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REVIEWED:

The Monterey Jazz Festival Experience
The Long Beach Blues Festival

Jazz & Blues Report

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On the Cover

A close-up of a hand drummer at work outside the vendor area by the Arena at the 51st annual Monterey Jazz Festival.

All MJF photos by Wanda Simpson.



"Buffalonus"

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

The Monterey Jazz Festival Experience



These kids were not just very, very cute...they also sounded very, very good!

By Bill Wahl

When it comes to jazz festivals, the Monterey Jazz Festival is certainly among the most prestigious in the world, and the top jazz festival in the United States. This year was the 51st annual Monterey Jazz Festival presented by Verizon, which was again held at the 20-acre Monterey Fairgrounds in Monterey California, just south of San Francisco.

MJF is the longest continually running jazz festival in the world. Founded in 1958 by Jimmy Lyons and his co-founder Ralph Gleason, the first festival that very year presented such names as

Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, John Lewis, Shelly Manne, Gerry Mulligan, Art Farmer, Ernestine Anderson, Harry James and Max Roach. Music of the highest caliber has been presented every year since that first festival on the third full weekend of every September, and some of it has been recently released on Monterey Jazz Festival Records and with more to come in the future (see our September 2008 issue). MJF offers three days of per-

formances, workshops, panel discussions, jazz conversations, exhibits and countless vendors throughout the grounds.

I combined the festival with a trip up and down the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) with three other people, which was simply an incredible experience all the way from Santa Monica to Monterey.

The general admission grounds tickets this year were \$35 for Friday, and \$45 for Saturday or Sunday. This single price gets you into everything except the Arena Concerts, which are priced separately. While you may want to see some of the Arena Concerts (Jimmy Lyons Stage), those whose budgets won't allow the extra expense can easily hear the music in the vendor area next to the open air arena, or can watch the simulcasts on several screens situated around the festival grounds, including inside at Klub Korbekel, the midway's patio bar.

There is so much going on at once at MJF it can be a mind blowing for any jazz fan who is visiting the festival for the first time. But it is not all straight



Maceo Parker with MJF Next Generation Orchestra



Derek Trucks Band

jazz, so you can bring along someone who might not be as serious about the music as you. To give you an example, the opening arena show on Saturday afternoon at 1 pm was the popular 2-time Grammy nominated R&B singer Ledisi. At the very same time, soul singer Ryan Shaw was performing on the Garden Stage. And also right around the same time, you could sit in on a conversation with Nancy Wilson and John Levy at Dizzy's Den, or hear the Pacific Crest Jazz Orchestra at The Bill Berry Stage. Or...you could hear the music of Sadza, a marimba and mbira band from Santa Cruz playing traditional and contemporary dance music of Zimbabwe on the West Lawn. A bit earlier there was a showing of the Jazz Icons DVDs at Jazz Theater Presented by Best Buy, which would be repeated a number of times throughout the weekend. The Jazz Theater was also one of the sites for the Arena Concert simulcasts. There was also music going on at the Coffee House Gallery, and a Yamaha Disklavier demonstration at the Courtyard Stage with pianist Sue Downs. So, in some cases, if you missed an artist in one spot, you could see them later in another. Funkmaster saxophonist Maceo Parker performed with the MJF Next Generation Jazz Orchestra (a fantastic big band made up of students), but if you missed that 2 pm show you could

see him with his band at the Garden Stage at 5:30. Or, if you missed Ledisi at the arena, you could see her later at the Garden Stage as well. Of course, this was not always the case, as the main arena headliners for the weekend, Cassandra Wilson on Friday; Derek Trucks Band and Nancy Wilson on Saturday; and the Wayne Shorter Quartet and Herbie Hancock on Sunday just played the one large venue show. Cassandra Wilson, however, was featured in a Downbeat Magazine Blindfold Test on Saturday afternoon. In addition to the Jazz Icons, there were also some other film showings in the Jazz Theater, namely "My Name Is Albert Ayler" The Albert Ayler Story hosted by Kasper Collins, and "Electric Heart: Don Ellis The Man, His Times, His Music" hosted by John Vissuzi. Just prior to the Ellis movie, in the same theater, I saw a fine solo concert by Bulgarian pianist Milcho Leviev, who closed with a most interesting piece he referred to as a "Bulgarian Boogie."

The MJF 2008 Artist-In Residence was bassist Christian McBride, who not only played with his quintet Saturday night in the arena, and was back in the arena with the MJF Next Generation Orchestra Sunday afternoon, but was also featured with his band at Dizzy's Den on Friday and Sunday evenings.



Ledisi



Sadza



Some colorful line-dancing



Interesting, plentiful and varied food offerings

But this is only a portion of what was on tap, musically speaking. I'll give you a rundown of just some of the other performances throughout the weekend in addition to what was mentioned above. On Friday you could also hear the Joshua Redman Trio with Matt Penman and Brian Blade in the arena, and in other venues the Berklee Latin Jazz All-Stars, George Young Quartet, Matt Wilson's Arts & Crafts, Anat Cohen and Rudder. On Saturday you could also hear the Maria Schneider Orchestra and NEA Jazz Master Nancy Wilson with Terence Blanchard & Tom Scott in a Tribute To Cannonball Adderley in the arena, and in other venues Pacific Crest Jazz Orchestra, Junko Moriya Quartet, United States Air Force Falconaires, Tuck & Patti, Antonio Sanchez's Migration featuring David Sanchez, Miguel Zenon and Scott Colley; Maria Schneider again later at Dizzy's Den, Tom Scott back in the evening at the Night Club followed by the Terence Blanchard Quintet and the Matt Wilson/Bill Frisell duo, and Marc Cary's Focus Trio in the Coffee House.

On Sunday you could also hear the Buchanan High School Jazz Band "A", Jamie Cullum and Kurt Elling Sings Coltrane/Hartman in the arena, and in other venues Kyle Eastwood Band, Jamie Davis Big Band, then Kurt Elling again later at Dizzy's Den, California State University Northridge Jazz "A" Band, Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band, Hammond B3 Blowout in the evening at the Night Club featuring Barbara Dennerlein Trio followed by Brian Auger's Oblivion Express, and in the Coffee House Trio M – Myra Melford, Mark Dresser and Matt Wilson. The 'New Grooves' of Turntablists-In-Residence 4OneFunk and Quantic were heard in Lyon's Lounge from 8-11 pm each night. Also on Sunday there was a panel discussion "The Cannonball Legacy Lives On" with Greg Field, Orrin Keepnews, John Levy, Roy McCurdy & Scott Yanow followed by a Conversation with Clint Eastwood (who is very involved with MJF) and Jamie Cullum "Talkin' Music" in Dizzy's Den.

On Sunday afternoon six top high school ensembles from the 2008 Next Generation Festival performed at Dizzy's Den – Los Angeles County High School For The Arts Vocal Jazz Ensemble, Folsom High School Jazz Chair "A," Rio Americano High School Big Band, Las Vegas

Academy Big Band, MJF Monterey County High School All-Star Band and Acalanes High School Jazz Ensemble. For Family Day on Sunday Zun Zun, a husband and wife duo

that celebrates the environments and cultures of the Americas through music was in the Coffee House followed by Jazzschool Advanced High School Jazz Workshop.

Believe it or not, there was more. See what I mean about mind-blowing?

As you are wandering from stage to stage you will notice what I would estimate at around 100 vendors, many of which were unlike any vendors I have seen at festivals before. Let's say they were definitely a cut above, whether it is paintings, prints, sculptures, posters, clothing, jewelry, accessories or whatever. There were many unique items in many categories rather than the usual fare. As far as food goes, there was quite an array of food vendors, many with an international flavor such as Asian, Indian, Korean, French, Cajun and Thai, as well as seafood, sausages and burgers and pizza. How about some Alligator on a stick? Kind of tastes like chicken, but tougher! It appeared that the popular beer at the festival was Brother Thelonious, which was pretty good stuff – a Belgian style Abbey Ale. I really liked their logo and t-shirts. Check it out at

www.northcoastbrewing.com/beer-brotherThelonious.htm. There was also tent where you could check your email; and interactive technology areas such as Best Buy Games and the Sharp Experience Truck.

There is so much to hear, see and do at MJF that it might be a good idea to actually take the schedule and plan your day, or days in advance. And as you walk around the live music from different areas might just keep bringing you to a stop to look for a seat. That is exactly what happened when I neared the arena and Derek Trucks' Band was playing its version of My Favorite Things, somewhat based on Coltrane's. It brought back some memories of the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise when, as we were just leaving the port at St. Maarten on a star filled night, Trucks' band was playing "Greensleeves," also somewhat based on Coltrane's version. As we moved on out to sea there were dozens of small boats going right



The 80-foot McWay Waterfall flows over the rock formation

along on both sides of us with people on the decks listening to the music themselves. Ooops...sorry for the flashback!

So, now that you have some idea of what to expect when you pass through the gates at a Monterey Jazz Festival, let's cover the subject of getting there. You could take the easy way; book a hotel and a rental car and fly into the Monterey Peninsula Airport, or larger airports such as San Francisco, Oakland or San Jose. But, if you have never driven the PCH, especially the 125 or so miles from Monterey south – it is an experience everyone should have at least once. As you drive along the side of mountains, sometimes with hairpin curves, the scenery is breathtaking. There will be a mountain on one side of the road, and a *steeeeeeep* drop to the mighty Pacific Ocean on the other. Yep...just like in the movies, but better – because you are actually living it.

You'll find yourself stopping often at the Vista Pulloffs to fire off more pictures on your trusty camera. You may go for two or three hours without seeing a gas station, or rest rooms, so take care of your refueling and defueling at Morro Bay coming North from LA, or at Carmel going south from Monterey. While you are in Morro Bay, I can recommend Tognazzini's Dockside on Embarcadero for a place to grab a meal. I can do this for two reasons – first, we had a wonderful dinner, all of us ordering different items and all enjoying them (I had the local fresh fish of the day), and second – it is the only place I have ever eaten at in Morro Bay. It is right at the dock too, with a fine view of the bay and the famous giant Morro Rock jutting out of the water. You'll want to get some food in you before the drive up to Monterey!

The drive up (or down) the PCH is also loaded with parks and other places to stop and check out. Let's say we are driving north from Morro Bay to Monterey. One of the first side trips could be the Hearst Castle. I am told it takes a while to tour it, but you can at least drive up the road a bit and get a closer look at the 115-room, old European architecture castle perched on its 127-acre little plot of land. Then there is Ragged Point, where there is an inn and a restaurant. This is a good place to stop and have a cool drink or some food if you missed that at Morro

Bay. You can also take a short walk and get an incredible view to the north of the California coast. Definitely a camera moment. Moving on, after a good drive you'll come to Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park.



A Big Sur sunset

You are now in the incredible Big Sur area. After entering the park you'll want to hike the trail along the coast and check out the 80-foot McWay Waterfall. Another camera moment. You'll want to check out the redwoods too.

Moving on to the north, although we did not stop there, I am told that Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, Sycamore Canyon and the white sand Pfeiffer Beach are all sights to be seen. You'll see more places along the way that you may want to check out depending on how much time, and daylight you have. I ended up at the wheel for the last shift and had to navigate some of the trip's sharpest curves in the dark, so I'd recommend trying

not to let that happen. Besides, you'll want to see Carmel-by-the-Sea in daylight, and you'll want to see the many sights in Monterey Bay as well. Since we drove back down the coast again after the festival, we were able to make that entire trip to Morro Bay in daylight.

But I can't stress enough just how much of an incredible experience the drive on the PCH between Monterey and Morro Bay is. Everyone needs to do it at least once. And if you are renting a car, the Mustang convertible was fantastic. It had enough power to navigate the mountains with four people; it handled extremely well on hairpin curves; and it had a reasonably large trunk, given the convertible thing. It was also surprisingly good on gas. And best of all...it is a *Mustang convertible!*

So, in closing, the combination of Monterey Jazz Festival with a sightseeing trip on the PCH will be an experience you will never forget...and will definitely want to repeat.

For more information on the festival, visit www.montereyjazzfestival.com.

For more information on the California parks, visit www.parks.ca.gov/. For the area mentioned above, select the Central Region.

For more information on the Monterey area, visit www.monterey.com and www.montereyinfo.org/.

For more information on the Big Sur area, visit www.bigsurcalifornia.org/.

There was a lot that we did not get to do. And some things I heard about later...such as the "17-Mile Drive" in Monterey that is supposed to be spectacular (you can Google that one).

