Hampton's Orchestra backing a young Rufus Thomas, while Doc Wiley's two tracks include a hot jump instrumental and the more philosophical *Play Your Hand* with Wiley's strong piano and nice vocal. A few cuts are more in the vein of Mills Brothers styled harmony, and fill out what is a pretty exceptional reissue that will be of special interest to fans of blues shouters.

The Rogana Story: Hossman's Blues compiles a number of blues tracks that legendary Nashville dee-jay and record producer, William 'Hoss' Allen produced, mostly

which were licensed to other labels. The material here is very blues-based and features both some Nashville recordings and Muscle Shoals sides. The Nashville sides often feature guitarist Johnny Jones, who leads The Beat Boys (tied into the legendary TV show that Allen produced and emceed, and also included bassist Billy Cox). Vocalists Sam Baker and Dottie Clark (terrific on *All Woman*) benefit from Jones' stinging playing. The tracks by The Beat Boys include not only Jones' fiery fretwork but also the famed steel guitarist Pete Drake playing through a Leslie cabinet. *Finger Lickin'* is a particularly outstanding selection of deep in the alley blues guitar. Jimmy Stuart, trumpeter at the time with B.B. King, plays downhome blues harp on a couple selections (*Sit and Beg My Baby* has a nice soulful vocal) as well as on an instrumental duet with Elvis guitarist Scotty Moore. Gatemouth Brown was recorded by Allen (he was featured on Allen's **The Beat** TV show) and his *Have You Ever Been Mistreated* is a fine blues. Also outstanding is Johnny Copeland's *Ain't Nobody's Business*. Several other selections feature vocalist Art Grayson (singing in a deep soul vein) while the last selection is Hoss Allen's tribute to Martin Luther King, *He Went to the Mountain Top*. A nice collection of blues and southern soul that is quite entertaining.

The Champion Records Story; Volume 2 Rockin' R&B perhaps brings together more pop and R&B flavored recordings than the other reissues here. Champion was one the labels associated with the legendary Ted Jarrett. Jimmy Beck opens things with three instrumentals, with the opening *Pipe Dreams* suggesting perhaps a bit of a ska groove. Little Ike comes across as a Little Richard copycat on *She Can Rock*, while Larry Birdsong's somewhat forgettable *Scooter Poopin'* predates his Vee-Jay days. Earl Gaines is still around and is heard on three rocking sides, while Chuck Harrod & the Anteaters have a rockabilly flavor to them especially on *They Wanna Fight*, and *Crawdad Hole*. Al 'Murfreeseboro' Garner handles the lead on *Oh My Love* with doo wop backing. Don Q's Band with Clenest Gant harken back to earlier jump blues with a rocking *Hallelujah* and *Jump Jump Hi Ho*. Joyce Paul's two tracks are sort of minor league Ruth Brown styled recordings, while Sandra Meade is a good singer with in a nice rendition of *Fever*. This closes with Baker Knight's rocking *Bring My Cadillac Back*, as his baby ran off with his Cadillac. There is a nice booting sax solo on this and a simple rock groove. An interesting slice of music perhaps, but the least interesting of these reissues.

The last of these discs is an excellent collection of recent recordings that Fred James has produced, **The Champions of R&B**.

James produced recordings and tours by these artists and the selections are 'leftovers' I guess, but that should not imply any musical shortcomings on any of the tracks issued here. The material is a nice mix of straight blues and southern soul ballads. Roscoe Gordon opens with a rocking *She's the One* with some nice use of the whammy bar on the guitar while guitarist James Nixon's

One More Chance is strong deep soul, as is Freddie Waters rendition of the Dan Penn/Spooner Oldham *It Tears Me Up*. Johnny Jones is likely the guitarist on Charles Walker's terrific *Monkey Blues* with Jones' playing complementing Walker's gospel-tinged singing. I was unfamiliar

with Larry LaDon, but the terrific *Living on Borrowed Time* is a great performance on a song that evokes some of Albert King's recordings. LaDon has a vocal style closer to Junior Parker than B.B. King and more good guitar here. Johnny Jones' *Girlfriend's Blues* has Johnny in consternation after discovering his woman has another lover, "my girlfriend has a girlfriend too." Earl Gaines' *A Fool's Advice* is a solid ballad with a philosophical tone while Al Garner's marvelous *Gonna Stop Drinkin'* also benefits from some wonderful T-Bone Walker styled guitar. Altogether there are 18 tracks here that are at least good and mostly exceptional. With about 76 minutes of music, this is also good value. While Roscoe Shelton and Freddie Waters are no longer with us, others still are and plans are in the works for organizing another touring revue by these acts. If they come to a town near you, I would suggest you catch these musical giants and in the meantime, do check this wonderful CD out.

Ron Weinstock

QUEEN LATIFA

Trav'lin' Light

VERVE

Queen Latifah's latest release, and her first for the Verve label, *Trav'lin' Light*, is, in a word, wonderful. This is Queen Latifah. She continues to spread her musical wings. Rapper, actress and gifted vocalist – the Queen jumps over the proverbial broom, marrying great pipes to an increasingly impressive professional life.

