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Fall Music Festivals

California

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Fall Music Festivals California

Arena Packages and Single Day Tickets Available for 53rd Annual Monterey Jazz Festival Presented By Verizon, September 17 - 19, 2010

Three-Day Arena Packages Offer Ultimate MJF Experience with Prime Seating for 5 Concerts, Access to 7 Additional Grounds Stages, In-and-Out Privileges, Renewable and Upgradeable Annually

New Single Day Arena Tickets Offer Reserved Arena Seating from \$66, Including Access to 7 Additional Grounds Stages

Exclusive Arena Performances by Harry Connick, Jr.; Ahmad Jamal, Angelique Kidjo, Chick Corea's Freedom Band with Kenny Garrett, Christian McBride and Roy Haynes; Delbert McClinton, Les Nubians, Next Generation Jazz Orchestra and Los Angeles County High School for the Arts Big Band

Monterey, CA – Offering a rare opportunity for fans to purchase and retain Arena seats, the Monterey Jazz Festival has announced that Three-Day Arena Packages for the 53rd Annual Monterey Jazz Festival are still available.

An Arena Package provides intimate access to exclusive world-class music on the legendary Jimmy Lyons Stage, the site of countless musical memories and historic events since 1958.

"An Arena Package is the ultimate way of experiencing the festival because it enables patrons to keep their seating choice each year," says Timothy Orr, Marketing Associate for MJF. "With the Three-Day Arena Packages, you are guaranteed a seat in the Arena, and you can request an upgrade in seat location each year. Patrons get access to all the additional Grounds venues as well, plus the ability to exit the Fairgrounds and come back for the evening's shows with the next Arena Show Ticket, so it allows the greatest freedom. For Patrons on a budget, the Single Day Arena Tickets are a great option to see the shows on the day of your choice, while getting all the Grounds festivities at the same time."

Arena Packages are on sale now by phone at (925) 275-9255 and on the Monterey Jazz Festival's website, www.montereyjazzfestival.org. Arena Packages are available starting from \$225, and include one reserved seat for each of five concerts on the Arena/Jimmy Lyons Stage, access to all performances and activities on seven additional Grounds Stages throughout the weekend, plus conversations, exhibitions, panel discussions, international shopping, food and beverages, and more.

Exclusive Arena Artists for 2010 include Harry Connick, Jr., Ahmad Jamal, Angelique Kidjo featuring Christian McBride, Lionel Loueke, Kendrick Scott and Mino Cinelu; the Freedom Band with Chick Corea, Kenny Garrett, Christian McBride and Roy Haynes; Delbert McClinton, Les Nubians, the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra with Special Guest Dianne Reeves, and the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts Big Band. On Saturday night, the Arena will host the 2010 Monterey Jazz Festival Commission piece, "Music for Two Quartets" featuring the Billy Childs Quartet with the Kronos Quartet

in their Arena-exclusive performance.

Arena artists who will also be performing on the grounds include Septeto Nacional de Cuba, Roy Haynes, Billy Childs (with Scott Colley, Steve Wilson and Brian Blade); the Kronos Quartet, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, the Roy Hargrove Big Band featuring Roberta Gambarini, Dianne Reeves, and Naomi Shelton & the Gospel Queens.

Tickets are on sale now by phone at (925) 275-9255 and on the Monterey Jazz Festival's website, www.montereyjazzfestival.org. Full Weekend Arena Packages are available starting from \$225, and include one reserved seat for each of five concerts on the Arena/Jimmy Lyons Stage, access to all performances and activities on seven additional Grounds Stages throughout the weekend, plus conversations, exhibitions, panel discussions, international shopping, food and beverages, and more.

For the full 2010 Monterey Jazz Festival lineup, tickets and additional information, visit www.montereyjazzfestival.org.

The Monterey Jazz Festival is dedicated to perpetuating the uniquely American form of music known as jazz by producing performances that celebrate the legacy and expand the boundaries of jazz; and by presenting year-round local, regional, national, and international jazz education programs. The Monterey Jazz Festival is a nonprofit organization and has donated its proceeds to musical education since its inception in 1958.

2010 Angel City Jazz Festival -- October 2nd through 9th

**A Week of Six Exciting Events
at Six Prestigious Venues**

Los Angeles, CA – The 2010 Angel City Jazz Festival -- L.A.'s only non-commercial jazz and new-music festival -- is a weeklong celebration at six venues, combining music, film, art, dance, poetry and food with two world premieres. Featured artists include The John Abercrombie Quartet, Nels Cline's DIRTY BABY, The Ravi Coltrane / Ralph Alessi Quintet, Henry Grimes and Friends, Wadada Leo Smith's Golden Quartet with Vijay Iyer, Myra Melford's Trio, The Sons of Champignon (Tim Berne, Jim Black and Nels Cline) and many others. The festival is produced by Angel City Arts in association with the L.A. County Arts Commission, LACMA, CalArts, L.A. Filmforum, Cryptogramophone Records and the Jazz Bakery. For more information please visit angelcityjazz.com or call Rocco Somazzi at 323-573-2110.

Saturday, October 2nd - 8:00 PM at Walt Disney Concert Hall's REDCAT Theater -- Henry Grimes & Friends with Dwight Trible / John Beasley Duo. Henry Grimes was an A-list jazz bassist in the '50s and '60s who worked with everyone from Benny Goodman to Albert Ayler. Then he disappeared. For almost 33 years he lived the life of a day laborer in Los Angeles. This is Henry's first major performance in L.A. since his re-

PAGE THREE

emergence onto the jazz scene in 2003. Henry's friends performing this evening include trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith, woodwind player Vinny Golia, pianist Ben Rosenbloom and drummer-percussionist Alex Cline. Expect some special guests. Dwight Trible and John Beasley explore the outer reaches of musical invention. Dwight Trible is a singer who has collaborated with Pharoah Sanders, Charles Lloyd, Billy Childs and Horace Tapscott. Pianist John Beasley is a prodigious performer and composer who has worked with Miles Davis, Steely Dan, Freddie Hubbard, Bennie Maupin, Christian McBride and James Brown. REDCAT is located at Walt Disney Concert Hall, 631 W. Second St., L.A.; (213) 237-2800. Produced in association with CalArts.