I don't know what happened. After 35 years of just covering music, in the past year I have also become a travel writer too. What fun! *Photos by Wanda Simpson*

THE 2008 LONG BEACH BLUES FESTIVAL



Reviewed by Bill Wahl

Long Beach, California is located about 25 miles south of Los Angeles and 100 miles north of San Diego. The area is easily accessible by car via a number of highways and by air via Long Beach Airport. It is also relatively close to Los Angeles International (LAX) and John Wayne Airport in Santa Ana (SNA). The shore area of the city and the Long Beach Harbor are on the San Pedro Bay, which opens into the Pacific Ocean and is, quite simply, a wonderful area to visit. More on that later.

The area is the setting for a yearly blues festival and jazz festival. We were not able to attend the jazz events this year, but did make it to the 29th annual Long Beach Blues Festival, which was held August 30 & 31, 2008. This year the festival was at the beautiful and spacious Rainbow Lagoon Park, which is a very healthy green grassy area with a large lagoon, foot bridges and several areas loaded with trees for those desiring shade. On Saturday, August 30 the main stage lineup consisted of Pinetop Perkins with the Bob Margolin Band, The Dirty Dozen Brass Band, John Mayall, Chuck Berry, Roy Rogers & The Delta Kings and Roy Young. On Sunday the lineup was the Taj Mahal Trio, Joe Louis Walker, Charlie Musselwhite, Eddie Floyd, Booker T. Jones and Ana Popovic.

While the main stage was being changed over between bands, there was a small second stage right next to it featuring a number of bands, mostly from the area, which enabled the music to keep flowing pretty much nonstop between the two stages. I have been to a number of festivals where there were two stages that were so far apart that the people would pretty much have to pick one and park themselves in a spot with a good view and stay there while the stage was being changed over and another band was playing elsewhere and could be heard, perhaps, but not seen. With this setup, the people could find a good spot and just stay there right along, and hear and see everything. Definitely a nice setup, especially for those who arrived very early and grabbed spots up front.

With many jazz and blues festivals these days, the music goes beyond the particular genre and features musicians that either have big names that can draw in people who might not otherwise attend such an event, but the lineup at LBBF didn't really stray far from the blues/R&B arena. Although Chuck Berry is rock n' roll, and Dirty Dozen is more jazz, it all worked well together.

Speaking of Dirty Dozen, they were performing just as Hurricane Gustav was threatening their homes in New Or-



Pinetop Perkins



Bob Margolin



Dirty Dozen Brass Band



A psychedelic moment with Buddy Whittington

leans and the residents were facing mandatory evacuations. In spite of it, they delivered and inspired set that enthralled the crowd. Certainly a real treat that same day was seeing 95-year old blues legend Pinetop Perkins walk out on stage, dressed sharp, and sitting down at the piano for a fine set with Bob Margolin's band. Later I saw him sitting on a stopped golf cart with several fine looking younger (though that is not hard) women lined up to hug him and get an autograph. John Mayall's band was pretty much what I expected, and still features the fine guitar work of Texas-born Buddy Whittington. Mayall delivered his best performance on the harmonica feature "Room To Move," from the 1969 Turning Point album. Oddly enough, he did not play "California" from that album. It was a pleasure to see Chuck Berry perform, and he certainly still has it. Unfortunately his band was not as good as those that preceded the headliner, but the crowd obviously did not care since the man himself was on stage right before their eyes.

We were only able to make it to Long Beach for Saturday's shows, but I am told the music on Sunday was fantastic and the crowd was just as large.

The festival ran from 2-11 pm Saturday, and 3-8 pm on Sunday. Tickets for each full day were \$45, and a 2-day pass could be purchased for \$75. Dozens of vendors lined one side of the area offering beer, wine, various sandwiches, t-shirts and the like. Parking was easy, for \$10 you could park right across the street in Marina Green Park. And in the comfort area, there were plenty of clean port-a-potties in several areas at the festival.

I have been to other festivals in scenic areas, such as the Pocono Blues Festival in Pennsylvania and the Dana Point Blues Festival in California, not too far north of Long Beach. And while the scenery was fine inside Rainbow Lagoon Park, there was also much to see and do just outside the park. Just across the street from the festival's west entrance was Shoreline Village. This area consisted of many stores and restaurants on a boardwalk in Rainbow Harbor. You won't have a hard time finding a place to eat, or have a drink should you get to the area well before the festival opens.

I was able to do something I'd wanted to do for many years. During World War II the British luxury ship RMS Queen Mary, along with her sister ship RMS Queen Elizabeth, served as a troop carrier, taking many thousands of US Army soldiers to Europe. She is now, and has for many

years, been docked at Long Beach and is a hotel. She can be seen right across the bay from Shoreline Village and one can take the water taxi known as AquaBus from a dock not far from that area to the other side of the bay and get off right by Queen Mary for only a dollar! At last I got to see this historic ship, but unfortunately we were having problems getting adjusted to a new camera and none of the close-ups came out, although we did get a good shot from afar at Shoreline Village. We were too close to the festival opening, so we did not get a chance to take the tour of the ship. That will have to wait until the next time.

You can also take the AquaBus to several other docks in the area to explore Long Beach harbor. And, there is a catamaran called the AquaLink that will take you on a longer run starting at the Queen Mary, then stopping at the Aquarium of the Pacific and then way across the bay to Alamitos Bay Landing near Seal Beach for only \$3. So, if you are able to spend an extra day or so in Long Beach, there is enough good stuff to do to keep you busy.

I would presume the 30th annual Long Beach Blues Festival will be in late August of 2009. The festival is presented by Bill Silva Presents along with KJAZ 88.1, a very fine jazz and blues radio station at California State University Long Beach. Make a bookmark for www.jazzandblues.org/longbeachbluesfestival to check on information upcoming for the 2009 festival. And, I would guess that being the 30th anniversary, it will be quite an event!

Photos by Wanda Simpson



The docks at Shoreline Village • RMS Queen Mary in background

Jazz Festival Returns to the Tropical Setting of Riviera Maya

Playa del Carmen, Mexico – The Riviera Maya will host its sixth annual jazz festival at Mamitas Beach this November 27 – 29. The festival is emerging as one of the premiere jazz music events in the Americas, and will showcase an array of international stars.

This year, the festival will draw crowds on the white sandy beach of Playa del Carmen, as it will host such top name jazz artists as Billy Cobham, Earl Klugh, David Sanborn, Hector Infanzon and others, all performing under a star-filled Riviera Maya sky.

On the opening night, Thursday, November 27, the best of Mexican jazz will be showcased and represented by Beaujean sisters from Mexico City, and followed by Jose "Pepe" Moran, the son of the great trumpeter Chilo Moran. Mr. Moran's performance will be dedicated to his father's music.

Continuing into the evening will be the local host band, Aguamala group, led by Fernando Toussaint, the creator and Director of the Riviera Maya's Jazz Festival and one of the region's own local stars, who has performed during past five festivals. The closing of this first night will be completed with the music of Hector Infanzon, one of the best Mexican pianists, who will perform with a quartet.

On Friday, November 28, the Festival will start with the performance of Iraida Noriega, who is regarded as one of the best voices of contemporary jazz and will be presenting her new solo album.

Iraida's opening performance will be followed by the Grammy award winning Earl Klugh, a pioneer of contemporary jazz, who has been opening new paths for jazz for about 30 years. He is also considered to be a follower of George Benson, who performed at the last year's festival. Mr. Klugh is a virtuoso on acoustic guitar, whose style can be described as eclectic, mixing classical music, blues and jazz.

The evening will come to a close with a performance by alto saxophonist David Sanborn, who's 4 decade career began in the sixties with the Paul Butterfield Blues Band and he collaborated with other popular musicians such as Stevie Wonder and David Bowie. He launched his solo career in 1975 and become one of the most in demand studio musicians for sessions with many others in pop, R&B and jazz. Although comfortable in many areas, Sanborn is perhaps the most influential saxophonist in the smooth jazz genre.

On the last night of the festival, Playa del Carmen will heat up once again with even hotter jazz sounds. Gianluca Littera will open the concert accompanied by Sacbe band and the Toussaint brothers. Littera is known for being the only musician performing classical music with a harmonica, and he has been playing in philharmonic halls of London and Milan. Sacbe has over thirty years of jazz experience and the three Toussaint brothers, who make up the band, are responsible for creating the first jazz record label in Mexico. This legendary jazz band, known throughout the country and the US, has been representing the Riviera Maya's Jazz Festival in both Montreal's and Haiti's Jazz Festivals.

Their performance will be followed by Billy Cobham, a Panamanian American jazz drummer, composer and bandleader, who is regarded by many as one of the top drummers on the scene, and who is known for his powerful drumming style blending rock and jazz rhythms into a harmonious fusion.

The closing act of this phenomenal music event will be a performance by Fourplay, a group which includes pianist Bob James, bassist Nathan East, guitarist Larry Carlton and drummer Harvey Mason, all of them known individually as among the top musicians today on their particular instruments. For over seventeen years and with ten albums, the group has been stretching and exploring jazz limits, while also appealing to a broad mainstream audience.

Javier Aranda, Director of the Riviera Maya Destination Marketing Office, is convinced that this year's Festival will be taken to an even higher level, as an aggressive marketing campaign had been initiated earlier this year. Upgrading the Festival's technical equipment, i.e. installing digital stage screens, was also added to enhance the overall success of annual event.

For more information on the Riviera Maya Jazz Festival visit www.rivieramayajazzfestival.com.

Easily accessible from many cities throughout the U.S., the eighty-one mile stretch known as the Riviera Maya is situated in the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico. Beginning eleven miles south of Cancun International Airport in Puerto Morelos, the Riviera Maya extends to Tulum, one of the most important archeological sites in the Mayan World. The region features the tranquility of uncrowded beaches, a vast network of underground rivers, over 100 cenotes, the action of eco-adventure sports including kayaking, mountain biking, scuba diving, snorkeling, trekking, bird watching and deep sea fishing, proximity to many of Mexico's most significant Mayan archeological sites, the varied activities of the eco-archeological parks, plus golf courses, spas, shopping, gourmet dining and a range of accommodations to suit every lifestyle and budget. The Riviera Maya has been named a Top Destination in Mexico for four consecutive years by Travel Weekly (2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007), one of the hottest beach destinations by Orbitz in 2008 and was also featured in the January 2006 issue of Travel + Leisure as "The Next Riviera."

For more information on the Riviera Maya, visit www.rivieramaya.com.

Editor's Note: See our review of the 2007 Riviera Maya Jazz Festival at www.jazz-blues.com and click the image under Special Issue, or click on the Notable button.

CD REVIEWS

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Blue Bay Jazz Fest Set for November 19–23 in St. Croix, U. S. Virgin Islands

St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands – The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism would like to invite locals, visitors and music lovers alike to a truly cultural jazz experience at the St. Croix Blue Bay Jazz Festival 2008, November 19-23.

The festival will take place in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands in the downtown Frederiksted district, with performances by local Crucians, as well as nationally-acclaimed musicians, including Pete Escovedo and Tito Puente, Jr. In addition to non-stop musical listening, the festival will feature cuisine by local Caribbean vendors, arts and crafts activities, street entertainment and dance performances by Mocko Jumbie.

Some of the music featured at this year's festival is as follows:

Wednesday November 19

- **Sherrie Bias**, a New Orleans native, has been performing her cross-cultural style of jazz worldwide for the past ten years. Her style can best be described as "all-inclusive Jazz refined with Gospel, R&B, and Latin Flare."

- **Rolando Briceno** studied saxophone, flute, and clarinet at conservatories in his native Caracas, Venezuela, as well as in the United States. Since 1971, he has been teaching, recording, and performing in the Venezuelan Symphonic Orchestra and with Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, Mario Bauza, and others.

Thursday, November 20

• V.I. Rhythm Section

- **James "Blood" Ulmer** is an American jazz and blues guitarist and singer. Ulmer has toured with numerous jazz greats and formed several bands including Music Revelation Ensemble. He is known for his distinctive guitar sound and his raggedly soulful singing.

- The **Rashied Ali** Quintet is headed up by Rashied Ali, an avant-garde jazz drummer best known for playing with John Coltrane in the late 1960's. The group released a double CD in 2005 entitled "Judgement Day."

Friday, November 21

- The **Louis Taylor** Quartet is fronted by Taylor, whose sultry sounds and screaming solos on the saxophone have won him worldwide acclaim. In addition to performing worldwide, Taylor records for film and music projects and leads lecture series at the USC Jazz Studies Department.

- **Nathan Lucas** – Organ Quartet

- **Tito Puente Jr.** has worked tirelessly to nurture and grow the musical legacy left to him by his father. The popular percussionist has toured casinos, performing art centers and jazz festivals and wowed jazz fans worldwide.