Trav'lin' Light showcases the Queen's versatility. Veteran producers Ron Fair, Tommy LiPuma and Marc Shaiman underscore her sumptuous vocals with masterful, production of jazz, pop, rock, swing and even gospel-esque selections.

The experience that is Ron Fair is evidenced by production that enhances the Queen's delivery on seven out of thirteen tracks. The first cut, a version of "Poetry Man" likely to bring smiles to lips of even Phoebe Snow loyalists, is beautiful, rich and true and dusted with a touch of soul. Latifah covers the 10CC classic, "I'm Not in Love." She treats the ballad with respect while successfully making it her own. Also standing out are the catchy "How Long (Betcha Got a Chick on the Side)" and "Don't Cry Baby".

Tommy LiPuma provides rich, luxurious orchestrations for five tracks. Breathtaking renditions of "Georgia Rose," "I Love Being Here With You," and "I'm Gonna Live Until I Die," with full strings and brass; underline, emphasize and showcase Queen Latifah's increasing depth and innate ability.

"I Know Where I've Been," is lucky thirteen on this album. Inspirational and uplifting, this Marc Shaiman produced tune smacks of religiosity. It's good, darned good and leaves the listener feeling good.

All in all, *Trav'lin' Light*, is a treat that provides a brief vacation "...away from all the earthly cares." This album will surprise and delight those unfamiliar with the breadth of Queen Latifah's musical talents and promises to grow her already considerable fan base. *Wanda Simpson*

THE INSOMNIACS

Left Coast Blues

DELTA GROOVE MUSIC

Oh great. A chance to review the new disc by a bunch of young hot shots touted as the "next big thing" to save the blues scene. That, or watch paint dry. Hmmm, tough choice but I watched paint dry last week so I guess this disc goes for a spin. Wow, hold the snarky judgment, it's eat crow time. In a rare bit of truth in advertising, this disc lives up to its billing and more.

This four piece Portland, Oregon based band featuring Vyasa Dodson vocals and guitar, Dean Mueller on bass, Alex Shakeri on keyboards and Dave Melyan on drums has crafted a disc that hits all the right notes from beginning to end. While the band has a decided retro sound, it performs with the enthusiasm of discovery rather than the caution of reverence. In other words, this baby smokes. Leading the charge is Dodson who channels Stevie Ray Vaughan one moment, *I'm Not Sorry*, and Hollywood Fats or Alex Schultz the next, *Stick Around*, all the while sounding uncannily like Tommy Castro on vocals. Dodson clearly knows his way around the guitar and makes his Telecaster sing its brittle song most prominently on the Tex-Mex cha cha groove of *I Got Money*.

The rest of the band deserves equal credit for the strength of this release with Alex Shakeri's work on piano and keyboards adding greatly to the mix with everything from the chill out grooves of *Serves Me Right* to the rollicking barrel house piano found on *I'll Treat You Right* and on one of the bonus live tracks, *No Wine, No Women*. While the band favors upbeat jump style blues, *Be Quiet*, it is equally adept at Chuck Berry rockers, as channeled by the Beatles, circa the Hamburg Club, *Watch Your Mouth* (which cribs a few licks from the Saber Dance) and even cheesy soundtrack instrumentals, *Crime Scene*.

While I doubt there is any band out there that can single handedly change the popular perception of the blues as repetitious and stuck in the "baby done me wrong/lost my job/the bottle bit me" lyric trap, the widespread exposure that this disc deserves should at least start the discussion.

Mark Smith

MG3

(MARTIN GASSELSBERGER TRIO)

Any Place But There

ATS Records

On the third release with his trio, "mg3," Austrian pianist Martin Gasselsberger serves up 12 appealing originals with bassist Roland Kramer and drummer Gerald Enstrasser. Together, this threesome performs as a tight, flawless unit.

One player that Gasselsberger has been compared to is Keith Jarrett. And you'll hear those similarities in his keyboard style, his phrasing, his lyricism, his sense of swing, his creativity in improvising and his compositions. At the keys, Gasselsberger employs a painterly approach that can occasionally stretch to the outside edge—such as on "My Blues," an upbeat modal number that demonstrates the pianist's strong right-hand linear method. Both Kramer and Enstrasser get some moments in the spot-

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light to display their talents but more often, they provide support for Gasselsberger's abundant chops.

Tunes range from three to six minutes. The melodic "Hope," a cadent, slow-paced piece with a catchy melody launches the set. Other highlights include the percolating "Longing for Happiness," the sweet, airy ballad "Until We Meet Again," the bluesy, bouncy "What Shall's." The soaring "Dreamworld" boasts another memorable melody, with Kramer playing arco bass.

Attention-grabbing tunes and inspired presentations make Mg3's third disc a satisfying album you'll want to play again and again. *Nancy Ann Lee*

DELMARK REISSUES

SLEEPY JOHN ESTES

On the Chicago Blues Scene

ART HODES

Friar's inn Revisited

JIM ROBINSON

Economy Hall Breakdown

EDWARD PETERSEN

Upward Spiral

DELMARK RECORDS

Delmark has just reissued some gems from its catalog that will be of interest to jazz and blues enthusiasts.