Sunday, October 3rd - 5:00 PM at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre. The centerpiece of the festival is a daylong outdoor event with five of the world's most creative jazz ensembles: Ravi Coltrane / Ralph Alessi Quintet, Wadada Leo Smith's Golden Quartet with Vijay Iyer, Sons of Champignon, Vinny Golia Sextet and Kneebody. Nestled in the Hollywood Hills, the Ford Amphitheatre is one of L.A.'s hidden treasures -- a glorious place to hear music with the entire family. The Ford Amphitheatre is located at 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, LA; (323) 461-3673. This event is produced in association with the L.A. County Arts Commission. For Tickets: <http://fordtheatres.org/en/events/details/id/113>

Monday, October 4th - 7:00 & 9:00 PM at Royal/T in Culver City -- Music, Dance, Food & Improvisation

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with Myra Melford Trio, Oguri, bassist Mark Dresser and Chef Paul Canales. This benefit for Angel City Arts features Myra Melford's Trio with Stomu Takeishi and Alex Cline, Japanese butoh dancer Oguri, bassist Mark Dresser and Chef Paul Canales of Oliveto Restaurant. Taste food inspired by music, which is simultaneously interpreted in dance. Enjoy a four-course meal with wine and music. There will also be an art auction with proceeds donated to Angel City Arts. Royal/T, 8910 Washington Blvd, Culver City - (310) 559-6300

Thursday, October 7th - 7:30 PM at LACMA's Bing Theater - **DIRTY BABY**: Nels Cline, Ed Ruscha and David Breskin. Experience the world premiere of Nels Cline & David Breskin's visionary recontextualization of legendary L.A. artist Ed Ruscha's "censor strip" paintings. **DIRTY BABY** is the gloriously unruly mutt born of a synaesthetic mating of pictures, music and poetry. For this special event based on their new book, Cline leads two prestigious ensembles in a performance of his compositions, Breskin reads his ghazals, and Ruscha's Silhouettes and Cityscapes are projected for good measure. Afterward, Ed, Nels and db sign **DIRTY BABY**. LACMA - Bing Theater - 5905 Wilshire Blvd.; (323) 857-6000. Produced in association with LACMA and Cryptogramophone Records.

Friday, October 8th - 8:00 PM at the Barnsdall Gallery Theater in Hollywood -- Creative Music & Film: World premiere of *The Reach of Resonance*, plus a solo piano set by Motoko Honda. A chainsaw orchestra, a singing dog, a man who chews on amplified glass, a string quartet written for barbed-wire fences, a woman who creates counterpoint from dot-matrix printers -- these are a few of the creative endeavors explored by filmmaker Steven Elkins. A Q&A with the filmmaker follows. Motoko Honda is a pianist/ composer/ improviser who creates structured improvisations intended to extend beyond rhythm, melody and harmony to affect the skin, organs and minds of the listener. Barnsdall Gallery Theater - 4800 Hollywood Blvd.; (323) 644-6272. Produced in association with L.A. Filmforum.

Saturday, October 9th - 8:00 & 9:30 PM - Musicians Institute Theater in Hollywood - The John Abercrombie Quartet. Throughout a career spanning more than 40 years and nearly 50 albums, John Abercrombie has established himself as one the masters of jazz guitar. Favoring unusual sounds and nontraditional ensembles, Abercrombie is a restless experimenter, working firmly in the jazz tradition while pushing the boundaries of meter and harmony. Performing in Abercrombie's quartet are violinist Mark Feldman, bassist Thomas Morgan and drummer Joey Baron. Musicians Institute Theater - 6752 Hollywood Blvd.; (310) 271-9039. Produced in association with the Jazz Bakery.

San Diego's Adams Avenue Street Fair is Sept. 25 & 26

San Diego, CA – The Adams Avenue Street Fair, Southern California's largest FREE music festival, will celebrate its 29th anniversary on Saturday, September 25, from 10:00 am to 9:00 pm, and Sunday, September 26, from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, on Adams Avenue, located in the Normal Heights community of San Diego.

The Street Fair offers fun, great entertainment and excitement for all-ages, all weekend.

This year's Adams Avenue Street Fair will include more than 60 musical acts performing on six stages spread out over eight-blocks of Adams Avenue. Street Fair-goers will enjoy a variety of music, including blues, gospel, rock, reggae, swing, roots-rock, folk-rock, Latin jazz, and zydeco.

This year's headliners will include former X singer/songwriter Exene Cervenka, Grammy nominated singer/songwriter Peter Case, noted songwriter Jack Tempchin (performing with Rocket Science), blues master James Harman and Friends, Mariachi El Bronx, and Robert Walter.

In addition to the wide-range of music, there will be three beer & wine lounges, giant carnival rides, children's activities and more than 300 food, arts and craft vendors selling their specialties along Adams Avenue.

During the past 28 years, the Adams Avenue Street Fair has generated critical acclaim for its focus on rising local, regional, national and international talent, as well as established artists who have influenced generations of musicians.

Past Adams Avenue Street Fair performers – many of whom are Grammy Award winners and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductees – include; Big Jay McNeely, No Doubt, Lila Downs, Pops Staples, Andy Summers, Wanda Jackson, Nortec Collective, Koko Taylor, Dave Alvin, The Zeros, Johnny Johnson, Rosie Flores, Los Fabulocos with Kid Ramos, The Beat Farmers, Cindy Lee Berryhill, Charles McPherson, GOP, and Mojo Nixon.

This year's final Street Fair line-up will be announced soon.

For further information and updates on the music including the complete 2-day performance schedule on all stages, please visit on the web at: www.AdamsAvenueBusiness.com

The Adams Avenue Street Fair is presented by the Adams Avenue Business Association, a non-profit organization whose mission is "To promote and increase commercial activity within the Adams Avenue Business District."

More than 600 Adams Avenue businesses, proud hosts of the Street Fair, Taste of Adams Avenue and Adams Avenue Roots & Folk Festival, offer an eclectic array of unique boutique shops, restaurants and pubs that make it worth returning to Adams Avenue year-round.

jazz-blues.com

Steve Miller to Teach at USC Thornton School of Music

The Gangster of Love will work with students in popular music and music industry programs

Los Angeles, CA – Some people call him the Space Cowboy. Some call him the Gangster of Love. But when Steve Miller, one of rock music's all-time greats, joins the University of Southern California faculty this fall, he will have to get used another moniker: professor.

During the 2010-2011 school year, Miller will teach at the USC Thornton School of Music, named by Rolling Stone magazine as one of the top music schools in the country and noted for its broad curriculum, internationally renowned faculty and immeasurable contributions to the music industry.

"To say we are thrilled about Steve joining our faculty would be an understatement," said Chris Sampson, associate dean of the USC Thornton School of Music.

With a trademark blues-rock style, the Steve Miller Band has come to define classic rock, selling more than 30 million albums and introducing the phrase "pom-pitus of love" to the English lexicon. Some of Miller's hit songs include "The Joker," "Rock 'n Me," "Take the Money and Run," "Jet Airliner," and "Fly Like an Eagle" – all of which are played daily on rock stations around the country.

"This is an amazing opportunity for the students at USC Thornton. Clearly, Steve cares deeply about the next generation of musicians and wants to be a part of their growth. His willingness to share his incredible experience with our students will undoubtedly transform their experience," Sampson said.

As an Artist in Residence at the USC Thornton School of Music, Miller will work on a regular basis with undergraduate students in the Popular Music and Music Industry programs. He will hold master classes and pass along his wisdom and knowledge to a new generation of professional musicians.

"Professor Miller will be a great addition to our already illustrious faculty," said Robert Cutietta, dean of the USC Thornton School of Music.

The USC Thornton School of Music, founded in 1884, is the oldest continuously operating cultural institution in Los Angeles. Launched two years ago, the Popular Music Performance program was the first of its kind at a major research university.

Miller consulted on the creation of the program and continued his active interest in the USC Thornton School of Music by inviting several students to record with him in the famed Capital Records studio. Last year, the Steve Miller Band played two sold-out concerts on campus as part of the USC Thornton School of Music's 125th anniversary celebration.