Saturday, November 22

- **Eddie Russell Quelbe/Latin Jazz Band** - Russell, a St. Croix native and trumpeter extraordinaire, is known for his red-hot improvisation and beautiful, seasoned tone. Russell began performing professionally at age 15, touring the USVI and Puerto Rico before earning Fine Arts degrees from the City University of New York. The group

performs often within the Caribbean and has lent their jazz stylings to other genres as well.

- **Willie Martinez' Latin Jazz Sextet** is known for their real New York style Latin jazz. A perfect marriage of the scintillating rhythms of the Afro Caribbean with the brilliant harmonic spontaneity of American Jazz, the ensemble features Willie's original compositions and arrangements, as well as those of the members of the sextet, all top notch composers in their own right, along with new interpretations of a few familiar themes from the past.

- **Pete Escovedo Orchestra** - Pete Escovedo is a legendary percussionist who has been performing in the music industry for more than 50 years with the likes of Carlos Santana, Tito Puente, Herbie Hancock, and more. Escovedo is known for breaking the barriers between Smooth Jazz, Salsa, Latin Jazz and contemporary music.

Sunday, November 23

- **Open Mic Beach Jam** with VI Rhythm section – and open mic (all musicians and singers are invited to participate). Local artists: Adjoa, Blackness, Venus, Malcolm, Judi Frick, Regina, Belgrave, Pikey and others

For more information, or an updated listing of musicians, visit www.frederiksted.org/.

Read our review of the 2007 St. Croix Blue Bay Jazz Fest on the December 2007 issue (Issue 299) downloadable from our site. Click on the current issue image and scroll down into the archives to retrieve it.

Travel Packages

For travelers interested in packages for the event, the 2008 St. Croix Blue Bay Jazz Fest Package starts at \$699 per person and includes:

- \$100 Amex Travelers Cheque
- \$50 Dinner Coupon
- Coupon booklet value up to \$1,600

The 2008 St. Croix Blue Bay Jazz Fest Package is valid for booking windows from now through November 15, for travel between November 17 and 24, and is based on a four night minimum stay. Participating hotels include: The Buccaneer, Carambola Beach Resort, Club St. Croix, Colony Cove, Divi Carina Bay Beach Resort, Frederiksted Hotel, Hibiscus Beach Hotel, Holger Danske Hotel, Hotel Caravelle, Palms at Pelican Cove and Sugar Beach Resort. This package must be booked through the Travel Desk 800-524-2026, 773-8220 or traveldeskestcroix.com to secure the package.

For more information about the United States Virgin Islands, visit usvitourism.vi. When traveling to the U.S. Virgin Islands, U.S. citizens enjoy all the conveniences of domestic travel – including on-line check-in – making travel to the U.S. Virgin Islands easier than ever. As a United States Territory, travel to the U.S. Virgin Islands does not require a passport from U.S. citizens arriving from Puerto Rico or the U.S. mainland. Entry requirements for non-U.S. citizens are the same as for entering the United States from any foreign destination. Upon departure, a passport is required for all but U.S. citizens.

jazz-blues.com

B.B. King Museum Opens

Indianola, Miss., – Construction has been completed for the \$15 million B.B. King Museum, which officially opened September 13.

It's a belated 83rd birthday gift, if you will, for Riley B. King, best known as "The King of the Blues." The blues great and 14-time GRAMMY winner is renowned for his facile playing on the guitar famously known as "Lucille."

The project includes the restoration of Mississippi's last brick gin mill, where he once worked, as part of the 2.3-acre complex in Indianola, Miss., near King's birthplace. Veteran museum executive Connie Gibbons is the museum's permanent director.

Why Indianola, Miss.? According to King, "They asked to do it, and it's where my roots are. Maybe it's the same reason I go back year after year to do a free homecoming concert – there's a sense of place that's very powerful and I hope it can make a difference for the children of the Mississippi Delta."

Different areas of the complex, to be developed and opened in two phases, feature various aspects of King's 60-year career, many narrated and presented thru interviews and recordings by King himself, including his difficult childhood in the Mississippi Delta and the early days in Memphis, where he launched his career in clubs and on local radio.

A replica of the WDIA radio studios in Memphis, where the indefatigable musician discovered his first real success, will also be housed at the museum. The state of Mississippi pledged \$2 million in state funds for the project.

Many performers over the years have been influenced by King's trademark guitar style including Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and George Harrison.

Visit www.bbkingmuseum.org for more information.

Anguilla's 6th Annual Tranquility Jazz Festival Nov. 6–9

Anguilla, British Caribbean – The Anguilla Tourist Board and BET Event Productions have announced the performers for the Sixth Annual Tranquility Jazz Festival set to take place in the island paradise of Anguilla on November 6-9. The "Straight. No Chaser. Tranquility Jazz Festival" has earned a reputation as one of the Caribbean's only true *all* jazz events and this year's lineup is guaranteed to keep the tradition going.

The star-studded lineup will feature Patti Austin, the legendary and beloved performer, songwriter and vocalist; Trumpeter Christian Scott, one of the brightest new jazz stars; Tony winner and two time Grammy-winning jazz vocalist Dee Dee Brightwaters; saxophonist Dean Fraser, one of Jamaica's finest brass players; Michel Camilo, Grammy and two-time Latin Grammy Award winning pianist from the Dominican Republic, and Arturo Sandoval, one of the world's most acknowledged guardians of jazz trumpet and flugel horn, winner of 4 Grammy Awards, 6 Billboard Awards and an Emmy Award. They will be joined by a host of young, talented Anguillian musicians, ready to make their mark in the jazz world.

The festivities get underway on Thursday, November 6 at CuisinArt Resort & Spa with dinner and an intimate

evening with Patti Austin. Friday swings in the daytime too, with "Jazz on the Parkway" a showcase of local and regional artists from 11 am to 5 pm presented by the National Bank of Anguilla. That night, the action moves to the festival's main event venue, the Temenos Golf Club with headliners Arturo Sandoval and Christian Scott. Saturday brings an exciting triple billing back at Temenos with Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dean Fraser and Michel Camilo, and a set from local or regional performers. Sunday provides the perfect send off to the weekend as the action takes to the beach at Sandy Ground for the traditional free finale with Dean Fraser and a host of local and regional performers.

Special packages are available island wide at a selection of luxury and affordable accommodations with options for land only and air/land offerings. All packages include festival tickets and are available at www.anguillajazz.org.

A sampling of *land only* packages include: Three Nights: Anguilla Great House - \$590; Sirena Resort & Villas - \$590; Paradise Cove Resort - \$600; Carimar Beach Club - \$499; CuisinArt Resort & Spa - \$1179 and Cap Juluca - \$1185. Four Nights: Anguilla Great House - \$715; Sirena Resort & Villas - \$715; Paradise Cove Resort - \$720; Carimar Beach Club - \$609; CuisinArt Beach Resort & Spa - \$1350 and Cap Juluca - \$1400.

Event sponsors include the National Bank of Anguilla, Anguilla Social Security Board, St. Regis Temenos, Tropical Shipping, Avis Apex, Digicel, American Express, CuisinArt Resort & Spa, Paradise Cove Resort and American Airlines' American Eagle.

To learn more about Anguilla, call the Anguilla Tourist Board at 1-877-4 ANGUILLA or visit www.anguilla-vacation.com and www.anguillajazz.org.

Black Top Catlog to be Reissued by Hep Cat Records

Los Angeles, Calif. — Hep Cat Records, the roots label of the Collectors' Choice Music family, has launched a reissue initiative for Black Top Records, an influential '80s and '90s blues label with New Orleans roots. The project began this past summer with re-releases by Anson Funderburgh & the Rockets (*Talk To You By Hand*), James Harman Band (*Two Sides to Every Story*), Rick "L.A. Holmes" Holmstrom (*Lookout!*), Rod Piazza & the Mighty Flyers (*Blues in the Dark*) and Ronnie Earl & the Broadcasters (*Surrounded by Love*).

Coming on October 28 are five more: James Harman Band (*Do Not Disturb*), Rod Piazza & the Mighty Flyers (*Alphabet Blues*), Anson Funderburgh & the Rockets (*She Knocks Me Out*), Ronnie Earl & the Broadcasters (*Soul Searching*) and Sam Myers & Anson Funderburgh (*My Love Is Here To Stay*).

Black Top Records was a New Orleans-based independent blues and R&B label founded in 1981 by brothers Nauman S. Scott III and Hammond Scott. The label's flagship release was Anson Funderburgh & the Rockets' *Talk To You By Hand*. Artists on the label (many of whom will be featured in subsequent Hep Cat releases) included Earl King, Snooks Eaglin, Lee Rocker, Guitar Shorty, Maria Muldaur, Robert Ward, Carol Fran & Clarence Hollimon, Mike Morgan & the Crawl and W.C. Clark. The label often utilized backing musicians from New Orleans or from the house band of the Austin club Antone's. The label released 100 albums before folding

in 1999. Nauman Scott died in 2002 and Hammond Scott has leased the catalog for reissue.

Among the albums slated for the next cycle:

- James Harman Band – *Do Not Disturb*
- Anson Funderburgh & the Rockets – *She Knocks Me Out*

- Ronnie Earl & the Broadcasters – *Soul Searching*
- Sam Myers & Anson Funderburgh – *My Love Is Here To Stay*

World Culture Music Founder, Drummer/Composer Kendrick Scott To Join Herbie Hancock on European Tour

Drummer/composer Kendrick Scott, founder of the artist collective label, World Culture Music, will be joining the legendary Herbie Hancock on his three-month tour of Europe, commencing at the Opera House in Vienna, Austria, on September 30th. The tour, which runs through the beginning of December, includes stops in Germany, Luxembourg, France, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, Ireland, the UK, Greece, Russian and Poland, with additional dates to be added. Also featured with Hancock on this tour will be Scott's bandleader, Grammy-winning trumpet player/film composer Terence Blanchard, bassist James Genus, guitarist Lionel Loueke, harmonica player Gregoire Maret.

In the words of Terence Blanchard, "Kendrick is a true artist of the highest order. He is not bound by the conventional wisdom of the music world. I've noticed that he never says why, but rather why not. He is exactly what the music world needs: someone with the vision and courage to press forward and expand the world of music. I am blessed to have him around and look forward to seeing what he does every time we play."

Drummer Kendrick Scott is one of jazz's young masters of the instrument. He was born in Houston and attended the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, winning Downbeat Magazine student awards, IAJE's Clifford Brown / Stan Getz award and the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts. Kendrick was awarded a scholarship to attend Berklee College of Music where he majored in Music Education. As a performer, Kendrick joined The Crusaders and The Terence Blanchard Group; he has also shared the stage with Dianne Reeves, John Patitucci, Stefon Harris, Kenny Garrett, Pat Metheny, Nicholas Payton, Gary Burton, Mark Turner, Joe Lovano, Herbie Hancock, John Scofield, David Sanborn, Roy Hargrove and many more, including playing on numerous film soundtracks by Spike Lee. Kendrick recently released "The Source" his debut recorded and first World Culture Music release to rave reviews. With this debut, he secures his position as part of an elite group of young New York-based improvisers and composers impacting jazz around the world.

World Culture Music is an artist collective record label and multi-faceted music company that was created

by Kendrick Scott to form an alliance of like-minded musicians who are making a significant impact on both today's jazz scene and on music in general.

WCM's mission is to blur the labels in music, cross the cultural divides, bypass the corporate structure and provide the next generation of talent an outlet to fulfill their creative visions.

As an alternative approach to the traditional record label, World Culture Music's objective is to bring the artist closer to the listener with no filters in creativity and honesty. WCM provides young creative musicians an opportunity to maintain all artistic control over their music and enables the musician to decide how it will be presented to the world. Unified under WCM, its artists can connect with their audience on a broad scale.

WCM presents artists of the highest caliber who are some of today's most in-demand musicians. Drummer Kendrick Scott, vocalist/composer Julie Hardy, trombonist Nick Vayenas, and guitarist Mike Moreno have established themselves as some of the leading musical figures of their generation. They have played on over 35 recordings combined and performed with some of today's top jazz acts including Joshua Redman, Terence Blanchard, John Scofield, Nicholas Payton, Greg Osby, David Sanborn, Joe Sample, Dianne Reeves Jeff "Tain" Watts, Michael Buble, Kenny Garrett, and Ravi Coltrane.