Sleepy John Estes was one of the great blues poets and vocalists whose prewar recordings were highly influential on the likes of John Lee 'Sonny Boy' Williamson and others. A creative lyricist who often spun songs from his own experiences, his crying vocals (and rudimentary guitar playing) backed by the vocalized harmonica of Hammie Nixon and the mandolin of Yank Rachell produced numerous classic songs that became part of the blues repertoire, such *Diving Duck Blues*, *Drop Down Mama*, and *Everybody Oughta Make a Change*. Rediscovered in the sixties, Estes had a revived career recording and performing worldwide, producing several excellent albums for Delmark. Delmark's reissue of *On the Chicago Blues Scene* makes available for the first time on CD an album originally released as *Electric Sleep*, a play on the psychedelic recordings of Muddy and Howling Wolf, although this was simply presenting Estes in a Chicago blues setting with a backing band that included Sunnyland Slim on piano, Jimmy Dawkins on guitar, Carey Bell on harp, Odie Payne on drums and various bassist including Earl Hooker. Koester recalls seeing Estes participate in a jam in Europe with Hubert Sumlin, Rice 'Sonny Boy Williamson' Miller, Sunnyland Slim and others, and able to sing with such modernists and a few years later cut an album in that vein, and with the sympathetic backing by a band that does a fine job in backing Estes who could sometimes not be easy to follow. The vocals are marvelous as can be expected and it's a joy to hear familiar Estes songs take on a fresh sound and hear the music played with such joy and soulfulness. Recommended.

Chicago pianist Art **Hodes** bridged the worlds of blues and traditional jazz, as well as wrote on jazz, which was as delightful as his wonderful blues rooted playing. Among

his considerable discography were several albums for Delmark, which include the just reissued **Friar's inn Revisited**. The title refers to a club that housed the New Orleans Rhythm Kings (NORK), generally regarded as the finest of the white New Orleans Jazz Bands (they recorded with Jelly Roll Morton on what was probably the first interracial recording session), and several of their recordings became staples of the jazz repertoire. As a youth Hodes first visited Friar's inn before he started venturing to south-side Chicago to see King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Jimmie Noone and others.

For this session, Hodes leads a band that includes NORK veterans, trombonist George Brunies and clarinetist Volly DeFaut (with Barney Bigard heard on two selections), along with trumpeter Nappy Trottier, bassist Truck Parham and drummer Barrett Deems. It opens with Brunies introducing *Angry*, and then handling the vocal as the band plays a nice medium tempo. This is followed by *Sobbin' Blues*, a nice remake of their classic recording with Jelly Roll Morton, with Hodes sounding marvelous followed by a lovely woody clarinet solo by DeFaut. *That's a Plenty* is often taken at a breakneck pace, so the relaxed swinging groove is a refreshing change, while Barney Bigard contributes a lovely solo to *Tin Roof Blues*. *Panama* is another staple of the traditional repertoire and benefits from being taken at a peppy, but not too fast tempo. The previously unissued *The Real Thing* is a lovely duet with Parham, while the unissued alternates of *After Your Gone* (with a nice, almost seamless tempo change) and *I Know That You Know* are quartet sides with clarinetist DeFaut, likely from the sessions that produced another Hodes album, **Up in Volly's Room**. This writer has great affection for Hodes' music and is quite pleased that this release is available again. It's a marvelous recording that those who appreciate older jazz styles will enjoy immensely. Others with open ears might give a listen and be surprised how much they enjoy this.

Trombonist **Jim Robinson's** career dated back to World War I and in the 1920s he played and later recorded with New Orleans bandleader Sam Morgan. With the resurgence in interest in early New Orleans jazz he gained fame as a member of the bands of Bunk Johnson and George Lewis and was part of Preservation hall when that esteemed venue opened in the sixties. Delmark has reissued **Economy Hall Breakdown**, which was recorded at Preservation Hall in 1965 with a band that included Johnny Wiggs on cornet, Raymond Burke on clarinet, Bob Greene on piano, Allan Jaffe on tuba and Yoichi Kimura on drums that showcased Robinson's big-toned robust tailgate style of trombone along with the fine playing of Wiggs, Burke and Greene. The title track is a lively mix of Joe *Avery's Piece* and *Dippermouth Blues*, followed by a down-in-the-alley *2:19 Blues* with Wiggs muted wah wah trumpet complimented by Robinson's blustery tailgate playing. Wiggs' peppy *Right Now is the Right Time*, *Put On Your Grey Bonnet* and the hymn *Bye and Bye* (on which Robinson sings) are among other highpoints here.

The heart of the music is essentially the blues as shown on the fine rendition of W.C. Handy's *Atlanta Blues*, and another Wiggs composition, *Postman's Lament*. Listening to the band play with trombone, trumpet and clarinet interweaving their lines together one gets such a joy that

any rough edges are ignored. Robinson was extensively recorded (especially with Bunk Johnson and George Lewis), but only recorded a few times as a leader, including this ingratiating release.