In June 2010, Miller released his critically acclaimed new album BINGO! The album serves as

Miller's musical autobiography, reaching back into his own apprenticeship as a young man in the Chicago blues scene. There he met Howlin' Wolf playing in nightclubs and shared a bandstand with Muddy Waters. Miller transformed the classic rhythm and blues songs into monumental rock performances.

Rolling Stone described BINGO! as "a return to Miller's blues roots with the slick party pop vibe of his classics 'The Joker' and 'Fly Like an Eagle'" and Guitar Player magazine said "the Space Cowboy has cut his best guitar album EVER!"

In keeping with his dedication to music education, Miller's work with USC is an extension of his philanthropic work with Kids Rock Free, a program that provides free and low-cost music lessons to students age 7-17. KRF® has serviced over 12,000 kids and there are currently 800 waitlisted for the program.

Miller continues his work with the program and encourages donations from fans and artists to achieve the goal of expanding the Kids Rock Free schools nationwide.

Steve Miller joins Grammy Award-winning musician and music director Patrice Rushen and legendary songwriter Lamont Dozier as Artists in Residence at the USC Thornton School of Music.

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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 reigned over a land called Jazz.*

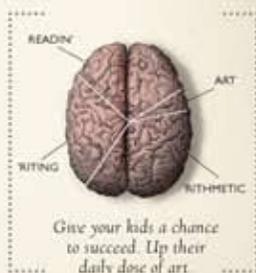
Sentimental Mood," and "Take the 'A' Train." His historical concert in 1953 at the Newport Jazz Festival has entered the lexicon of legendary live performances. There is no doubt about it, Ellington's brand of jazz has contributed significantly to the American songbook and to the lives of anyone who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



*Royal dukes are squareville.
 They have no rhythm
 And they wear crowns.*



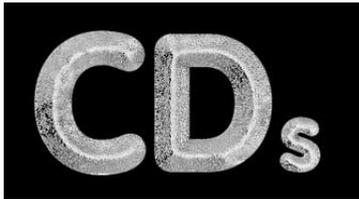
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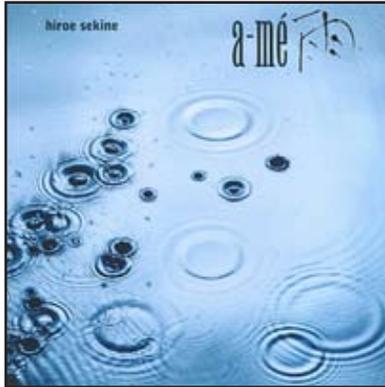


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We only bring you
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HIROE SEKINE
A-mé
SEKAI MUSIC

With the hoards of new jazz CDs released these days it is indeed a special pleasure to come across one that grabs my attention from the first notes and holds me in there right to the very end. Unfortunately it rarely happens. But...it just did!

Japanese pianist Hiroe Sekine has released her debut album titled "A-mé" (Rain), which is a joyous ride right off the bat with the first of several remarkable, and very fresh reworkings of old jazz standards. Gigi Gryce's "Minority" is wearing a brand new suit and it fits the classic song very well.

The septet, which plays on most of the album, kind of reminds me of the Louis Hayes-Woody Shaw aggregation back in the seventies on this opener. Hiroe's fine acoustic piano work is accompanied by great soloing and 3 horn ensembles from John Daversa/trumpet, Bob McChesney/trombone and Bob Shepard/tenor sax propelled by bassist Tony Dumas and drummer Peter Erskine. Now this is quite a crew she and producer Russell Ferrante (Yellowjackets keyboard man) have assembled, and the seven continue to shine throughout the 10 songs.

"If I Were a Bell" gets a makeover as well and at this point we are quite sure we are in for a fun ride on the road ahead. Sekine's "Euclidian Moon" is the first of four originals, all of which are thoughtfully written with respect to pleasing the listener – opening with very lyrical heads on songs that are quite remarkable not only for a debut album, but even from a well established artist.

Another standard, "All The Things You Are" features Hiroe with just Dumas and Erskine for a piano trio rendition of one of the most recorded songs in jazz,



Hiroe Sekine

given a treatment reminiscent of Brubeck in the fifties as she has some fun with time signatures, and on this one you really get a chance to hear just how good a pianist she is.

Another Hiroe original, the bouncy "Little Monster" is up next followed by another very cool standard reworking – "There Is No Greater Love." Sekine's title track is a very lyrical and percussive ballad as she paints her musical interpretation of rain, with drummer Chris Wabich, who replaces Erskine on two songs, adding some nice stickwork to the portrait.

A bright and tasteful arrangement of Milton Nascimento's "Vera Cruz" is the album's Latin offering taken at a quick clip followed by a sweet solo piano version of "Every Time We Say Goodbye" with a classical style prelude segueing into Hiroe's expressions of the song's lyrics.

The closer is an original, "Sand-Smog" – a hard bop burner giving all the soloists a chance to deliver their final statements before the set's end.

In closing let me say that Hiroe Sekine has, with this CD, displayed everything a very high percentage of musicians are doing wrong with their albums these days. And she achieved that simply by doing everything right! An excellent album that might have her shaking in her boots thinking about the follow-up. But for some reason, I think not.

Check out some tracks for yourself at www.sekai-music.com or Amazon. Highly recommended – this is the real stuff – every song is an absolute gem.

Bill Wahl

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CLAUDETTE KING

**Onto Something
BLUES EXPRESS**

Being the youngest daughter of B.B. King might open some doors, but Claudette King certainly would have had people take note of her talent in any respect. Don Bacon at Blues Express was certainly taken with her vocals and in the late nineties started recording an album by her with guitarist Bobby Murray and others, which was halted when Claudette’s mother was seriously ill.

A couple of years ago she contacted Bacon and brought in Steve Savage to help with the project, and redid the vocals for the earlier tracks as well as contact Dennis Walker and Alan Mirikitani to write new songs and help fill out the disc on a session that included veterans Jim Pugh on keyboards, Richard Cousins on bass and Lee Spath on drums with Mirikitani handling the guitar. The result is this new disc, which showcases her vocals that mix blues and soul into a personal style that reminds me of Carla Thomas.

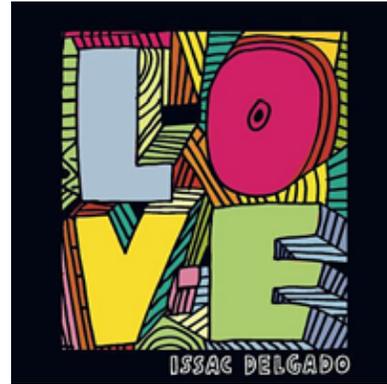
A couple of songs from the nineties session open the disc with Tim Brockett’s “Can I Walk You To Your Car,” a brassy shuffle with a hot guitar solo from Bobby Murray that is bookended by her seductive singing as she invites her baby to walk her to her car which is not too far. Walker and Mirikitani penned the soulful ballad “Too Little Too Late,” on which Claudette delivers the lyric of her cheating man coming home and asking forgiveness that is a bit too late. “Playing With My Friends” was originally done by Robert Cray and B.B. King; with Frankie Lee adding his impassioned singing to Claudette on a terrific rendition of this number with another choice solo from Murray.