For more on WCM, visit www.worldculturemusic.com

To check out the tour dates with Herbie Hancock, visit www.herbiehancock.com/tour/

Keith Jarrett Trio Caught in Philly

Keith Jarrett, Jack DeJohnette and Gary Peacock played the Verizon Theatre at the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia on September 19. 2008 marks the 25th Anniversary of this trio and they are currently on tour. They came together in 1983 when Jarrett invited the other two to join him in a recording studio in New York to play 'standards'. These sessions produced the trio's first three releases Standards Vol. 1, and 2 and Changes. These recordings from the original trio were re-released as a special 3-CD box set titled "Setting Standards" in early 2008 to celebrate their 25th Anniversary.

Tonight's concert attests that these three masters continue to have a connection with each other that communicates pure energy and a deep expression of joy for life and love of the music that only great masters can translate. When touched by great art, to try to verbalize what can only be felt and goes deeper than words, is a humbling experience. I can only say that being in the presence of this great music connects the listener to the depth of soul.

These masters titillate, coax and seduce the listener on a musical journey that transcends thought and draws us into their personal meditation. Clearly Jarrett, DeJohnette and Peacock speak the same language and have the ability to bring us mere mortals into their world of passionate and beautiful sound. Jarrett's piano produces rich and lush melodies, accompanied by Peacock's deep, smooth and constant voice while DeJohnette moves us with his tasty, rhythmic and funky beats.

The entire being of the listener is seduced. The seduction begins with the ear, moves into the body, mind and

soul to find its center, to take you home. Transformation happens, moving the experience of the artist into the experience of the listener. We all walk away enriched, well-fed and deeply breathed.

They played two sets that included, 'I'm a Fool To Want You', 'Smoke Gets In Your Eyes', 'When I Fall in Love', and a great funky version of 'God Bless the Child' in their 3rd encore. At one point in the show, Jarrett, shaking his head in awe of DeJohnette's skill asked, "I've played with you for 25 years and I have never heard you do that before?" At the end of it all, they bowed deeply, their transmission complete.

All I can say is "God Bless Us All...Everyone"...I walk away happier, lighter and breathing more deeply!

Paula Ryan

The next Keith Jarrett Trio concert (that we know about is at Boston Symphony Hall, Boston, Mass on Sunday, October 26 at 8 pm. For tickets visit www.bso.org or call 888-266-1200.

BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

New Release blues.... While you are cruising around taking in the glorious color of the fall leaves, don't forget your favorite color: blue.... This year's fall harvest brings a bumper crop of new blues.... **B.B. King- One Kind Favor; Joe Bonamassa- Live from Nowhere in Particular; Irma Thomas- Simply Grand; Albert Cummings- Feel so Good; Monte Montgomery- Monte Montgomery; Chris Duarte- Vantage Pointe; JJ Grey & Mofro- Orange Blossoms; Taj Mahal- Maestro; Indigenous- Broken Lands; Elvin Bishop- The Blues Roll On; Magic Slim & the Teardrops- Midnight Blues; Marvin Sease- Who's Got the Power; E.G. Kight- It's Hot in Here; Carlos del Junco Band- Steady Movin'; Candye Kane/Deborah Colman/ Dani Wilde- Blues Caravan: Guitars & Feathers; Cephas & Wiggins- Richmond Blues; Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials- Full Tilt; Marc Ford & the Neptune Blues Club- Marc Ford & the Neptune Blues Club; Jackie Payne and Steve Edmonson Band- Overnight Sensation; Buddy Whittington- Buddy Whittington; Freddie King- Feeling for the Blues; Johnny Rawls- Red Cadillac; Jimmy Witherspoon- Live at the 1972 Monterey Jazz Festival; Eddie Taylor Jr.,- I got the Make this Money Baby; Geoff Muldaur- Is Having a Wonderful Time; Jon Cleary & the Absolute Monster Gentlemen- Mo Hippa Live; Odetta- Odetta Sings Dylan; New Guitar Summit (Jay Geils/ Duke Robillard/ Gerry Beaudoin - Shivers; Byther Smith- Blues on the Moon- Live at Natural Rhythm Social Club; Paul Mark & the Van Dorens- Blood and Treasure; Wressing & Schultz- Don't Be Afraid to Groove; Deborah Bonham- Duchess; Slo Leak- New Century blues; Cedric Burnside & Lightnin' Malcom- 2 Man Wrecking Crew; Los Fabulocos featuring Kid Ramos-; Los Fabulocos; Paul Reddick- Sugar Bird; Diamond Jim**

Greene- Holdin' On; John Lee Hooker, Jr.- All Odds Against Me; Grady Champion- Back in Mississippi Live; Delaney Bramlett- A New Kind of Blues; Dave Spector- Live in Chicago; Billy Flynn- Blues Drive; Eddie Floyd- Eddie Loves You So; Travis Haddix- Daylight at Midnight; Scott Ellison- Ice Storm; Chris James and Patrick Rynn- Stop and Think About It; Rory Block- Blues Walkin' Like a Man- A Tribute to Son House; Joe Louis Walker- Witness to the Blues; RJ Mischo- King of a Might Good Time; Hans Theessink & Terry Evans- Visions; Theodis Ealey - Live; The Bruce Katz Band- Live at the Firefly; Reba Russell Band- Bleeding Heart... That's it for this month. See Ya!

Summer in the Autumn:

the Popkomm Reggae Festival in Berlin

Berlin, Germany – Europe's largest showcase festival will take place in October. For Popkomm this is a good reason for bringing more Jamaican atmosphere to Berlin. With more than 20 acts on three stages the Popkomm Reggae Festival on 10 October not only provides an overview of traditional Roots Reggae, but also other forms such as Ragga, Dancehall, Reggaeton and Ska. This long night will also provide an opportunity to look further afield and examine where this type of music crosses over with HipHop and World Music.

Two Berlin agencies, Grooving Smokers and Terrabeats, have compiled an international programme for the two venues, RAW-Tempel and Cassiopeia, which is located opposite it. "Popkomm is the ideal setting for bringing the best exponents of offbeat rhythms from so many countries to Berlin in such a concentrated form", says Perry Ottmuller, Head of Grooving Smokers, the well-known organizer of reggae parties and shows in the German capital. For Pepe Vargas of TERRABEATS, which has established quite a reputation for its world music parties, the Popkomm Reggae Festival demonstrates above all how universal this music from Jamaica has now become: "Reggae has not only conquered the pop world but has for a long time been influencing regional music. Our intention is to demonstrate some of these interactions during the Popkomm Night."

For fans of traditional reggae the Popkomm Festival contains two particular highlights in the form of Ponto de Equilibrio, the most popular reggae band in Brazil, and Black Ghandi, successful newcomers from Spain. Junior Banton (Germany) and the Pirat's Sound Sistema (Spain), singing in Catalan, will then show how this genre is keeping up with the times and forming a link with dancehall. This electronic variation on reggae will be represented by Mad Killah & Tanto Nyro (France), 3gga (Austria) and Benjie (Germany). Local practitioners, the Berlin Boom Orchestra, will demonstrate that reggae also works with a big band format.

Just how international reggae has become, and how it has also found its way into South America folk music, will be demonstrated by Argentinian-born Paco Mendoza, who describes himself as a "citizen of the world of the arts", and who grew up in Nicaragua, Honduras and Germany. Although Vincent van Gogo come from Denmark, they play soul and afro-beat. MC Habano from Havana

combines the musical heritage of his Cuban homeland with modern beats derived from reggaeton and hiphop. Hiphop has learned a lot from Jamaica, as is shown by MusiCalistik, a French crew based in London, and the convincingly multi-cultural Too Funk Sistaz (Germany), who have their roots in Mexico, Chile and Turkey.

The intervals between the bands and the sound systems will be filled by DJs Sammy Dread (Jamaika), Pepe Vargas, Johnny Vedado, Boogoo Yagga Dub Disco, Irie Steppaz, Lou Large, Triple D and Ashne (all from Germany).

But the evening will not focus entirely on music. This year's Popkomm Reggae Festival is being supported by "Schulwälder für Westafrika e.V.", a socio-ecological project that encourages children in Africa to plant trees in their schoolyards. For each tree that they plant they will be rewarded with a solar lamp, and in this way they can learn about the positive impact of producing sustainable energy. Established in 1996, this project is committed to practical ways of protecting rain forests and thus the world climate too. In 2005 its work was acknowledged by the German UNESCO Commission and the German National Committee of the UN Decade "Education for Sustainable Development" (more details can be found at www.schulwaelder.org, www.solux.org).

All the information about the Popkomm Reggae Festival can be found at: www.popkomm-reggae-festival.de

Michael Burks, Shemekia Copeland head for Iraq on Bluzapalooza Tour

Beginning October 26, guitarist/vocalist Michael "Iron Man" Burks and powerhouse blues singer Shemekia Copeland will perform for U.S. troops in Iraq and Kuwait as part of the second Bluzapalooza tour this year. During the 12-day tour, they will join blues artists Deanna Bogart, Zac Harmon, Moreland & Arbuckle and Tony Braunagel and The Bluzapalooza All-Star Band.

The tour was created by blues producers Steve Simon and John Hahn and is presented by Armed Forces Entertainment. The first tour, featuring blues/soul vocalist Janiva Magness, legendary R&B singer Bobby Rush and harmonicist Billy Gibson, began on April 1.

Burks feels privileged to be making the trip. "I'm happy for the chance to show my appreciation for what the troops are doing. For me to play for them is a small gesture compared to the sacrifices they make every day."

Copeland agrees. "I am deeply honored to be going over there to entertain our troops — and Lord knows I love to hang out with men in uniforms."

Bluzapalooza founder and producer Simon states, "We are thrilled to be going back to Iraq and to have so many great blues artists volunteering to go to a war zone. This is certainly an historic event for the blues and for our men and women who so proudly serve our country."

Co-producer Hahn adds, "Our October tour's lineup would sell out any blues festival in the country. It's an honor to be able to bring it to our troops."

Renowned New York photographer, Joseph A.

Rosen, a recipient of the "Keeping The Blues Alive" Award from The Blues Foundation, will document this historic tour.

A free limited edition 14-track blues sampler CD will be distributed to the troops, featuring songs from artists on the upcoming tour, the previous tour, as well as other blues stars. All the recorded performances and all the costs involved with the CD, from manufacturing and printing to song publishing and artwork, were donated free of charge.

Artists on the CD, simply titled *BLUZAPALOOZA*, are, from the first tour: Janiva Magness, Bobby Rush, and Billy Gibson; from the upcoming tour: Michael "Iron Man" Burks, Shemekia Copeland, Moreland & Arbuckle, Zac Harmon and Deanna Bogart; and also The Home-made Jamz Blues Band, Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials, Tinsley Ellis, Watermelon Slim & The Workers, Smokin' Joe Kubek & Bnois King, and The JW-Jones Blues Band.

The Bluzapalooza tour is made possible with the help of Armed Forces Entertainment, The Blues Foundation, *Blues Revue*, Alligator Records, NorthernBlues Music, Blind Raccoon, Delta Groove Records, Blind Pig Records, Hohner Harmonicas, Telarc Records, Sony Corporation, Ruf Records and Entertainment Support Systems, LLC.

Armed Forces Entertainment (AFE) is the lead Department of Defense agency for providing entertainment to U.S. military personnel serving overseas. Founded in 1951, AFE brings entertainment to more than 500,000 troops each year.

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Why Some People Think *Duke Ellington* Is a Member of the Royal Family.

KIDS DON'T GET ENOUGH ART THESE DAYS. So you can see why some of them might accidentally confuse a jazz legend named Duke with royalty named duke. But it's finally time to set the record straight.

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington didn't rule over a small English estate. Instead he reigned supreme over jazz institutions like The Cotton Club. He riffed

powerfully on the piano, but it was the full orchestra that he considered his most compelling instrument. He introduced improvisation to his compositions — a process unheard of using a 15-piece orchestra. The result was a different approach to jazz that sparked a revolution and an evolution. His music spread across the world with songs like "Sophisticated Lady." "In a



A piano player. A composer. An orchestra leader
 Duke Ellington raged over a kind called jazz.

"Sentimental Mood," and "Take the 'A' Train." His historical concert in 1953 at the Newport Jazz Festival has entered the lexicon of legendary live performances. There is no doubt about it, Ellington's brand of jazz has contributed significantly to the American songbook and to the lives of anyone who has ever tapped their foot to a beat.

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can

really transform lives. In fact, the more art kids get, the smarter they become in subjects like math and science. And the more likely they'll become well-rounded, cool members of society. For Ten Simple Ways to get more art in kids' lives, visit AmericansForTheArts.org.



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 They have no rhythm.
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CARLOS DEL JUNCO

Steady Movin' NORTHERN BLUES

Northern Blues has treated us to the latest release by the Cuban born, Canadian raised harmonica wizard Carlos del Junco, "Steady Movin'." Del Junco plays a ten note diatonic harmonica chromatically employing the "overblow" technique taught to him by the virtuoso Howard Levy.