The breadth of Delmark's jazz catalog can be seen by the reissue of tenor saxophonist **Edward Petersen's** first CD to record his own compositions, **Upward Spiral**. Petersen had previously recorded with the likes of Cedar Walton Ron Carter, Chet Baker, and Clark Terry. Shortly after this disc, Petersen was recruited by Ellis Marsalis to the University of New Orleans where he teaches jazz and directs the prestigious Louis Armstrong Quintet. On **Upward Spiral** he is joined by Fareed Haque on guitar, Brad Williams on piano, Rob Amster on bass and Jeff Stitley on drums. Of these Haque is probably the best known, whether leading his own quartet or working with the popular jam band Garaj Mahal. The first four numbers were recorded live in June 1989 at the Chicago club The Green Mill, while the rest were studio recordings from a few weeks later. With the exception of the closing Richard Rogers number, *I Didn't Know What Time It Was*, Petersen wrote the music here, opening with a hard bop ripper, *Probably*. Petersen's full tone here is complemented by Haque's fiery, horn-like guitar lines. The title track has more of a dreamy flavor reflecting its origin as an attempt to write music for people to consider world peace, and like *Objects In The Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear*, has a somewhat dreamy flavor evocative of some of Wayne Shorter's compositions for Miles Davis. Among the studio tracks *Opus B* is another number that has a similar flavor with Williams taking a terrific solo before more fine playing by the leader. *For Dan* is a spicy samba styled tune with a unusual three-beat cycle that has some robust soloing from everybody but bassist Amster. The ballad side of his playing is showcased on the fine interpretation of the Richard Rogers number that closes an exceptional date that Delmark has made available again. **Ron Weinstock**

JIMMY AMADIE TRIO

The Philadelphia Story: The Gospel As We Know It TPR RECORDINGS

The 70-year-old pianist Jimmy Amadie recorded this 12-tune disc over a period of nine months, inviting special guests Benny Golson (tenor sax), Randy Brecker (trumpet, flugelhorn) and Lew Tabackin (tenor saxophone, flute) to augment his trio with bassist Steve Gilmore and drummer Bill Goodwin.

Playing mostly tunes by Amadie, each guest performs four tunes each. The fare ranges from uptempo numbers to ballads and a bossa. Amadie admits the trio adjusted to each artist, rather than sticking to a familiar style or grooves. Highlights abound. The title tune is a bouncy, swinging affair featuring Golson. Brecker delivers a mournful tribute to his late brother in "Michael's Lament," Tabackin sparkles with his gorgeous flute playing on the uptempo "Samba For Lew T." There's not a dull tune in the bunch.

Amadie has a penchant for leading melodious sessions full of spirit and passion. This latest recording continues that path as he triumphs over ongoing hand, wrist and forearm maladies that have made playing the piano

so difficult he's had to rest, wrap, and brace his hands and wait (sometimes months) before he could record another tune. All the right elements were present for this recording and Amadie's guests have risen to the occasion as if each song was a celebration. **Nancy Ann Lee**

RONNIE EARL AND THE BROADCASTERS

Hope Radio STONY PLAIN

After a long career that has found him doing everything from replacing Duke Robillard in Roomful of Blues to backing a rotating cast of lead singers including Kim Wilson, Sugar Ray Norcia and Darrel Nulisch in his own band, The Broadcasters, to nearly losing it all to drugs and alcohol, guitar master Ronnie Earl has finally found that he communicates best by focusing solely on instrumental tracks.

While the absence of words often means the presence of instrumental indulgence, such is not the case with this talented crew of Broadcasters including Dave Limina on Hammond B-3, Jim Mouradian and Michael "Mudcat" Ward on bass and Lorne Entress on drums who have crafted a disc that is marked by restraint and a respect for all that happens in the space between notes. In their sympathetic hands, the 11 tracks of live and unedited blues and jazz found here rise above the shackles of the verse/chorus/verse structure necessary when backing a singer and, in fact, don't need a single syllable to communicate as much as most songs with words. While the band is deserving of

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This photo of Dietra Farr captured by Ron Weinstock at the 2007 Pocono Blues Festival is just one of hundreds of Ron's photos you can view online at www.flickr.com/photos/novaron

much credit for its tight, intuitive interplay, at the end of the day it is Earl's guitar that carries this disc to its often stellar heights.

Too many blues guitarist's instrumental numbers quickly find their way into boogie or shuffle wonderland or venture into the "how many notes can I fit in a bar" wasteland. Earl, on the other hand, has both the skill and impeccable taste to take his tracks to a much different destination: one where dreamy interludes share space with aggressive string work that is cathartic instead of angry. With more change ups in pace, tone and dynamics than most blues musicians use in an entire career, Earl engages your mind in the same way as the most adept jazz or classical music composers. You won't need words to feel the despair that pervades *Kartrina Blues* or to feel the joy of *Bobby's Bop*.

Likewise, no words are necessary to measure Earl's love for Otis Rush which is so plainly evident through the searing string work on *Blues for Otis Rush*. Based on the strength of this release, we can all be grateful that Ronnie Earl has found that he speaks best through the six strings on his guitar.