Another Walker-Mirikitani ballad, “This Ain’t How I Planned It,” has her singing about how she dreams of her man to be home at night, and in contrast her man claims to be working late and this ain’t how she planned it. “Rock My Soul” is a Murray composition that Frankie Lee recorded around the same time. Not as much a shouter in her delivery as Lee is, her heartfelt singing gives her own performance on this a distinct and equally appealing character.

“Isn’t Peace The Least We Can Do” is a jazzy, gospel number with a nice tenor sax solo from Mike Vannice and followed by another poignant indigo ballad “Easier

Alone,” where she includes some vocal gymnastics into the upper register in her delivery.

According to Frank-John Hadley’s liner notes she did record a blues and country album in Europe that was available briefly, but for practical purposes in the United States this is a debut recording, and it is one that will have blues and soul fans take notice of a strong voice that will hopefully be enriching our ears for a long time. The release date is 9-21-2010. *Ron Weinstock*



ISSAC DELGADO

**L-O-V-E
SONY CLASSICAL**

It says so much about how highly Cuban singer Issac Delgado is regarded, that his new CD, “L-O-V-E” is the first tribute to Nat King Cole that Cole’s brother Freddie Cole participated in. The album is centered around the three albums Cole did that were recorded for Spanish speaking audiences and includes several other Cole recordings that Delgado sings here in Spanish (some of the songs on this Cole recorded in Portuguese or English).

Backing him is a rhythm section of pianist John di Martino; bassist Charles Flores; drummer Dafnis Prieto and percussionist Pedro Martinez. Also present are trumpeter Brian Lynch, trombonist Conrad Herwig and saxophonist-clarinetist Ken Peplowski, who contribute to some of the twelve songs. Freddie Cole adds his English vocals to two of the performances.

As Will Friedwald observes in the liner book, Cole sang Spanish and Portuguese phonetically when he recorded the three albums for Latin audiences, and recorded these albums in Havana, Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City. This was a point that endeared Cole to these audiences, and even though Delgado was not even born when Cole’s albums were released, “he grew with them.”

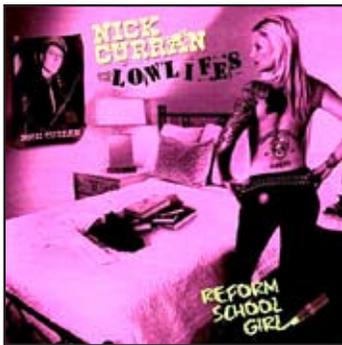
I have not heard the original Nat King Cole recordings nor speak Spanish, but to listen to Issac Delgado sing is a joy through his intimate, sensual and romantic delivery, which is matched by the marvelous musicians backing him. The rhythm section is sublime and adding the warm trumpet and flugelhorn of Lynch on the opening “Perfidia” is magical. Peplowski’s clarinet helps set the tone on “Quizas, Quizas, Quizas/ Per-

haps, Perhaps, Perhaps,” one of the two duets with Freddie Cole who comes in after Peplowski’s solo and whose vocal provides an intriguing contrast to that by Delgado. “Tiernamente” is better known as “Tenderly,” and breaks from guitarist Romero Lubambo and pianist Martino help embellish the warm sensuality of Delgado’s baritone.

The mood switches from the light Latinized rendition of “Tiernamente,” to the hot Cuban salsafied (to use Friedwald’s description) of “Ay Cosita Linda,” with Martino’s brilliant arrangement and a fiery Lynch solo.” Then there is the bossa nova flavor of “Suas Maos” with some lovely trombone from Herwig, while on “A Su Mirar Me Acostumbré,” the lovely Spanish rendition of “I’ve Grown Accustomed to Her Face,” only the rhythm section provides the sublime accompaniment. Freddie Cole opens “Green Eyes/ Aquellos Ojos Verdes,” with Peplowski providing some alluring tenor sax before Delgado enters almost with as a whisper before again drawing the listener in with the sensuality he provides. The title track was one of Nat King Cole’s last hit records and opens with a bass vamp featuring spirited playing from Lynch that takes this performance to new heights.

In the liner booklet, Will Friedwald makes the claim that Delgado brought the “same combination of remarkable chops, musicianship and overwhelming, loving warmth that Cole himself brought to the songs of Cuba, Mexico, Brazil and elsewhere...” The music on “L-O-V-E,” substantiates the claim. The combination of Delgado’s vocals and the exquisite accompaniments result in this being one of the year’s most enchanting recordings.

Ron Weinstock



NICK CURRAN & THE LOWLIFES

Reform School Girl
ELECTRO GROOVE

Nick Curran may be best known as a guitarist with The Fabulous Thunderbirds between 2004-2007. Prior to that the Maine native left his home state to tour with rockabilly musician Ronnie Dawson, who taught him not to get pigeonholed. He eventually moving to Austin and then recorded “Dr. velvet,” which won a W.C. Handy Award for Best New Album debut. After leaving the Thunderbirds, he formed his new band, The Lowlifes, a roots rock’n’roll band. And now Delta Groove’s Electro Groove subsidiary has issued their explosive

album “Reform School Girl.”

This is a hard rock’n’roll album, not a hard rock. It will evoke classic wild rock and roll records from the fifties by the likes of Little Richard, Larry Williams, Screaming Jay Hawkins, and Esquerita, with instrumental touches from Ike Turner and T-Bone Walker, with some musical accents suggestive of The Ronettes and Lazy Lester. Curran and his band have a take no prisoners approach to reviving ‘50s wild, raucous rock and roll on a collection of originals modeled on the wilder side of the fifties from such labels as Federal and Specialty. The tone is set with the wild little Richard style performance of a lesser know Etta James song, “Tough Lover. Take a song like “Dream Girl,” where upon opening it Curran’s vocal takes a nod to Johnny ‘Guitar’ Watson before it sounds like someone put some benzedrine in Nick’s ovaltine (to steal a line from Harry ‘The Hipster’ Benzedrine) as he sounds like his soul was possessed by Screaming Jay while his wild guitar makes some of Ike Turner’s wilder solos using his whammy bar sound fairly tame. “Flyin’ Blind” is a rocking duet with Blaster Phil Alvin, where Curran’s wild singing makes Alvin come off as a teen crooner. On “Lusty L’il Lucy” Curran comes off as a cross between Little Richard and Larry Williams with the saxophones recreating that old Specialty sound before yet another guitar solo rockets off into the stratosphere.

The manic wildness of “Reform School Girl,” does not mask the fact that Curran is one mother of a performer. Rock and Roll still lives on this, a magic carpet ride of classic rocking sounds, that fans of the wilder side of the fifties music scene will want to take for a spin. Incidentally, Nick was recently diagnosed with tongue cancer and we can only hope the treatment is successful so he can get on to road to promote this release.