This set is produced by guitarist Kevin Breit (Norah Jones, Cassandra Williams) and features him in the context of a blues quintet on a genre transcending set of blues, jazz, funk, folk and more. Obviously the selling point of this album is his harmonica wizardry, but he isn't that bad a singer either. As suggested, this covers quite a range of musical styles from the hot swinging jump harmonica boogie "Diddle It" that opens this with some driving saxophone like lines, followed by Kevin Breit's "Dull Blade" with its Ventures instrumental flavor with del Junco's harp adding a TV theme flavor.

Dennis Keldie adds some nice organ on this track that surprises with its twists and turns. "Jersey Bounce" is a jazzy instrumental that may have come from the Tiny Bradshaw songbook on which del Junco displays his jazzy side. "Mashed Potatoes Canada" with John Dickie's vocal is a tribute to James Brown with a nice funk groove and Carlos being a one-person funk horn section. It is followed by a nice tribute to Rice Miller on "Movin' Down the River Rhine," with him evoking Sonny Boy's harmonica styling and contributing an effective vocal.

The intimate setting is followed by the Latin-jazz flavored "Paradise," with another credible vocal and some country-folk guitar in the backing. A lengthy solo version of "Amazing Grace" with his harp echoing bagpipes near the ear precedes exotic "The Simple Life," with echoes of the music of the Indian subcontinent. "Bailey's Bounce," a tribute to DeFord Bailey, is a marvelous harmonica evocation of a train such that Bailey himself had made famous. The album ends with "Doodle It," with a banjo prominent in the skittle band styled backing that opens at

a slow tempo before the band kicks it into a peppier gear with more swinging harp that closes this excellent album on a very high note.

Del Junco is obviously rooted in the blues, but he goes beyond his blues roots for a stunning recording that demonstrates why he among the most highly regarded harmonica players around, which is helped by the excellent support he receives on this disc. "Steady Movin'" is simply superb.

Ron Weinstock



DERRICK GARDNER AND THE JAZZ PROPHETS

A Ride to the Other Side... OWL RECORDS

Formed in 1991 when Derrick Gardner arrived in New York, the hard bop Jazz Prophets has hung together since then. This group is heard on this exciting new release "A Ride to the Other Side..."

The core of the band is leader Derrick's trumpet, his brother Vincent on trombone and Rob Dixon's tenor saxophone, rounded out by the rhythm of pianist Anthony Wonsley, bassist Rodney Whitaker and drummer Donald Edwards. Percussionist Kevin Kaiser spices up several tracks with his Latin rhythmic accents. Musically, the Jazz Prophets are inspired by the funky hard bop of the likes of Cannonball Adderley, Horace Silver, Art Blakey and Louis Hayes-Woody Shaw. If Derrick Gardner is the leader, this band sounds like there is quite a cooperative flavor as both brother Vincent and saxophonist Dixon contribute some of the originals. The only performance that is not an original is "Be One," from bassist Bill Lee (Spike's dad).

Whatever the source, this album cooks from the opening "Funky Straight" through the hot Afro-Cuban scorcher "Lazara," the dreamy "Just a Touch" with its stop-time effect and Dixon's spirited "Of Infinity," that closes this disc. "Mac Daddy Grip" is a Blakey inspired number with a loping beat with brother Vincent opening with a strong trombone solo followed by a prancing tenor solo from Dixon before the leader takes the spotlight recalling the likes of Woody Shaw and Lee Morgan with his brash and bright tone. Bill Lee's "Be One" gives Derrick a chance to showcase his marvelous ballad playing on a number some may be familiar with from the sound track of "School Daze."

Few, if any, hard bop enthusiasts will be disappointed by the spirited and thoughtful playing here by an excellent ensemble that bring some fresh voices to this jazz tradition.

Ron Weinstock



NEW GUITAR SUMMIT
Shivers
STONY PLAIN

Stony Plain recently issued "Shivers," the second collaboration of New Guitar Summit, comprised of guitarists Jay Geils, Duke Robillard and Gerry Beaudoin, Guitarist-vocalist Randy Bachman (of Bachman-Turner Overdrive and Guess Who fame) guests on two Mose Allison songs included among the eleven selections.

While I have not heard the prior recording, my familiarity with Robillard led me to expect a swing-based session and obviously the earlier collaboration was successful enough to justify this sequel. And one can understand, as all three obviously love the easy swinging groove throughout this collection of jazzy blues, swing classics (the title track is from Charlie Christian and Lionel Hampton), and the pair of Mose Allison numbers.

One hears echoes of Christian and Grant Green (listen to the opening of Beaudoin's original "Blue Sunset"). They take the old Thurston Harris R&B hit "Little Bitty Pretty One" and turn it into a swing romp, followed by a spiffy jam on "Flying Home," and they really rip into the old swing romp, "Broadway." Bachman's low-key vocal delivery really contributes to the mood of the two Mose Allison numbers, "Your Mind Is On Vacation," and "Everybody's Crying Mercy" and adds a distinctive style with his guitar on these selections. "Honey Suckle Rose" may be taken a bit too slow, but that is more a matter of preference and the playing here is very lovely, as it is non the closing "Mediterranean Nights."

This album just brings some friends together for a blues-tinged, swinging disc that will deservedly have wide appeal.

Ron Weinstock

BEBO VALDÉS & JAVIER COLINA
Live at the Village Vanguard
CALLE 54 RECORDS

Pianist Bebo Valdés, accompanied solely by double bassist Javier Colina, performs 14 standards and Latin jazz classics in this duet set recorded live in November 2005 at New York's Village Vanguard, Valdés' first New York club engagement.

The impeccably recorded acoustic date features compositions by Valdés ("Con poco coco," "Ritmando el cha-cha-cha," and "Bebo's Blues") as well as classics by Ernesto Lecuona, familiar boleros, a pop composition by Jerome Kern ("Yesterdays") and, the closer, Bill Evans' "Waltz for Debby." Valdés doesn't miss a beat or chord and Colina plays in tight unity throughout.

Valdés was born October 9, 1918 in Quivicán, Cuba. After acquiring the keyboard skills that enabled him to perform in a series of local bands, Valdés left his birth town for Havana, where he became musical director at a famous Havana night club. He was one of the primary forgers of *descarga*, the Cuban jam session, alongside bassist Israel "Cachao" Lopez. Valdés defected from Cuba in 1960 and by 1963 settled in Stockholm. He is the father of renowned Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés.

The CD is a delightfully light and melodious listen. Valdés has previously won two Grammy Awards and five Latin Grammy Awards, so it's no surprise that this recording—released shortly before the pianist's 90th birthday—has been nominated for a Latin Grammy for Best Instrumental Album.

Nancy Ann Lee



WATERMELON SLIM AND THE WORKERS
No Paid Holidays
NORTHERN BLUES

Watermelon Slim has followed his acclaimed album "The Wheel Man" with this new disc that is sure to please fans and critics alike. Backed by his tight band The Workers, he brings his multi-instrumental skills and raspy, gritty vocals to a collection of provocative originals mixed with some choice covers.

The album kicks off with some slide guitar on the driving "Blues For Howard," followed by the by the relentless vamp and groove of "Archetypical Blues No. 2" which cleverly incorporates some traditional blues stanzas. He shifts to harp while the band kicks into a fast boogaloo groove for Detroit Junior's "Call My Job," with his crisp machine-gun delivery of the lyrics being very effective. "You're the One I Need," with its Latin-shuffle rhythm, is effective with its lower-key delivery. Perhaps a bit too hard driving may be "Bubba's Blues" with a guest appearance from Leroy Parnell on slide guitar. An interesting performance is Laura Nyro's "And When I Die," which Slim accompanies only with his harmonica, a far cry from Blood Sweat & Tears hit of the song. "Gearzy's Boogie," is a frenzied harp feature that features some crisp playing but perhaps a bit too frantic a tempo, which contrasts with the sparse field holler opening of "This Traveling Life," on which the starkness is broken up by some crying harmonica.

Taking up the dobro, Slim has a playful tribute on "Max The Playful Clown," which might not be a blues, but is a damn fine song and performance. Its playful mood contrasts with his stark eyewitness protest of the brutal oppression by the military rules in Miramar, "The Burmese Blues." Not sure who decided to follow this with his talking blues "I Got a Toothache," with guitar and foot stomping, but no pos-

sible fault can be found with his moving rendition of Mississippi Fred McDowell's "Everybody's Down On Me."

There are a few flaws but overall "No Paid Holiday" is a highly satisfying recording, full of some exceptional new songs and thoughtful, yet impassioned performances.

Ron Weinstock

LIONEL HAMPTON ORCHESTRA Live at Mustermesse Basel, 1953 (Part 2) Swiss Radio Days, Vol. 18 TCB RECORDS

For this concert performance live-recorded on September 25, 1953 in Switzerland, Lionel Hampton leads an orchestra that includes trumpeters Art Farmer, Clifford Brown and Quincy Jones (also piano), trombonists Jimmy Cleveland, Benny Powell, bassist Monk Montgomery, drummer Allan Dawson, and other ace instrumentalists. Like all its successors, this was a short-lived band.

The rousing charts make this an exciting listen. All but four of the nine tunes (45:02 total time) are Hampton compositions. Familiar include "Flying Home," "Air Mail Special," "Hamp's Boogie Woogie" and "On the Sunny Side of the Street." You don't hear much of Hampton's vibes playing until track 7 ("Kingfish/Drinkin' Wine"). One drawback is that liner notes (by Kurt S. Weil) don't list soloists.

Never released before, the historic material on this Part 2 disc captures all the fun of a live performance, especially Hampton's "Hey-Baba-re-Bop," in which the audience engages in a call-and-response with vocalist Sunny Parker (or Hampton) against pounding traps work. Part one, released in October 2007, included a ten-track mix of mostly standards.

Nancy Ann Lee

CHRIS JAMES AND PATRICK RYAN Stop and Think About It EARWIG

Guitarist Chris James and bassist Patrick Ryan have been working together for quite some time, playing the clubs in Chicago, and touring with Sam Lay for several years as well. This writer saw them as part of Jody Williams' backing band at the 2007 Pocono Blues Festival and had a chance to chat with Chris, finding him as knowledgeable as he was a marvelous player. Earwig has just issued a release by the duo, "Stop and Think About It," which is a terrific recording of old school Chicago-styled blues.

James fronts the recording with his powerful vocals and his terrific guitar (evoking the late Robert Lockwood and Williams). He and Ryan are joined by a variety of backing musicians including harmonica player Bob Corritore, with whom they have toured Europe, pianist Dave Maxwell, drummers Sam Lay and Willie Hayes and saxophonist Jonny Viau.

They mix in some wonderful originals that suggest John Brim and Little Walter along with covers of songs from Elmore James (four numbers, of which only "Hawaiian Boogie" may be well known), Jay McShann, Bo Diddley, and Snooky Pryor. Check out the title track, a strong shuffle taken a relaxed tempo; a remake of Jay McShann's "Confessin' the Blues," with a terrific tenor

solo from Carla Brownlee and strong piano from Julien Brunetaud; and "Mister Coffee," an easy rocker with hints of Jimmy Rogers and John Brim as James sings about being man who grinds so fine," with Corritore adding harp.

"Early in the Morning," is one of the Elmore James covers here with some nice slide along with horns using the "Fannie Mae" riff. While "Hawaiian Boogie" often is played with a manic tempo, the performance here benefits from James' restraint, which does not diminish the power of this rendition.

"You Got to Move" is one of the songs Elmore recorded for legendary Harlem record man Bobby Robinson, and with Brownlee's baritone helping to give bottom to the performance, James lays down a first-rate vocal and takes a terrific solo. It's so refreshing to hear someone put his own stamp on Elmore's music, yet remain true to the music's essence.

James perhaps is a bit out front with the vocal on Snooky Pryor's "Someone to Love Me," but it still is a solid performance. "Relaxing at the Clarendon" is a fine instrumental that displays more of James' strong slide style taken at a walking tempo. Mix in the fine rendition of "Bo Diddley's "Mona" and one has little to find fault with on this disc.

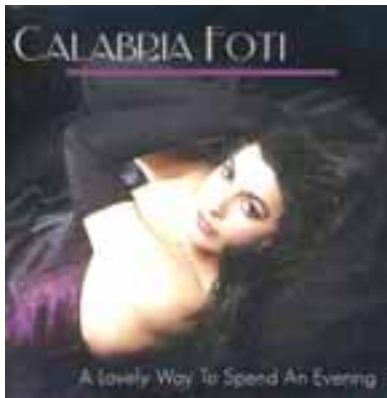
When I saw James and Ryan backing Jody Williams, I could appreciate how good they were as musicians, but this stellar release shows even more, how good they are out in front. This was an unexpected blues delicacy and highly recommended.