Mark Smith

THE PIZZARELLI BOYS

Sunday at Pete's
CHALLENGE RECORDS

When the Pizzarelli's perform, you can be assured it's going to be a tidy swing set and this CD—their first recording ever as an unaccompanied quartet without an entire band behind them—ranks high among their best.

John Pizzarelli (guitar), John "Bucky" Pizzarelli (rhythm guitar), Martin Pizzarelli (bass) and Tony Tedesco (drums) perform 14 nostalgic tunes drawn from the family repertoire and Bucky's uncles, Peter and Bobby Domenick. Gems such as "Sweet Sue," "Alabama Bound," "Whispering," "When You're Smiling," "Bye Bye Blues," "In the Good Old Summer Time," and others are cheery renditions that will have you tapping your foot. Most tunes last around three to five minutes or so, except for the 12-minute finale, "Night on Garrett Mountain," an upbeat blues original named after a favorite spot of Bucky's in his hometown of Paterson, NJ.

These musicians work as a tight unit delivering a flawless, perky session that keeps the listener engaged and delighted. A 12-page liner booklet contains notes by John Pizzarelli and black-and-white session photos.

Nancy Ann Lee

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WEST OF MEMPHIS

Honey Pie
WEST OF MEMPHIS

Comprised of vocalist-harmonica player Karl Cabbage and guitarist Tom Walpole, and various sidemen, West of Memphis is a blues band hailing from San Diego. The band's name stems from the fact that when Cabbage was stationed at a Naval base forty miles West of Memphis, he hitchhiked to busk and play harp on Beale Street and catch various blues heroes. The band was formed in 1999 and has been holding down a weekend gig at San Diego's House of Blues since early 2006. Yes, imagine a House of Blues having a regular gig by a blues band.

They have just issued their second CD, *Honey Pie*, produced in Montreal by a superb Canadian harp player, Bharath Rajakumar, and this recording certainly will please fans of jumping Chicago styled-blues. There is a nice variety of material including solid remakes of songs from Jimmy Rogers (*Back Door Friend* and *That's All Right*), Little Walter (*Who and I Got to Go*), Muddy Waters (*Crosseyed Cat*), and Johnny Young (*I'm Having a Ball*), along with solid idiomatic originals like *Canary in Her Cage*, the title track and *Cell Phone Blues*. One would be hard-pressed to find any tracks that stand-out as everything is done so nicely.

They do a solid straight cover of Willie Dixon's *I'm Ready* with, I assume, Walpole as the one ably handling the vocals, while Cabbage takes a solid chromatic solo. Cabbage handles the vocal mike on the Little Walter interpretations and Johnny Young's exuberant *I'm Having a Ball* on which Bharath showcases his formidable harp playing. One of the originals *Cell Phone Blues* is preceded by a call from the song's co-writer Geoff Starin, before Cabbage opens the song with some blasting harp as he tells his woman to close her cell phone baby, because "he don't love you like I do." There is some great guitar from Walpole in a Junior Watson vein while the pianist, M. Gagnon, helps supply the bottom with his strong two-handed playing (as he does throughout this disc). Bharath takes the vocal on *That's Alright*, where Cabbage plays some nice harp in the vein of Sonny Boy Williamson II. *Miss Sugarpuss Boogie* is a crisp feature for Walpole's guitar that comes across as a fifties' styled number.

The closing shuffle, *Chupacabra*, is a hot harmonica duet by Bharath and Cabbage that ends a strongly appealing disc.

Ron Weinstock

STEVE ALLEE TRIO

Colors
OWL STUDIOS

On his fifth CD, pianist-composer-arranger Steve Allee, a native of Indianapolis, Indiana, leads a trio featuring Bill Moring on bass and Tim Horner on drums.

This 10-tune project draws somewhat from Allee's world travels and he infuses his straight-ahead originals with a variety of influences, delivering a Latin-laced title tune and expressing the tropical warmth of Grand Bahama Island on "Lucaya." The trio performs two standards: an uptempo, expansive version of Jerome Kern's "Yesterdays" and an uncluttered, fresh take on Johnny Mercer's

"Come Rain or Come Shine."

Allee is a melodious, creative player whose improvisations are full of ideas. Moring, who has performed with Mulgrew Miller and Chris Potter, plays a solid support role and shines especially when he has the rare chance to play arco bass. Horner, who performs with Maria Schneider and the Village Vanguard Orchestra, adds much to this session with his lively cymbals work, rim shots and flashy timekeeping.

As composer, Allee contributes some appealing original tunes for which a vocalist might want to write lyrics. An air of freshness to their warm outpourings draws the listener inside the music. *Nancy Ann Lee*

ANDREW BROWN

Big Brown's Blues BLACK MAGIC RECORDS

There have been so many examples of blues artists who produced a small number of recordings whose recordings were highly prized by those who heard them but never reach the more general acclaim that their music deserves. It's been over twenty years since singer-guitarist Andrew Brown passed away after recording some excellent 45s, several tracks for Alligator's Living Chicago Blues series and two superb albums for Dutch Labels that I do not believe have been issued on CD. The Dutch Black Magic label has made almost all of Brown's recordings available (the issued Alligator tracks excluded) on a wonderful limited edition reissue titled *Big Brown Blues*.