Ron Weinstock



OWEN HOWARD

Drum Lore
BJURECORDS

Drum Lore is an auspicious recording by Owen Howard, a member of the Brooklyn Jazz Underground. As Howard explains, the genesis of this disc came from his participation in a jazz workshop’s composition class when someone asked why he a drummer was participating. The result is these eleven performances, which, in

addition to Howard's "Roundabout," include compositions by Peter Erskine, Tony Williams, Billy Hart, Jack DeJohnette, Paul Motian, Ed Blackwell, Al Foster, Denzil Best, Chick Webb (with Benny Goodman and Edgar Sampson) and Shelly Manne and dispel the myth about drummers and composition. Howard provides a brief overview for each composition performed. On this recording, in different combinations, are John O'Gallagher on alto sax; Andy Middleton on tenor sax or soprano sax; Adam Keller on alto sax, tenor sax or soprano sax; Alan Ferber on trombone; Frank Carlberg on piano; and Johnny Wiedenmueller on bass, in addition to Howard on drums.

The opening "Bulgaria" by Peter Erskine is transformed from a trip performance to a quintet with Middleton's soprano snaking through the shifting meters before Carlberg enters with some free tempo playing complemented by Howard's responsive drumming. Another quintet performance, Tony Williams' "Arboretum" features interesting counterpoint between O'Gallagher's alto and Ferber's fuzzy trombone before Wiedenmueller solos, followed by swinging, concise solos from O'Gallagher, Ferber and Carlberg. Howard notes the melodic qualities of many of Billy Hart's compositions, and this is evident on "Duchess."

Howard features himself a bit more prominently on Jack DeJohnette's "Zoot Suite," which mixes some jump blues horn riffing through the different parts of the composition with shifting tempos and moods. This is one of the two performances where I am quite familiar with the original recording by DeJohnette's Special edition on ECM, and this fares well in comparison with the original, with the three saxophones all contributing here with Middleton's soprano especially evocative. Paul Motian's "It Should've Happened a Long Time Ago," offers Kolker's bass clarinet blending with O'Gallagher's alto to provide an elegiac quality to this performance.

Another performance that I am familiar with is Ed Blackwell's "Togo," which I believe was originally performed with Old and New Dreams. Howard rearranges this into a slightly larger group as Ferber's trombone replaces Don Cherry's trumpet, while O'Gallagher and Kolker (on tenor sax) replace Dewey Redmond's sax. Ferber languorously states the theme before the three horns state it on a number based on a Ghanian folk melody. Howard calls this a tour de force for Blackwell, but also for him as he transverses distinct time feels on his solo. "45° Angle" is a lesser known composition of Denzil Best that Howard invests with a lively calypso feel with Middleton standing out with a lively tenor sax solo backed by Howard's crisp playing. Howard's own "Roundabout" is inspired by Miles Davis' "Circle in the Round," with a shifting pulse and some lovely playing from Ferber, Kolker and O'Gallagher, with Kolker's soaring soprano playing particularly standing out. "Stompin' at the Savoy," is one of the foundational numbers of swing jazz and Howard provides some modern musical coloring in his arrangement with which he tries to impart a jam session flavor that has some lively playing.

It is easy to lose sight of what a superb job on drums

Owen Howard plays throughout. Even when not up-front, his playing complements and pushes the soloists through these fascinating compositions that is a lesson that student at the jazz workshop hopefully by now has learned. Howard notes he has at least 30 other great tunes composed by drummers that he would have loved to have used, and intimates that a Volume 2 may be forthcoming.

The music on this fabulous recording certainly would make such a sequel very welcome. Owen Howard's website is <http://owenhoward.net>. Brooklyn Jazz Underground Records link, from which this can be purchased, is <http://www.bjrecords.com/>. Among other sources for this CD is Amazon who has "Drum Lore" is available on cd and mp3. It can also be downloaded on itunes.

Ron Weinstock

WILLIE BUCK

The Life I Love

DELMARK

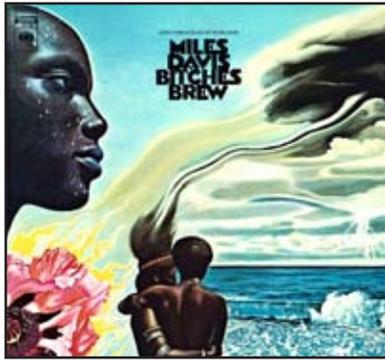
Willie Buck has been a Mississippi-born Chicago resident since the 1950s who is a solid Chicago blues singer and has been part of that City's club scene for decades. In addition to singles issued over time, he had an album, "The Life I Love," recorded in 1982 and issued on vinyl in 1983 that Delmark has just made available, supplemented by some live recordings from a couple of years later.

For the studio session he brought together some of the best Chicago blues players still living, including Louis Myers and John Primer on guitar, Little Mac Simmons and Dimestore Fred on harmonica, Big Moose Walker on piano and Dave Myers on bass for some classic Chicago blues in the vein of Muddy Waters and Junior Wells. Muddy is most evident as an influence, based on Buck's songs and vocal style.

This is a solid set of Chicago blues and one can imagine how entertaining Buck is in a club setting. Nothing musically original perhaps, but he sings with heart and the band just lays out the real deal as he opens with Muddy's "She's All Right," followed by Buck's original, "How Can I Be Nice To You," which has a melody very similar to Muddy's recording "Just to Be With You," as Myers and Primer lay some nice single note runs and Walker pounds out some tough piano sounds.

I guess that is the young Primer who is responsible for the fine guitar solo on B.B. King's "I Got a Right To Love My Baby," while Walker lays the foundation and holds things together on another Buck original "There's a Time." "Sweet Sixteen," is credited as if it was the Big Joe Turner tune, but sounds like a slowed down rendition of the Chuck Berry rocker while the band turns in a terrific reworking of Little Walter's "Everything's Gonna Be Alright." There is also a lively rendition of Jimmy Reed's "Found My baby Gone," and the live recordings of "Don't Go No Further," and "Sugar Sweet." The result is over an hour of strong traditionally rooted Chicago blues that one hears played so well less frequently nearly three decades later. Recommended.

Ron Weinstock



MILES DAVIS
Bitches Brew
Legacy Edition

& 40th Anniversary Collector's Edition
COLUMBIA LEGACY

Miles Davis' groundbreaking 1970 album "Bitches Brew" started a whole new arena in music – blending jazz with rock – and wound up being Miles' first RIAA Gold Album and placed 94 on *Rolling Stone* magazine's list of the 500 best albums of all time. Still sounding fresh 40 years later, the double LP has seen a brand new reissue on CD with more enhanced sound and six extra tracks – alternate takes of "Spanish Key" and "John McLaughlin," and stereo single version edits for "Miles Runs The Voodoo Down" and "Spanish Key," plus mono single edits of "Great Expectations" and "Little Blue Frog."

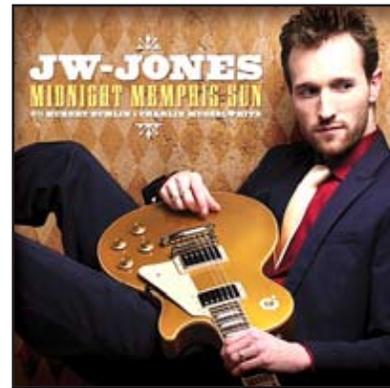
A third CD is included featuring a previously unreleased live concert at the Tanglewood/Berkshire Music Center in Lenox, MA in August 1970. His band here consisted of Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea, Gary Bartz, Dave Holland, Airto Moreira and Jack DeJohnette as they burn through four songs from "Bitches Brew" plus "Directions," "The Mask" and "It's About That Time." Yes, these guys were hot that night, and the recording quality is pretty decent - on par for the era.