Ron Weinstock

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CALABRIA FOTI

A Lovely Way to Spend An Evening MOCO RECORDS

When one has the likes of a Johnny Mathis and Johnny Mandel boosting you, then people are going to pay attention. Mathis makes the comment about Calabria Foti's recording "A Lovely Way to Spend An Evening," "This recording of Calabria Foti's voice is some of the most beautiful and artistic music I have ever heard.

It is a treasure.." Mandel is quoted as saying this "is one of the best records I've ever heard." Others praising this include Chris Botti, Sammy Nestico and Dave Koz, and she does have a gorgeous voice, which she displays throughout this romantic collection based on the American Songbook.

Backing her is the trio of pianist Matt Harris, bassist Trey Henry, and drummer Dick Weller, who are joined by guitarist Larry Koonse, trombonist Bob McChesney (who does the string arrangements on the tracks with strings), saxophonist Rob Lockart and a string section on various songs. Its a light jazz-vocal, very easy to listen to album sure to have wide ranging appeal, starting the opening "Love Me As Though There Were No Tomorrow," with its lush string accompaniment, followed by a jazzier "The Touch of Your Lips," with some easy scatting from Foti along with some nimble guitar by Koonse and a bass solo from Henry.

Strings return to the backing Gershwin's "Do It Again," with a marvelous, sensuous delivery of the wistful lyrics with McChesney taking a melodic trombone solo. Soothing and slow may be part of the lyrics of Benny Carter's "When Lights Are Low," taken at a lackadaisical tempo and coupled as medley with the Peggy Lee hit, "Linger Awhile." With her clean delivery and lovely vocal, the strings add to the dreaminess of her performance here. Cole Porter's "All of You" is peppier and includes spirited solos from Koonse and McChesney in addition to Foti's dreamy, sensuous delivery of the lyrics.

Just the trio accompanies her on the medley of "I Am Woman (You Are Man)" / "You Fascinate Me," with pianist Harris being noteworthy here, while "I Want to Be Loved," made famous by Dinah Washington and only backed by Harris' spare electric piano, is more pensive than bluesy, and the title track with strings and a mellifluous trombone takes us fully back to romance.

Listening to this one can understand while the likes of Mathis, Mandel, Koz and Botti are so enthusiastic. After all Mathis' forte was the romantic ballad and the lovely voice of Calabria Foti certainly brings the romance to the fore on this disc which is a lovely way to spend some time with along with candles and some wine.

Ron Weinstock

THE STEVE HILGER BAND

Live In East Town REEDS LAKE RECORDS

Recorded live at Billy's Lounge, this debut release features two covers and eight originals by band leader Steve Hilger.

Blues fans who are tired of the same old guitar centered discs will find much to like here with saxophonist John Gist and keyboardist Brian Drews spending lots of time in the solo spotlight. With every song clocking in at over 5 minutes and three clocking it at over 10 minutes, the entire band gets plenty of time to stretch.

While the entire set is solid, highlights include the jazzy *Tell Me No Lies*, the low key, piano fueled *Miss You Baby*, the funky *Thrill of the Hunt*, the drum/bass twist on the introduction to the classic *Got My Mojo Working*, the slow burning, *Comin' Home* and the slinky *Party Down*.

Mark Smith

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This photo of Deitra 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

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ROY HARGROVE

Earfood

EMARCY RECORDS

It is astonishing that Roy Hargrove is not yet 40, as his recording career almost spans two full decades. His latest album features his trumpet and flugelhorn with his working band of Justin Robinson (saxophone), Gerald Clayton (piano), Danton Boller (bass) and Montez Coleman (drums).

This is a solid modern date which is intelligently programmed with a few choice chestnuts mixed in with Hargrove's intriguing originals that transverse a wide landscape of moods and grooves. The sizzling opening, Cedar Walton's "I'm Not So Sure," kicks off like an Art Blakey cooker, while the mood shifts on "Brown," with nice mute playing from Hargrove, but the whole group is terrific. The empathy they display is an element that is one the crucial reasons why this is such a solid effort. "Starmaker" is another lovely ballad with strong solos from Hargrove, Robinson and Clayton. "Joy is Sorrow Unmasked" is a melancholy tinged tone poem followed by the bouncy bop of "The Stinger." "Mr. Clean" is built on a funk bass line, somewhat evoking Cannonball Adderley and similar soul-laced jazz, while "Speak Low," is another ballad with Robinson sitting out and Hargrove's playing marked by its ruminative flavor. A live performance of Sam Cooke's "Bring It On Home to Me," takes us back to the church and the blues with Robinson and Hargrove engaging in a spirited call and response before Hargrove launches into perhaps the most fervent playing here followed by Clayton sounding like he is playing in church.

It is a spirited close to a terrific collection of performances by one of the leading groups playing today.

Ron Weinstock

AMOS GARRETT

Get Way Back

A Tribute to Percy Mayfield

STONY PLAIN

Guitarist Amos Garrett has had a long career recording and touring with the likes of Bonnie Raitt, Emmylou Harris, Paul Butterfield's Better Days, Stevie Wonder, Maria Muldaur and Elvin Bishop. He's also recorded a number of his own discs and has collaborated with Gene Taylor and the late Doug Sahm as the Formerly Brothers. This disc finds him with his long time band, The Eh! Team, featuring Bucky Berger on drums and Victor Bateman on bass. Also featured are Ken Whiteley on pi-

ano, Ron Casat on Hammond b3, Dave Babcock on saxophones and Alistair Elliott on trumpet. With this crew in tow, Garrett turns his attention to the songbook of R & B giant Percy Mayfield. Mayfield, perhaps best known for the oft covered classics, *Hit the Road Jack* and *Please Send Me Someone to Love*, also penned numerous other gems as evidenced by the eleven cuts included here.

Garrett's understated, laid back approach adds a breeziness to the material that makes it almost easy to overlook the darkness that often seeps into the lyrics. For example, the punchy horn chart of

Stranger in My Own Hometown hides the heartache of not getting acknowledged at home while the uptown swing of *My Jug and I* is almost at odds with the chronicle of Mayfield's difficult affliction with the bottle. On the other hand, *River's Invitation* and *Never Say Naw* are simmering scorchers that are as ominous as the barely concealed threats against a lover on the brink of giving him the goodbye look. *The Country* lopes along with an easy charm that exactly matches the lyrics about letting nature wash away your worries.

Even though an easy pace dominates most of this set, Garrett does know how to turn up the temperature as evidenced by *Get Way Back*, a jump/swing number that would fit nicely on a Wynonie Harris disc. Don't mistake the low key approach to musical laziness. Instead, Garrett and crew lay down restrained, tasteful charts that leave no room for overplaying. Matching the elegant musical approach is Garrett's easy baritone drawl which channels Lou Rawls, Bill Withers and, occasionally, Leon Russell.

Mark Smith

HANS GLAWISCHNIG

Panorama

SUNNYSIDE

New York based bassist Hans Glawischnig has certainly come along way from his Graz, Austria beginnings. He has attended Berklee and The Manhattan School of Music. In 1995 took the bass seat in Bobby Watson's Urban Renewal, followed by a stint with Maynard Ferguson before he was invited to join Ray Barretto's New World Spirit Ensemble Jazz followed by engagements with Pacquito D'Riviera, David Samuels and Bobby Sanabria along with performances with Billy Harper, Richie Beirach, Billy Hart, Joe Locke, Steffon Harris, Claudio Roditi, Brian Lynch, Phil Woods and Claudia Acuna to name a few. His first album as a leader was "Common Ground" for Fresh Sounds/New Talent in 2003.

Now Sunnyside has just issued his latest release as a leader, "Panorama." On his nine compositions he is joined by such well known artists as pianists Chick Corea, and Luis Perdomo; drummers Johnathan Blake, Antonio Sanchez, and Marcus Gilmore; saxophonists David Binney, Miguel Zenon and Rich Perry; and guitarist Ben Monder. Zenon is present on four of the performances which have a pretty wide cast. Zenon's sax dominates the opening 'Line Drive,' with his clean tone and marvelous invention followed by the impressive Perdomo's piano, while the leader's bass anchors the proceedings and drummer Blake imaginatively keeps pushing the tune along while adding his own accents.

The title track features Corea in a very thoughtful,

lyrical vein, while Glawischnig also gets to solo, and Zenon returns on "The Orchids," a performance that evokes some of the flavor of Keith Jarrett's European Quartet recordings. "Gypsy Tales," is a quintet track with guitarist Monder, saxophonist Binney and drummer Antonio Sanchez with a spacey feel, with Binney taking a probing tenor solo while Monder's guitar is in the post McLaughlin and Abercrombie approach. "Set to Sea" is a lovely ballad featuring the tenor of Rich Perry, while Corea returns for "Oceanography," derived "From How Deep Is The Ocean." "Barretto's Way," opens with nice bowed bass playing before a bit of flamenco is evoked by his bass (suggestive of David Holland here).

The rest of the album features fresh material, thoughtful and inventive playing and marvelous group interplay making "Panorama" a superior jazz release.

Ron Weinstock

MAGIC SLIM & THE TEARDROPS

Midnight Blues

BLIND PIG

The latest from Magic Slim is an enjoyable release again delivered in his immediately recognizable sound with his grinding slow blues and highly danceable walking shuffles with his solid singing and stinging lead guitar. He is backed by his band of guitarist Jon McDonald, bassist Danny O'Connor and drummer David Simms, with guest appearances by James Cotton, Lil Ed Williams, Lonnie Brooks, Elvin Bishop, and a Gene Barge horn section.

It's a typical mix of originals and lesser-known blues from other singers. "Let Me Love You" is a typical Slim shuffle with a driving beat and a solid vocal followed by a nice rendition of Muddy Waters' "You Can't Lose What You Ain't Never Had," with James Cotton chiming in on harp.

Lil Ed joins for the frantic rendition of Hound Dog Taylor's "Give Me Back My Wig," that is a tad busy sounding. Little Milton's "Lonely Man" is slightly flat, but the take on "Spider in My Stew," with Lonnie Brooks guesting, is much better as Slim and company grind out a most persuasive performance.

The country flavor of "Going Down The Road Feeling Bad" adds variety, but it's more of a novelty track here. "Full Load Boogie" is a nondescript instrumental, but is followed by a terrific take of Muddy's "Crosseyed Cat" with a groove that chugs along like an irresistible force.

Elvin Bishop helps out on the slow-drag "Carla," while Slim reworks "Cryin' Won't Make You Stay," from a slow-drag number to a jaunty shuffle employing the "Dust My Broom" groove.

A few tracks may be relatively disappointing, but Slim seems incapable of producing a bad recording. This is not Slim's most impressive effort, but it's far from a poor one.

Ron Weinstock

TAKE 6 The Standard HEADS UP

The *a capella* group Take 6, has won numerous awards for their vocal recordings and make their debut on the Heads Up International label with this recording of 13 (mostly) jazz songs. Guest appearances by George Benson, Al Jarreau, Jon Hendricks, Roy Hargrove, Aaron Neville and others enhance the album.

Tunes include "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Straighten Up And Fly Right," "Seven Steps to Heaven," "Windmills of Your Mind," "Someone To Watch Over Me," "Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans (featuring Neville)," "Shall We Gather At The River," and more. A fun track is their take on the familiar Sesame Street tune, "Bein' Green," with spoken words and lead vocals from Joey Kibble. One clever jazz track features Ella Fitzgerald singing "A Tisket A Tasket," with Take 6 providing sprightly accompaniment and scatting interludes. That track, in particular, will leave jazz fans wanting more of the same from Take 6.

The smoothly blended voices of Claude McKnight, Mark Kibble, David Thomas, Joey Kibble, Cedric Dent and Alvin Chea draw on the tradition of 1950s doo-wop and gospel groups as well as pop vocal groups that emerged more recently. The group began in 1980 at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama when McKnight formed a quartet called the Gentlemen's Estate Club. Other singers joined the group and, after college, they signed with the Warner Brothers label in 1987, changed their name to Take 6, recorded several award-winning albums and left Warner to launch their own label with the 2006 release of *Feels Good*.

This is a spectacular label debut from Take 6 and demonstrates their versatility. One can only hope that on subsequent albums they will continue to cross over into jazz – because they do it with such smart, swinging precision.