Packed in a book sized package, the contents of the two discs include his issued 45s for the U.S.A, 4 Brothers and Brave labels and a pair of unissued titles from Brave; two unissued songs from the sessions used for the Living Chicago Blues selections; the contents of his Black Magic and Double Trouble CDs and three demos recorded at Andrew's basement. The booklet contains a bio from Bill Dahl and producer Dick Shurman's recollections of Andrew and his music. As Shurman observes, "Musically, Andrew was accomplished, powerful, soulful and versatile."

Influences on Brown include B.B. King, Lowell Fulson and T-Bone Walker, but in listening to these his music struck me as very similar to that of the late Little Milton, which is evident in the wonderful treatment of Milton's *Losing Hand* that is the first track on the second disc. It is more a matter of similarities in the voices and common influences. Like Milton, Brown was not only a fleet guitarist, but also a wonderful songwriter. Magic Sam covered Brown's USA 45, *You Better Stop*, but there are any number of strong modern urban blues with sophisticated lyrics, sung with so much heart with his guitar playing embellishing, not overwhelming, his vocals. He moves from a rocking shuffle like *No More Talking* to the blues ballad *Your Love is Important to Me*, then taking up a funk groove on *Mary Jane*. Dick Shurman had him cover some songs on the two albums with Tin Pan Alley, including his terrific take on James 'Thunderbird' Davis' Blue Monday, Joe Tex's *I Want to Do (Everything For You)*, and a Bobby Bland classic *Lead Me On*. A few numbers are a bit more directed towards the straight soul market, but are delivered here so well.

Having Brown's two albums and even a 4 Brothers 45, I am delighted to have this wonderful reissue available by a person who should be much better known among a broader range of blues fans. His 'mellow' blues styling is akin to such other neglected past blues masters Mighty Joe Young and Fenton Robinson and is better than a lot of what is purported to be blues today.

This is a limited edition and I recommend checking the better mail order specialists like BlueBeat Music (www.bluebeatmusic.com from which I purchased this) to get this gem while you can. It is also available directly from Black Magic for \$35 postpaid (<http://home.tiscali.nl/blackmagicrecords.nl/>). *Ron Weinstock*

NEW YORK VOICES

A Day Like This

MANCHESTER CRAFTSMEN'S GUILD

Special guest instrumentalists Paquito D'Rivera (clarinet), Bob Mintzer (bass clarinet), Chuck Loeb (guitar), Dave Samuels (vibes), Gil Goldstein (accordion) and others join the Grammy Award-winning vocal ensemble, New York Voices, for this splendid studio session, their first solo album in nearly a decade.

With tightly blended harmonies, the group refreshes the 14 gems on this disc, including "Darn That Dream," "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning," "On A Clear Day," "For All We Know," "No Moon At All," "Stone Soul Picnic," and more. Most tunes last around 4-5 minutes. On the peppy finale, "Jackie" (music by Hampton Hawes, lyrics by Annie Ross, arrangement by Darmon Meader), with brassy instrumental accompaniment and scatting by Kim Nazarian, they sound a lot like Manhattan Transfer.

Vocalists Nazarian, Meader (who also capably plays tenor saxophone) and Peter Eldridge have been with the group (originally a quintet) since its founding in 1987 while they were students at Ithaca College in New York. Lauren Kinhan replaced Sara Krieger in 1992 and NYV permanently became a quartet when Caprice Fox left the group in 1994. The jazz vocal group performed for years with the Count Basie Orchestra, toured with the Boston Pops and other symphony orchestras, and has embraced a repertoire that includes bop tunes in the vocalese tradition as well as music from pop and jazz worlds. They recorded several albums for GRP in the 1990s and have guested on numerous albums.

New York Voices injects familiar songs with surprise twists, abundant energy and sentimental feeling. Their individual and blended voices are pleasing to the ear. Adding instrumentation enhances the fare. Nice album! May be their best one yet. *Nancy Ann Lee*

**Reviewed in our next issue:
The 2007 Riviera Maya
Jazz Festival
Playa del Carmen, Mexico**

HOMESICK JAMES

Shake Your Money Maker

SPV BLUE RECORDS

A cousin of the late Elmore James, the late Homesick James Williamson, is perhaps described among the second-tier of slide guitarists performing in the manner of his more famous broomdusting cousin. SPV Blue has just issued **Shake Your Money Maker**; some 1999 live recordings in Switzerland produced by Fred James who is on guitar on these tracks.

Homesick James was one of the artists who recorded for small Chicago labels like Chance, for whom he waxed *Lonesome Old Train* and his signature song, *Homesick James*. Later he recorded an album for Prestige, which I find hardly memorable although Fred James, in the liner booklet, calls it Homesick's 'high water mark.' He also was recorded by Sam Charters for the classic anthology, **Chicago The Blues Today**, which this writer feels is his most impressive work. In the ensuing years until his December 2006 passing, he recorded a number of albums for a variety of labels including Trix, Ice House and Appaloosa. Some of the European recordings he made with the late harp player Snooky Pryor perhaps are worth seeking out the most.