The Legacy Edition closes with a fourth disc, a DVD featuring a fine live concert at the Tivoli Konsertal in Copenhagen, Denmark in November 1969. Here the band comprised Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette as they cover three BB songs plus "Directions," "Agitation," "I Fall In Love Too Easily" and "It's About That Time." Another fine set with decent audio and video, and the second disc of previously unreleased performances in the four-disc set.

The 40th Anniversary Collector's Edition expands on the Legacy Edition by augmenting the four discs with a 180-gram vinyl double LP featuring the album's original six songs on two platters in a double gatefold like the original album. It all comes in a 12x12 box completed with a 48-page color 12x12 book with a 5,000 word essay by Ashley Kahn, photos, producer's notes and a Lenny White interview.

Two very nice packages from Columbia Legacy in the excellent ongoing Miles Davis reissue sets program, which would most definitely please all the "Bitches Brew" fans out there!

Bill Wahl



JW-JONES
Midnight Memphis Sun
RUF

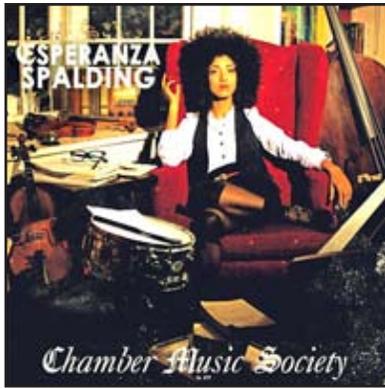
Canadian blues artist JW-Jones continues to mature as a performer and his latest CD, "Midnight Memphis Sun" (Ruf), certainly will enhance his reputation as it shows his maturation as a vocalist in addition to his continual growth as a guitarist. The promise of his earliest recordings, which displayed some awkwardness as a vocalist, was clearly demonstrated in his previous CD, "Blueslisted." The new CD's title refers to the fact this was recorded in Memphis at the Sun Studios, and it is a robust collection of blues with jump and soul strains integrally mixed in the material. He also has special guests Hubert Sumlin and Charlie Musselwhite lending their talents to three tracks each.

A Memphis soul groove (riff suggestive of "Midnight Hour") is evident on the opening "Off The Market, which is followed by a jumping rendition of a lesser known Lowell Fulson number, "Love Grows Cold." Both performances display his solid singing and slashing guitar with echoes of Ike Turner's use of the whammy bar on the latter. His playing is both thoughtful and passionate. With Musselwhite's harp added to "Kissin' in Memphis," Jones delivers a lyrical homage to some of the musical greats that painted Memphis blue in the fifties through seventies that is delivered in a more low-key fashion. The driving "Cuts Like a Knife," comes from Bryan Adams as he sings about how his women threw things away and there is plenty of strong guitar and nice organ from Jesse Whitely. "Born Operator" with Hubert Sumlin is about one who ran Ponzi scheme and stole other folks' dreams. The performance has musical echoes of Magic Sam, evident in Jones playing which contrasts with Sumlin's single note work that is followed by Jones' own electrifying solo.

Musselwhite returns behind Jones' easy vocal on Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry's "Burnt Child." In contrast, Jones' rendition of Jimmy Reed's "I Don't Go For That," with some rollicking piano and jumping rhythm from Larry Taylor on bass and Richard Innes on drums is far removed from Reed's lazy style and is a storming Chicago blues stomp with Jones' fleet single note solo echoing some of the Memphis greats from the early 50s before Musselwhite's explosive harp solo with a big fat tone. Jones' "Mean Streak" mixes his menacing guitar sound with the spare backing from Taylor and Innes to

evoke for this listener some of the doomy recordings that James Reed and Johnny Fuller recorded for Bay Area blues producer Bob Geddins. Jones may not be quite up to the level of those giants as a singer, but this splendid performance shows how he knows how to build atmosphere in his performances and knows that loud and frantic vocals and playing simply are no replacement for thoughtful, yet passionate performances. "Howlin' With Hubert" is a nice instrumental shuffle with Jones and Sumlin trading solos while Sumlin also guests on the closing track, "Games," with its driving, churning groove and after Sumlin's solo, Jones comes in basing his solo on "Got My Mojo Working" and adding some Freddie King riffs here. It is again a display of Jones growth from a blues prodigy to a seasoned veteran whose music makes blues fans of all stripes take notice. It is a solid ending to yet another first-rate recording by JW-Jones.

Ron Weinstock



ESPERANZA SPALDING
Chamber Music Society
HEADS LP

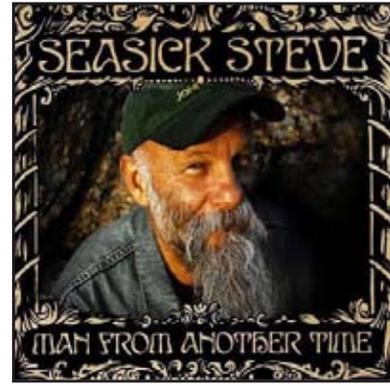
Were it not taken on by a certifiable jazz "star," an experiment such as this would likely be banished to the margins of listenership. If the commercially successful Ms. Spalding's presence can open more ears to a cross-weave of chamber group, piano trio and expansive vocals, those ears will be rewarded with a unique and most engaging set. The celebrated bassist/vocalist achieves a sound both eclectic and highly cohesive. And compelling.

The full force of this blend is heard on the second track, "Knowledge Of Good And Evil." Each faction crosses with the others along angular paths; the structures continuously re-configure, patterns falling together in kaleidoscopic fashion.

Spalding's beguiling multi-tracked scat work prevails on some tracks, on others it's the solid, swinging interplay with trio partners Leo Genovese- piano and Terri Lyne Carrington- drums, as on "Winter Sun." The strings play multiple, and not always predictable, roles and provide the connective tissue that gives this set its moody, seductive character.

Any prejudice resulting from previous experience with jazz/classical matchups should be left at the door. Chamber Music Society is one of this music year's nicest surprises.

Duane Verh



SEASICK STEVE
Man From Another Time
RYKODISC

Steve Wold a/k/a "Seasick" Steve has one of those resumes that seems made up by a marketing firm looking to promote a rags to riches story: He left home at 13, hopped freight trains, worked as a carnie, a cowboy and a migrant farmer, busked on street corners, spent three decades on a succession of marriages with a passel of kids, opened a studio and recorded with punk and grunge bands, had a heart attack and recuperated by recording a disc that went on to sell 200,000 units in the UK.

He then released a second disc that sold even more and soon found himself playing the storied Royal Albert Hall. The cool thing is that the story is true and his music rocks!

Like Watermelon Slim, this storied resume gives Steve a rich palette of personal experiences from which to draw his songs. Big Green and Yeller sounds like a classic blues double entendre, but it really is just about a John Deer Tractor. "Wenatchee" tells the tale of a migrant farmer while "Happy (To Have a Job)" is how a busking musician gets through the day. The title cut finds Steve worrying that by looking at the past he'll turn into the kind of "boring old fart" that used to dampen his younger days.