Nancy Ann Lee

JOE LOUIS WALKER

Witness To The Blues

STONY PLAIN

One would be hard-pressed to name any other blues performer in the past two decades who has produced such a body of recorded work to stand-up to that of Joe Louis Walker. Rooted in the blues and soul traditions, and heavily shaped by his time as part of gospel groups, Walker also has been able to rock his music without going over the top. No one covers such a range of blues at such a consistent high level as Walker who has a new disc, "Witness to the Blues."

The disc was produced by Duke Robilliard who brought together a backing band anchored by the keyboards of Bruce Katz and includes Doug James on baritone and tenor sax as well as Scott Aruda on trumpet. Robilliard himself adds guitar to 5 of the 11 songs, which includes several new Walker originals as well as interpretations of songs that have not been overdone (no "Sweet Home Chicago" or "Mustang Sally"). An example of the latter is J.J. Malone's "It's a Shame," that opens this set.



It has a nice funky groove with stinging guitar, which contrasts with "Midnight Train," a rocking original with a tinge of rockabilly flavor in the backing and some guitar with echoes of Ike Turner.

I am not familiar with the original of "Lover's Holiday," which is a fine soul duet with Shemekia Copeland. It is followed by "Hustlin'," a slow blues whose melody echoes Little Walter's "Everything's Gonna Be Allright," with a lyric about "hustling my life away" and contains a fiery solo. Walker's adaptation of the traditional "Rollin' and Tumblin'" brings life to well known blues, owing as much to Elmore James' recording as the better known renditions, although Walker's voice at a couple spots here sounds a little hoarse.

"Highview" is a mid-tempo guitar instrumental with Katz also getting some solo time along with Robillard trading fours with Walker, but musically seems to meander a bit. Walker plays some fine acoustic slide on "I Got What You Need," a country blues he co-wrote with Robillard, while Keep on Believin', is a soulful ballad with a backing vocal chorus. "100% More Man," is a driving slow blues similar melodically to Elmore's "Twelve Year Old Boy," with plenty of driving slide, while Walker plays some high-note harmonica on "Sugar Mama," with some nice accompaniment from the band (Katz's piano is very solid here).

This is quite an enjoyable recording as Walker sounds very good here, although some of the performances meander a bit and some editing would have kept them more focused. Still, though not one of Walker's best, it is a very good recording. *Ron Weinstock*

THE STRYKER/SLAGLE BAND WITH JOE LOVANO

The Scene
ZOHOMUSIC

Guitarist Dave Stryker and reeds man Steve Slagle deliver a nine-tune set of originals forged with bassist Jay Anderson, drummer Victor Lewis and special guest, tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano (4 tracks). This is the band's fourth CD and follows their 2007 release, *Latest Outlook*.

There's plenty to like about this equitable session that gives each player opportunities to shine. Stryker shows agility and imagination in his improvisations, as does Slagle. The pianoless studio set, recorded in April 2008, offers straight-ahead tunes of varying moods, which (with the exception of the launcher "Skee") were polished throughout live gigs last year. The two-sax front line improvisations sizzle, especially on the lively Slagle original, "Six Four Teo." The perky 6:54-minute "Two Sense, written for Slagle's daughter, has a loose, open feel. Lovano joins Slagle (on soprano sax) again on the front line on "Hopewell's Last," dedicated by Slagle to his late brother. One of my favorites (although too brief at 3:42) is "Fingers In the Wind," a delicate, airy guitar-flute duet.

The co-leaders have been developing their group sound for over 20 years and, with Anderson and Lewis who have played with them off and on through the years, this version of their band exhibits smooth interactions that draw upon that familiarity. Slagle has released 10 discs

as leader and appeared as sideman on many others. Anderson has played bass with Stryker and Slagle since the 1980s and performed on several of their CDs, in addition to releasing two CDs as leader. Stryker performed for more than 13 years with Stanley Turrentine, has worked with many top names and accrued 20 CDs as leader.

This fresh-sounding, innovative session is an enjoyable listen from start to finish. They don't force the music but just let it elegantly and gently flow. *Nancy Ann Lee*

ERIC ESSIX

Birmingham
ESSENTIAL RECORDINGS

Essix is enjoying a lengthy career that has included sides for Nova Records and Zebra Records and it was during his tenure with Zebra that he landed a spot on the Smooth Jazz Top 10 chart with his version of "Rainy Night in Georgia." Now the guitarist hops one state to the west for this tribute to his hometown; Birmingham, Alabama.

The title cut sizzles like a typical summer afternoon in "the 'Ham" as Essix doubles up with his guitar work, playing a fluid lead and funky rhythm chords that combine to make their own kind of heat. "Birmingham" is overtly funky, no surprise since Essix' band mate and co-producer is Kelvin Wooten who has helmed sessions for Earth, Wind & Fire, the Isley Brothers and Erykah Badu. Wooten plays keys throughout, never stealing the show but subtly enhancing tunes like the down-tempo acoustic guitar and sax smoothie "Big Valley" by lurking in the background with concise organ fills.

Fans of the long-running group the Crusaders will find a kindred spirit in Essix and this seamless collection of soulful instrumentals, all of which were self-penned except for a cover of John Handy's "Hard Work" and the set closer "We Shall Overcome."

Kevin Wierzbicki

TRAVIS 'MOONCHILD' HADDIX

Daylight at Midnight
EARWIG

This writer first became aware of Travis 'Moonchild' Haddix from his recordings for the Ichiban label from the late 1980s to the mid 1990s as well as his songs that found their way into the repertoire of such great singers as Artie 'Blues Boy' White. Playing the Cleveland R&B circuit, he had an opportunity to play with Johnny Taylor on the road, but raising a family took first place so he worked for General Motors and the Post Office for over 40 years.

When Ichiban folded, he started his own label, Wann-Sonn, and since 1998 has issued 8 albums, the latest, "Daylight at Midnight," has just been remastered and repackaged by Earwig. With a pretty sizable band including a four-piece horn section, Haddix presents ten new songs that illustrate his use of humor, irony and clever wording on a variety of blues themes of relationships as well as good and hard times. On the opening "Word A Lie," he tells he isn't telling his woman a "word

a lie, everything I say is true,” as he recounts allowing his woman to move in and then how she was doing everything she could to get him out. The title track is a reworking of the theme about strange things happening as they did when Travis moved into a new town and where there is daylight at midnight. “Nine Behind” illustrates how clever he can be with a lyric with the song about the number nine, waking up at Nine, having 9 cups of coffee, call 9 different ladies and his woman from 1 to 9 is a 9 and then takes a solid guitar solo. “Who Could I Be?” is a soulful ballad with nice piano from Robert ‘Red Top’ Young who was in the late Robert Lockwood’s band, as Haddix sings if he could be anyone else who he would be, he would still rather be me.

One of his main guitar influences is B.B. King as his solos throughout show. One choice solo is during “Way Back in the Country,” where he recounts growing up and learning about the birds and bees and becoming a man. “Your Kind of Fool,” has a funky groove and the funk continues on “What to Do,” before returning to a more traditional blues style on “Good Buddy Blues,” about a friend who creates more problems than help for Travis.” Haddix is a solid singer in the vein of a Bobby Bland and Artie White, although perhaps not having the range of the latter, as well as a solid guitarist. He benefits from a fine backing band although the horns provide a backdrop and their arrangements are most often simply backing riffs.

Having a number of Haddix’s albums (Ichiban and Wann-Sonn) this is not his best effort (check out the Wann-Sonn releases “Milk & Bread” & “Blues From Stag-horn Street,” as well as the live European recording “Mud Cakes”), but “Daylight at Midnight,” is a very welcome addition to his body of recordings. For more information check out www.travishaddix.net or www.earwigmusic.com.

Ron Weinstock

JASPER VAN HOF’S PORK PIE

FEATURING CHARLIE MARIANO

Transition

DON ‘SUGARCANE’ HARRIS

Sugar Cane’s Got The Blues

PROMISING MUSIC

There was a time before there was a genre called “fusion” and the practice of cross-breeding jazz, rock, funk, Eastern, *et al* wasn’t quite so stylized as it would later become.

Originally released in the early 70’s for the German label MPS, these two artifacts from that unlabeled era make for interesting perspective and good listening as well.

The more adventurous of the pair is keyboardist Van Hof’s five-piece plus guest percussionist. Both he and saxophonist/flautist Mariano provide energetic, fleet and fluid solo work over a set of interesting heads and some very spacey interludes. The energy is equally felt by the rhythm section- bassist J. F. Jenny-Clarke and drummer Aldo Romano. Standout tracks include the leadoff “Epoch” and the very Zappa-like “Something Wrong”.

More folks these days may know the late violinist Sug-

arcane Harris from his work with Zappa, John Mayall or the Pure Food and Drug Act rather than his classic LA R&B persona as half of Don & Dewey. This “live” 1971 set is primarily a straight-ahead jam that gives Harris plenty of room to expand on the paths he traveled on Zappa’s 1969 gem of a release

Hot Rats. Blended in, and seeming very *a propos*, is a nice run-through of Horace Silver’s “Song For My Father”. Harris’ backup is enthusiastic and worth noting for Wolfgang Dauner’s solid keyboard work and as one of the final recorded tastes of Soft Machine’s Robert Wyatt’s very individualistic drumming prior to his waist-down paralysis resulting from an auto accident. Good stuff.

Duane Verh



CURTIS SALGADO

Clean Getaway

SHANACHIE

Vocalist and harp player Curtis Salgado has fortunately come back with a vengeance after having very serious health issues. Perhaps marking the clean bill of health from doctors recently, his new disc for is titled “Clean Getaway.”

Recorded with the Phantom Blues Band, it is a terrific disc that showcases what a strong and soulful vocalist he is as he traverses the blues and modern soul genres on the performances here. The title track opens up with some stinging guitar with Salgado singing about selling everything he has to a pawn shop, leave his past behind and take a long vacation and make a clean getaway from things before giving a litany of complaints about the nature of things today. His vocal is well suited to the unusually thoughtful lyrics. The following “Both Sorry Over Nothin’” is a nice soul number with him adding some well placed harp, while “Who’s Lovin’ You,” is a soul ballad with a touch of Sam Cooke,

while “What’s Up With That,” evokes Johnny Guitar Watson’s “What’s Going On.” On this latter tune there is some shattering Watson-styled guitar and the Horns suggest the old Maxwell Davis studio bands that played on some of Watson’s recordings. “I Don’t Want to Discuss It,” is a hyper-rocking number while “20 Years of B.B. King” is a terrific blues as Salgado sings about his girl giving him the blues with lyrics that incorporate phrases from B.B. King’s recordings and song titles as he has learned more about the blues from her than 20 years of B.B. King. There is some really excellent guitar on this track as well. Another performance to note is his cover of Al Green’s “Let’s Get Married.”

This album has worn well; with Salgado sounding better each time I give it a listen. The only thing more welcome than this disc is the fact that Curtis Salgado is back and sounding as good as new.

Ron Weinstock

STEVIE HOLLAND

Before Love Has Gone

150 MUSIC

Backed by her trio and guests on her fourth recording for 150 Music, veteran vocalist Stevie Holland delivers a 10-tune set of standards, originals and seldom-heard songs.

Pianist Martin Bejerano, bassist Edward Perez and drummer Willie Jones provide first-class support, augmented appealingly on several tracks by guest saxophonist Ole Mathisen and guitarist Paul Bollenback.

A native New Yorker, Holland launched her full-time musical career in her mid-twenties, working in cabaret and theater before committing to jazz. Her warm, mid-range vocals nicely invigorate gems such as her co-written title tune with Gary William Friedman and the well-worn standards "Where or When," "Lazy Afternoon," and "How Deep Is the Ocean."

With spacious phrasing, attention to lyrics, and a true sense of swing, Holland delivers a perfected set that allows her musicians to shine, making for a very appealing listen.

Nancy Ann Lee



LIZ MANDEVILLE

Red Top

EARWIG MUSIC

On her long delayed fourth release, Liz Mandeville not only displays her new found guitar chops but rolls out fifteen self-penned tracks that showcase her versatility as both a vocalist and a songwriter. Joined by an all-star cast of Chicago musicians including Eddy Shaw on saxophone and Allen Batts on keyboards, Mandeville is by turns a tough, no-nonsense former victim who declares her independence, *Dog No More* and *Bad Man Blues*, a woman who isn't afraid to lay down the rules, *So Smart Baby*, a sexy blues mama who makes her desires well known, *Spanky Butt*, *Rub My Belly*, *Scratch the Kitty*, *Little Queen* and *Home Cookin'* (all 'PG-13' to "R" rated) and a mistress with eyes on a married man who's not going to leave his family, *My Baby's Her Baby Too*.