With respect to **Shake Your Money Maker**, it shows that in his 80s Homesick James had lost little in terms of his playing and husky vocals. As Fred James observes he had an erratic sense of timing, but also his slide playing seems a bit off the beat compared to his contemporaries. Certainly his slide attack lacks the forcefulness of his contemporaries such as Hound Dog Taylor and J.B. Hutto. There is nothing surprising of the performances here in terms of material. *Gotta Move* and *Set a Date* had mainstays of Homesick James repertoire, as was Elmore's *The Sky is Crying*. There are some interesting songs included like, *Crosscut Saw*, that sort of meanders along as opposed to the crisp rhythms of Albert King's recording, and Arthur Crudup's *That's Alright Mama*.

These are mostly lengthy performances that would have benefited from being a tad bit more focused and briefer, but generally are engaging. **Ron Weinstock**

FREDDY COLE

WITH THE BILL CHARLAP TRIO

Music Maestro Please

HIGHNOTE

Recorded in the spring of 2006, vocalist Freddy Cole serves up an appealing 11-tune set with radiant support from pianist Bill Charlap's trio.

Cole digs into his vast repertoire to come up with pleasing hits from the Swing era and later. Ranging from around three to nearly six minutes, the tunes are mostly ballads and light swingers. Cole's vocal phrasing leaves space for subtle comping from Charlap, one of the most sensitive, melodic players on the scene today. Their symbiotic relationship is evident on a medley of "Don't Take Your Love From Me" and "I Never Had A Chance," performed as a duo. The singer delivers a lovely version (though brief at 3:12 minutes) of the ballad "Once In A While." Although 76-year-old Cole's voice sometimes

breaks or strains in the upper register, he was savvy enough to give Charlap and his trio (Peter Washington on bass and Kenny Washington on drums) abundant time to expertly extend the mood of each tune.

Music Maestro Please is Cole's 17th album since 1990 when he recorded *I'm Not My Brother, I'm Me*. Charlap's presence seals the success of this session.

Nancy Ann Lee

JAMES BLOOD ULMER

Bad Blood in the City

The Piety Street Session

HYENA RECORDS

Returning from last year's side trip with Odyssey the Band, James "Blood" Ulmer has crafted a disc that takes its inspiration from the blues but doesn't spend much time in the 12 bar shuffle rut.

Joined by Vernon Reid of Living Color fame on guitar and a host of other musicians who add color and texture with electric fiddles and mandolins, Hammond b-3, clarinet and other assorted instruments Ulmer lays down a polyrhythmic stew reflecting both the African roots of the blues and its metamorphosis into a many headed creature when channeled through the American South.

Junior Kimbrough's *Sad Days, Lonely Nights* is lifted from its hypnotic roots and re-imagined with a complexity that would not be out of place on a Mamadou Diabate disc while *Let's Talk About Jesus* finds a gospel center with its energetic background vocals and *Backwater* distinguishes itself from the standard slow blues grinder with



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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well placed harmonica and electric violin accents. Elsewhere, Willie Dixon's *Dead Presidents*, Howlin' Wolf's *Commit a Crime* and his own *There is Power in the Blues* strike a more traditional blues pose. With a voice that alternates between the bullfrog croak of Randy Newman and a well worn version of Taj Mahal, Ulmer delivers lyrics that, among other things, encourage those impacted by the devastation of hurricane Katrina to take it up with the President, *Katrina*.

Ulmer isn't afraid to take on controversy, a point he drives home with conviction on John Lee Hooker's *This Land is Nobody's Land* and on *Slave Master* where he likens the "help" provided in the wake of Katrina to the "keep in line" mentality of the old boss man. A captivating disc that digs deep.

Mark Smith

Lest We Forget....

LURRIE BELL

DAVID LEVY

ONAJE ALLAN GUMBS

The irony of the end of the year is the onslaught of releases that show up in the final quarter and, usually, the lack of new stuff in January. With "big names" looking for big Christmas numbers and box sets arriving for gift-giving season, some very deserving sets can slip through the cracks. Here are some worth knowing about.

One of the year's very best blues releases snuck in during November. Chicago guitarist/vocalist **Lurrie Bell's** *Let's Talk About Love* on Aria B.G. Records is a tough set that both celebrates the Windy City tradition and offers just enough departure to keep it all fresh. Bell's pipes and chops are strong, as is his backup on fare from Willie Dixon, Pops Staples and Little Richard. Visit www.lurrie.com

Reedman **David Levy's** septet *Out To Lunch* on Accurate records is just the sort of outfit that keeps the jazz scene fresh. Celebrating Eric Dolphy by way of their band name- and James Brown by way of the title of their just-out *Excuse Me While I Do The Boogaloo*, OTL simultaneously turns out solid grooves and engaging improvisation. They can be eclectic and experimental, at times crossing genres and flirting with electronics, without losing their core identity as a solid jazz ensemble. Their stuff is tasty, fun, inventive and cooks like crazy. There's more info for you online at www.outtolunchmusic.com and www accuraterecords.com

Actually, **Onaje Allan Gumbs' Sack Full Of Dreams** has been available on 18th & Vine Records for most of the past year but it would be borderline criminal for any jazz piano fan to be unaware so its mention here is imperative. Mr. Gumbs, who has consorted with the likes of Nat Adderley, Woody Shaw and Betty Carter, and his crew crafted a top-notch set that merges technique, invention and the ability to swing in the best tradition of the mainstream scene.