"That's All" is a prisoner's dream of an elusive freedom, a sentiment repeated in "Never Go West" where he finds himself on the wrong side of the law. With a vocal delivery somewhere between Ry Cooder and Omar Dykes and a penchant for hill country blues grooves, Steve plays with the skill of his many years but with the energy of musicians a fraction of his age.

Most of the cuts are mid to up-tempo and hit hard despite the spare instrumentation of just Steve's rattle-snake guitar and Dan Magnuysson's percussion. It just doesn't get much hotter than on "Diddley Bo" which features the Bo Diddley beat and razor sharp one string grooves.

Change ups include the forlorn "The Banjo Song," the simmering "Dark" and the gentle "Just Because I Can (CSX)" where he takes a last chance to hop a freight train and ride for free.

Oh, did I mention that I dig this disc?

Mark Smith



TURTLE ISLAND QUARTET

Have You Ever Been...?

TELARC

TISQ takes on a big challenge in transforming the music of rock guitar legend Jimi Hendrix to the language of a classical string quartet, yet succeeds with exhilarating flair on the six Hendrix tunes (as well as seven more tunes by TISQ founding violinist David Balakrishnan and others). This disc follows their Grammy winning 2007 recording, *A Love Supreme: The Legacy of John Coltrane*

TISQ is Balakrishnan (violin, baritone violin), co-founder Mark Summer (cello), Mads Tolling (violin) and newcomer Jeremy Kittel (violin). The origins of this project trace back to two Hendrix concerts at the L.A. Forum that Balakrishnan attended as a teenager in 1969 and 1970, which led him to practicing Hendrix guitar licks on his violin.

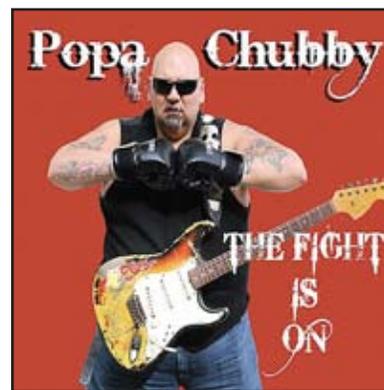
Decades later, his interest in Hendrix was fortified by a visit to the Woodstock Museum where he watched a video of Hendrix's performance.

The title work, a seamless four-piece suite of Hendrix tunes including "Have You Ever Been (To Electric Ladyland)," "House Burning Down," "1983...A Merman I Should Turn to Be," and "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)" opens the album. That piece segues into John McLaughlin's lively "To Bop Or Not To Be."

While the troupe adroitly translates Hendrix's music, it's really Balakrishnan's four-movement composition, "Tree of Life" that is the album centerpiece. Inspired by Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, it contains four pieces ("Ashwattha," "Lucy," "Monkey Business," and "Coelacanth") which reverently embrace Indian classical music, bluegrass, swing, bebop, Afro-Cuban styles and more. Vibraphonist Stefon Harris is featured on the catchy TISQ's interpretation of Hendrix's bluesy "Gypsy Eyes." Summer skillfully performs Hendrix's "Little Wing" as a solo cello piece.

Other tunes include Billy Roberts' ballad, "Hey Joe," and Bob Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower" featuring Mike Marshall on mandocello. Hendrix made the latter tune popular in his 1968-recorded version.

This highly recommended addition to the TISQ discography proves that, after 25 years, this group still has the ability to dazzle the listener. **Nancy Ann Lee**



POPA CHUBBY

The Fight is On

BLIND PIG

You mess with Popa Chubby at your own risk. Like that first taste of forbidden fruit a listen to one of his discs typically turns into a long term obsession as his hard hitting riffs, catchy hooks and tough minded lyrics make your other discs suffer in comparison.

This new release couples his typical well crafted songs with an aggressive attitude that makes the ride even better. From the first slashing notes of the smoking title track, Chubby sends the blues through a hard rock prism that will bring smiles to the faces of those who lived through rock's glory days. *We Got Some Rocking to Do* and *Noisemaking Love Machine* marry typical blues lyrics about keeping the ladies happy with incessant grooves that grab on and won't let go.

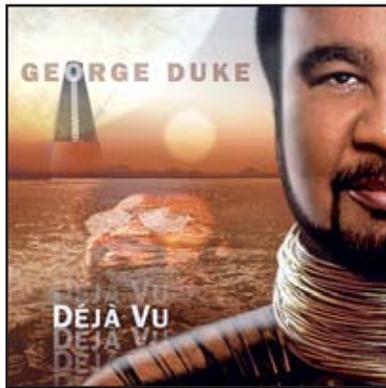
Likewise *Rock and Roll is my Religion* uses crunchy guitar riffs and Allman Brothers-like mirrored guitar tracking to convert the non-believers to "those low down blues", something he accomplishes without a word on the instrumental showcase *Steelhorse Serenade*.

By comparison *The Right Time* has a much lighter, buoyant feel that evokes carefree summer cruising which soon gets him in trouble on the cautionary tale of *Wicked Wanda* which finds Chubby in way over his head after a barroom pick up.

While Chubby clearly knows his way around a party he also has a deeper side as revealed by the mostly acoustic *Switchblade Combs and Candy Cigarettes* where he turns a tender eye towards his wicked child who is all rough and tough but with the same soft center that Chubby wraps in his own tough exterior. *Another Ten Years* is also a thoughtful piece with its reflections on the march of time and the casualties the grim reaper has collected along the way including heroes such as John Lennon and Jimi Hendrix.

And, it wouldn't be a Popa Chubby disc, without at least one soap box song where gets to rail about something that ticks him off: this time it is living over the limit which gets a hard look on *It's Over*.

If you are looking for some classic blues rock hooks without having to listen to the same 25 songs in heavy rotation on your local commercial station you need to have this disc. **Mark Smith**



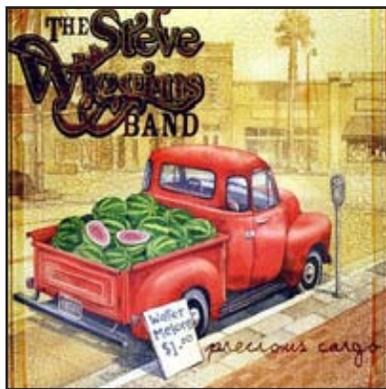
GEORGE DUKE

Deja Vu
HEADS UP

The grooves here are “signature” George Duke from feather-light samba to meaty, melodic funk and fusion. And the always congenial-sounding keyboardist/vocalist consistently maxes out his material. Duke’s savvy, inventive solo stretches anywhere along this very accessible set make the convincing case that “light” need not mean “lightweight.”

Standout tracks include the breezy leadoff “A Melody,” the jazz/funk hybrid “What Goes Around Comes Around,” enhanced by the leader’s delicate acoustic piano touches and Everette Harp’s simpatico soprano sax, and the quirky funk vocal feature, “You Touch My Brain.” Nice work.

Duane Verh



STEVE WIGGINS BAND

Precious Cargo
STEWWHO? ENTERTAINMENT

Florida native Steve Wiggins may have started with southern rock growing up, but in more recent years his musical focus has become directed more to blues and jazz and the result is The Steve Wiggins’ Band first blues album, “Precious Cargo,” that was recorded live at the Marina Civic Center in Panama City, Florida.