A listen to these cuts leaves no mistake regarding her strong sense of self assurance. It's a surprise, then, when she gives us a peek behind the strong front on *Hold Me* where her desperate plea for comfort against a painful world is heightened by Eddy Shaw's wailing tenor sax. While the joy, pain and lust tied up in relationships fuel many of her songs, she also chronicles the perils of over consumption that lead to missing moments and a night

compliments of the county jail, *Corner Bar Blues*, the joy of escaping a close call, *Whoa, Whoa, Whoa* and the pain of choosing between unemployment and benefits that could get you killed, *Illinois National Guard Blues*. Throughout, Mandeville displays a voice that is sexy, sly, powerful and laden with honest emotion.

For the most part, this is an upbeat, rocking effort with horns and a gospel choir adding ample doses of sanctified soul sweetener that will surely have even the most leaden foot tapping along.

Guilty of Rockin' All Night ups the party ante even further with scorching solos from Shaw that serve as the perfect fuel for Mandeville's tale of over the top fun. Miss this party at your own risk.

Mark Smith

JAMES MOODY

AND HANK JONES QUARTET

Our Delight

IPO RECORDINGS

Recorded in a New York studio on two dates in June 2006, tenor saxophonist James Moody and pianist Hank Jones deliver a masterful 12-tune set with bassist Todd Coolman and drummer Adam Nussbaum.

Moody's facile, relaxed blowing and Jones' melodious keyboard approach confirm they are in top creative form throughout. Each leader draws upon early musical influences. Tunes by Tadd Dameron (one of Jones' inspirators) and Dizzy Gillespie (Moody's mentor) dominate this first-rate session. Included in the fare are Dameron's "Lady Bird," "Good Bait," "Soul Trane" and the title tune, and Dizzy's "Birk's Works," "Con Alma" and "Woody 'N You." Their sax-piano duet version of the well-worn standard, "Body and Soul," pours out like honey. Moody contributes the bouncy, bluesy "Darben the Red Foxx," for which he's spotlighted on flute. Another chestnut, "Old Folks," gets fresh treatment in a lovely flute-piano duet.

This appropriately titled project, an ear-pleasing mix of ballads, boppers and blues, is the first where the two like-minded jazz elders are intentionally paired. Listeners will share in their sheer joy of playing, hopeful that they have another straight-ahead studio get-together planned.

Nancy Ann Lee

KENNY NEAL

Let Life Flow

BLIND PIG RECORDS

On his Blind Pig debut after discs on Alligator and Telarc, and a three year health induced hiatus, Louisiana bluesman Kenny Neal calls upon his stints playing with a who's who in the blues world to break out the wide arsenal of blues styles featured on this release. With a rich, expressive voice that recalls a younger Solomon Burke or even Rick Estrin of the Nightcats, Neal leads a horn heavy band through a number of self-penned tunes as well as covers of material by Willie Dixon, Ivory Joe Hunter and his father, Raful Neal, Jr.

Let Life Flow is an upbeat number with Neal's stinging guitar adding a nice counterpoint to the saucy horn charts. *Louisiana Stew* and *Starlight Diamond* return Neal

to his early swampy roots as a harmonica player while *Blues, Leave Me Alone* and *Another Man's Cologne* are straight blues numbers featuring ample doses of Neal's hollow body electric guitar. Ditto for the string laden *Fly Away* where Neal channels the smooth picking of B.B. King and Robert Cray. *Broken Dreams* features Neal with a gruffer voice lamenting the cruel turns of life over a sympathetic horn chart. On *You've Got to Hurt Before You Heal* Neal dips deep into southern soul for a smoldering ballad that covers old ground but still strikes a responsive chord. Despite its title and forlorn lyrics about a lost love *Bleeding Heart* is saved from the bumper bin by Lucky Peterson's buoyant piano work. The biggest change up comes at the end with the latin tinged *It Don't Make Sense You Can't Make Peace*. **Mark Smith**

LARRY VUCKOVICH TRIO

High Wall: Real Life Film Noir TETRACHORD MUSIC

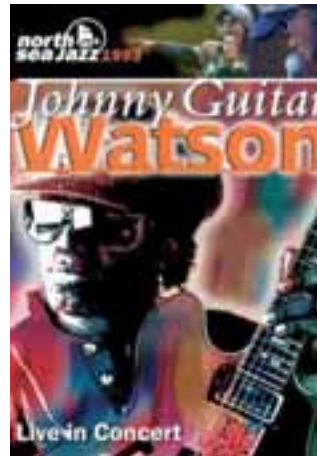
Pianist Larry Vuckovich follows up his acclaimed 2006 CD, *Street Scene*, with this 12-tune tribute to the classic film noir genre. He wrote the arrangements and contributes four originals to the session featuring Larry Grenadier on bass, Eddie Marshall or Chuck McPherson on drums, Hector Lugo on hand drums, and, on two tracks, percussionist Vince Delgado.

Highlights abound on this very pleasant, straight-ahead album. The lovely, Latinate 6:56-minute title ballad "High Wall" (drawn from an obscure film starring Robert Taylor) is Vuckovich's premier recording of the tune by Bronislaw Kaper. Performed as a trio, Vuckovich's "View From Telegraph Hill," was written for the film *House on Telegraph Hill*. Lugo on congas joins the trio in a bouncy take of Dizzy Gillespie's "Ow!," paying tribute to the bebop era when Vuckovich arrived in San Francisco.

The leader came to the U.S. in the early 1950s from Yugoslavia and, in addition to music, was soon immersed in American culture, particularly *film noir*. The liner notes reveal more of Vuckovich's personal history and views about the music.

Vuckovich's playing throughout is stellar and his side team works tightly with his innovations, making for a winning listen from start to finish. Rhythmically and melodically, there's enough variety in the selections so that they don't all sound the same. The 16-page liner booklet includes notes by Vuckovich and Dr. Herb Wong as well as details on the origins of each tune. This is a first-rate recording by a creative veteran jazz player. **Nancy Ann Lee**

DVDs



JOHNNY 'GUITAR' WATSON

Live in Concert - 1993 North Sea Jazz Festival CHARLY DVD

Johnny 'Guitar' Watson was one of the most versatile, innovative performers of the past five decades. He was a multi-instrumentalist who first recorded as a rollicking Amos Milburn styled pianist

before picking up from the late Guitar Slim to become a highly influential guitarist and showman whose impact was evident on the likes of Jimi Hendrix and even Etta James (listen to some of her vocals and Watson's vocal on his single, "Cuttin' In.'). Besides hard blues classics like "Three Hours Past Midnight" and "Too Hot," he recorded jazz piano for Chess, duets with Larry Williams for Okeh, and then his proto-type rap and funk records that got labeled disco-blues in the seventies, which inspired, and got sampled by, many hip hop artists. His last studio album "Bow Wow" was even nominated for a Grammy, and at last he had started performing in venues like the House of Blues.

He had been touring overseas in Europe through the good times and bad, and died while performing in Japan. Shout Factory's relatively recent reissue of his DJM recordings fortunately has led to a recognition of the fact that that he continued to stay contemporary and not simply rehash his older music.

There have previously been a couple of fine DVDs of his European performances (from TV shows) available. The British Charly Films has just issued "Live in Concert - 1993," centered on his North Sea Jazz Festival performance. It's a performance not that different from the other DVDs I have seen by him. This is Watson the funkster whose blues roots are always evident. The band kicks off with a funk number "Booty Ooty" before bringing him up for "Strike on Computers," mistitled here as "Jam," with his complaints of how computers are replacing human beings even in the musical realm.

I suspect that those expecting to see him rip things up on guitar will be disappointed, as he only plays guitar at length on a couple of numbers as well as on keyboards, focusing on his singing and interacting with the audience. The songs here are typical, including "I Need It," "Superman Lover," "Ain't It a Bitch," and the long extended "A Real Mother For Ya." His funky version of "Gangster5 of Love," displays how his music evolved from the original recordings which adapted the "Hootchie Kootchie Man"/"I'm a Man" melody, whereas "Three Hours Past Midnight" is his longest exploration in the blues here, with his playing focusing as much on musical textures as on blister-

LIVE BLUES ON THE HIGH SEAS



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ing guitar runs. And he plays the band like he plays guitar, evoking sounds from them, bringing up his saxophone player to wail or play some harp and letting his keyboard players loose.

What sets this apart from the other Watson DVDs are the included extras. These include three numbers from a 1996 German blues festival including a marvelous blues "Wrong Doing Woman" which incorporates "Three Hours Past Midnight"; a 14 odd minute memoriam from German TV that includes interviews with Watson a clip of him performing "Bow Wow," as well clips of the video he did to promote that song; a radio interview from 1987; footage of a young Watson on British TV including a snippet of his wild guitar, a piano boogie and playing rhythm guitar behind Bo Diddley; another video performance, this time from 1980 and a biography and discography.

Bill Dahl provides a concise overview of his life in the booklet that accompanies this which includes a listing of his recordings and recordings he appeared on including those with Larry Williams, George Duke, Frank Zappa, Frankie Lee and Herb Albert.

These extras are as valuable as the North Sea Jazz Festival performance and make this clearly the Johnny 'Guitar' Watson DVD to pick up. **Ron Weinstock**



JONNY LANG
Live At Montreux 1999
EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

A "true" blues number doesn't really show up until the encore but the set that precedes it is well stocked with smokin' blues-rock work from Mr. Lang. Backed by a solid band and, outside of the occasional stage strut, maintaining a friendly but focused demeanor, the one-time boy wonder guitarist works through tune after highly-

charged tune; both fingers and pipes suitably energized for this well-received festival set.

The song list is culled from Lang's first two releases for A&M and, amidst consistently strong performances, it's the power ballad "Breakin' Me" that jumps out from the pack. Pianist Bruce McCabe provides nice counterpoint on that tune as well as some tasty solo respite for Lang on the encore, "Rack 'Em Up", also penned by the keyboard man.

The production crew for these Montreux sets have got it down: great sound, nice "verite" presentation and tasteful shot selection. The video crew knows it's the band that's the attraction. Lang fans, don't hesitate. **Duane Verh**

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Third Series of Jazz Icons DVDs Released

Unseen Concerts Featuring Sonny Rollins, Oscar Peterson, Lionel Hampton, Nina Simone, Bill Evans, Cannonball Adderley, Rahsaan Roland Kirk

The eagerly anticipated release of the third series of Jazz Icons DVDs has arrived. Reelin' In The Years Productions and Naxos of America, Inc. are proud to announce the September 30 release of the next seven titles in the illustrious DVD series featuring performances by Sonny Rollins, Oscar Peterson, Lionel Hampton, Nina Simone, Bill Evans, Cannonball Adderley, and Rahsaan Roland Kirk.

Filmed in Europe between 1958 and 1975, this third set of Jazz Icons DVDs features concerts by seven of the most influential jazz artists of the 20th century captured in their prime and accompanied by some of the most legendary sidemen of the day. Previously forgotten or lost in the vaults of TV studios throughout Europe (in some cases for nearly 50 years!), they are now being made available for the first time.

The running time for the DVDs range from 60 to 100 minutes. All seven Jazz Icons titles will be sold separately and together as a deluxe boxed set with a *bonus* eighth disc featuring additional rare, never-before-seen, performances.

Each of the new Jazz Icons DVDs features one or more concerts filmed live in television studios and concert halls throughout Europe between 1958 and 1975, one of the most creative periods in jazz history. All seven DVDs feature performances that have never been officially released, and in many cases, the material is newly discovered and was never broadcast. In addition, every performance in the Jazz Icons DVD series has been transferred and re-mastered from the best-quality original masters yielding excellent sound and video.

The release of the seven new releases in the third series brings the total number of DVDs in the Jazz Icons series to 23 different titles. Including the two bonus discs in the boxed set, the Jazz Icons DVD series now features over 30 hours of classic performances.

The first series of Jazz Icons DVDs featuring classic vintage concerts by Thelonious Monk, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Quincy Jones, Count Basie, Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers, Buddy Rich, and Chet Baker, was released in September 2006 to universal critical acclaim, including feature stories in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times*, as well as reviews in *The New York Times* and *USA Today* (including their holiday gift guide.)

The second series of Jazz Icons DVDs was released in September 2007 and featured classic vintage concerts by John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, Dave Brubeck, Sarah Vaughan, Wes Montgomery, Duke Ellington and Dexter Gordon as well as a bonus disc included with the boxset. As with the first series, each title again received universal critical acclaim including reviews in *Newsweek*, *The New York Times* and *NPR Morning Edition*. *CBS Sunday Morning* named the Jazz Icons Series Two boxed set as the archival DVD release of the year describing the DVDs as "astonishing" and "an incredible gift."

Look for the review in our November issue.