Duane Verh

jazz-blues.com

books

THE BIOGRAPHICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JAZZ

By Leonard Feather and Ira Gitler

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Earlier this year, Oxford University Press released the soft-cover, one-volume, 718-page edition of *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Jazz*, which was released in hardcover in 1999. This useful resource expanded upon and updated Leonard Feather's classic Encyclopedia of Jazz, which was originally published in multi-volumes by decades.

Most of the biographical entries from previous books were updated, new players were added and international coverage was extended. When Leonard Feather died in 1994, Ira Gitler worked on the tome, with help from other researchers and writers that he credits in his 1999 Preface. Each entry contains basic information about the jazz artist, significant dates, influences, prime associations with other musicians, major recordings and performances, and other pertinent information.

Feather was a widely esteemed jazz critic who moved to the U.S. from England in the 1930s and built his career here as a journalist, lecturer, broadcaster, musician and writer of hundreds of jazz compositions.

Gitler has been the author of countless liner notes since 1951, has continued to contribute to *Downbeat* since the 1960s, and writes for many other publications. He teaches jazz history at the Manhattan School of Music. His books include *Jazz Masters of the '40s* and *Swing to Bop*. He lives in New York City.

Inclusive of all periods and styles, this book is a useful tool for jazz journalists, fans, musicians and record collectors.

Nancy Ann Lee

JAZZ MAVERICKS OF THE LONE STAR STATE

By Dave Oliphant

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS

An enthusiastic fan of jazz, Dave Oliphant authored *Texas Jazz*, which was a focus of the many contributions persons from the Lone Star State have made in the development and growth of jazz throughout the music's history. As he notes in his introduction, he had discovered a number of native Texans he had overlooked in the earlier book and discovered new information about others. In a sense some of the articles in this are a continuation to that book, while others, including a book review of *Jelly's Blues*, a biography of Jelly Roll Morton by Reich and Gaines, and their is a consideration of Western Swing pioneer Milton Brown.

I suspect reading the articles as the originally published is more satisfying than trying to read this in one sitting as one can tire of the author's Texas boosterism. Still there is plenty of interesting material here from the title chapter with brief bios and discussion of the contri-

butions of Eddie Durham, Jack Teagarden and Jimmy Giuffre, and the chapter on The Roots of Texas Jazz.

The focus on Texas connections does provide some interesting insights such as discussing Kenny Dorham, he notes that Dorham often incorporated a phrase that derives from the 'Anitra's Dance' section of Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg's incidental music to Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. And the author noting that Grieg's music was taught in Texas public schools raise the suggestion that this might be the source for Dorham's fondness for the phrase.

Other books discuss jazz connections between Texas and Wisconsin, a review of a biography of Ornette Coleman and one on Jazz Poetry. In the discussion of Jelly's Blues, Oliphant takes the authors to task for miscasting the contributions of Texas native, Alan Lomax, who Oliphant shows previously made many of the points they make in their book.

An interesting volume with many insights but is probably best read a couple of chapters at a time.

Ron Weinstock

JOURNEYMAN'S ROAD

By Adam Gussow

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE PRESS

As the blurb on the dust cover for *Journeyman's Road* notes, Adam Gussow is the rare academic who has lived the life of a bluesman. An Assistant Professor of English

and southern studies at the University of Mississippi, he has authored *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition* and *Mister Satan's Apprentice: A Blues Memoir*.

He is best known as a blues harmonica player who teamed up on the streets of Harlem and then toured the world with singer-guitarist Sterling McGehee as Satan and Adam.

The core of this book is 21 of the 26 columns that Gussow contributed to *Blues Access*, a lamented blues quarterly that folded several years ago.

Gussow brings us into his world as a musician and many of the very interesting individuals he came into contact with, brings alive the blues and jams at the long-closed Dan Lynch's, playing up on Upper Broadway with Mr. Satan and searching for the perfect amp. He provides a chapter on blues jam etiquette as well as a survey introduction to the blues literature.

A more recent group of chapters discuss the relationship of the blues to William Faulkner's body of work. As can be seen there is a wide range of subjects covered and Gussow writes in a fashion that gets the reader plowing through the text. OK, I admit I slowed down when he discussed Faulkner, but that is my only passing acquaintance to that great writer.

Gussow makes a number of very interesting points that will give folks plenty of time to do so, but he never comes across as pedantic, and certainly this is a book any blues enthusiast should enjoy.

Ron Weinstock