In addition to Wiggins on piano and organ, the band consists of Lenwood Cherry Jr. on drums and vocals, Bruce Herbert on bass guitar and vocals and Wally Tirado on saxophone. It is an intriguing change to have a guitarless blues band. In addition to the ten live performances, there is one studio recording with a guitarist added.

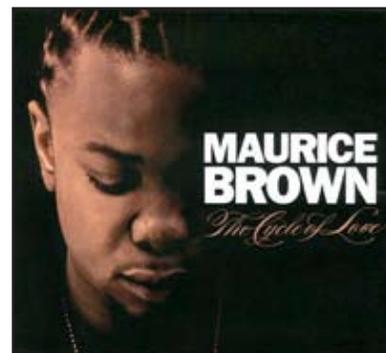
There is nothing deep about the music here; just good

time blues and boogie with some jazz and gospel inflections. “Steve’s Boogie” kicks this disc off with barrelhouse boogie piano mixed with riveting sax and chicken fried organ. It’s followed by a rendition of the song “Cold Shot,” associated with Stevie Ray Vaughan with Herbert handling the vocal and Tirado’s raspy sax being the primary solo voice along with Wiggins’ Hammond B-3. I’m not really a fan of James Taylor’s “Steam Roller,” which is vocally handled first by Herbert and then Cherry, but Wiggins opens with some deep blues piano and organ and Tirado adds to the atmosphere with his sax.

“Doin’ My Thing” features Cherry on vocal as it opens with Wiggins pounding the ivories with a bit of a funk groove while Tirado wails. Cherry penned “Black Cat Woman,” with an insistent rhythm and Wiggins and Tirado prominent in the backing as Cherry sings about this woman on the other side of town who likes to get down and has a spell. “Roosterfish” is a solid jazz-inflected instrumental and is followed by John Lee Hooker’s “Dimples,” with rollicking keyboards and an affable vocal by Wiggins. The tempo slows down for Cherry singing “My Last Tear,” with Tirado’s sax and the band hinting of “Stormy Monday,” as Wiggins gets down in the alley on piano and organ. Next up is a rendition of Herbie Hancock’s “Watermelon Man,” followed by a solid rendition Bill Withers’ “Ain’t No Sunshine.” Cherry may not be Bobby Bland or Bill Withers, but he does a very credible job delivering this lyric as well as the others. This is followed by the studio recording, another rendition of “Doin’ My Thing,” with a little bit fuller sound with the addition of guitar.

What stands out on “Precious Cargo,” is Wiggins’ really strong recording along with Tirado’s raw sounding tenor sax and solid band. Cherry is a good singer, although not all of the material here is classic. Still, this disc displays the Steve Wiggins Band as the entertaining group they are with strong musicianship.

Ron Weinstock



MAURICE BROWN

The Cycle of Love
BROWN RECORDS

Trumpeter Maurice Brown, according to his website biography was “Raised in south Chicago, Maurice was awarded a full music scholarship to Northern Illinois University upon graduating from Hillcrest High School. After winning first place in the esteemed National Miles

Davis Trumpet Competition, Maurice found new flavor in the heart of Louisiana, ..." He continued he studies at Southern University where he was part of the Jazz Program led by the late clarinet player and composer, Alvin Batiste. While living in New Orleans, he recorded his debut CD, "Hip to Bop," and established himself in the New Orleans scene, playing regularly at Snug Harbor. He also has done a wide variety of session work working with hip hop artists, queen of soul, and contemporary jazz artists including recordings by Musiq Soulchild, Aretha Franklin, Roy Hargrove, Kendra Ross, Ernest Dawkins, Fred Anderson and George Freeman. Currently he lives in New York, and has just issued his second CD as a leader, "The Cycle of Love," (Brown Records).

Derek Douget, on, was on Maurice's earlier CD and also studied in New Orleans although under the University of New Orleans Jazz Program under Ellis Marsalis' leadership. The rest of the quartet is pianist Chris Rob, drummer Joe Blaxx and bassist Solomon Dorsey, none of whom were on the earlier album. Of this album, Brown notes that the music here is his interpretation of the "different stages we go through in our quest for true happiness." He does elaborate for each tune here, but I will let you discover his comments for himself.

Drummer Blaxx opens "Fly By Night," with a hip hop groove, before Ron lays down a chord and Dorsey starts a bass figure with the two coming to state the melody with a stop-time stutter added. It exhibits some of the playfulness and melodic qualities that characterize this recording. Douget and Brown both have marvelous tones, with Brown having a bright, lyrical sound but certainly can dig in and get a stinging tone as necessary. Pianist Rob also exhibits a lyrical tone to his playing. "Good Vibrations" illustrates Brown's ability to write material, which should appeal to those with more of a smooth jazz taste, but his playing here certainly will not put to sleep those whose tastes are more straight-ahead.

It's hard not to tap one's feet or simply smile listening to Brown. One of my favorite tracks is "Time Tick Tock," built around a Blaxx's clock-like groove with Rob's repeated piano riff that echoes the groove as the two horns engage in a call and response with each other before Brown takes off on his solo, which elaborates on some of the melodic figures he had been passing back and forth with Douget. "Lovely" is a ballad with some elegant sounding playing with Brown adding a mute for his solo. Echoes of the Miles Davis Quintet of the mid-sixties can be heard on the performance "The Connection," and the disc closes on the upbeat "Reflections."

"The Cycle of Love" is alluring and I have listened to it repeatedly the past few weeks. Shortly after receiving my review copy, I learned he was playing at the Kennedy Center's K.C. Jazz Club backed by the quintet on the disc with the exception of a different bassist. There, before an audience that included Dr. Billy Taylor and pianist George Cables, Brown played a number of tunes from this, several from "Hip to Bop," and gave

the Errol Garner classic "Misty" a superb interpretation. Watching him perform, one sees the exhilaration he has in performing, as he will stand on the side dancing along, swaying, twirling his trumpet and encouraging his band members. The performance certainly delighted all there.

"The Cycle of Love" is available from cdbaby.com, Louisiana Music Factory, and other sources as well as can be downloaded. Maurice Brown will be performing the first weekend at this year's New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, but both and Derek Douget will be performing in a variety of groups and likely also at some evening appearances at clubs while JazzFest is taking place. I certainly hope to cross their paths while I am in New Orleans for the second weekend of JazzFest. His website is www.mauricebrown.net.

Ron Weinstock



**LITTLE SMOKEY SMOTHERS
& ELVIN BISHOP
Chicago Blues Buddies
BROWN DERBY**

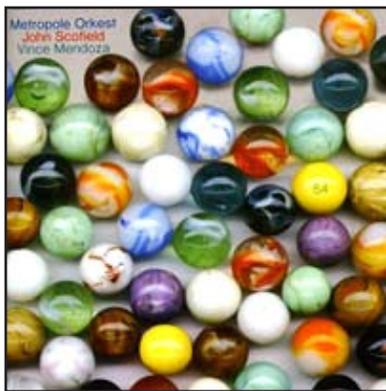
It was in 1960 that Elvin Bishop, then a newcomer to Chicago, met and was mentored by Smokey Smothers (oft referred as Little Smokey to distinguish him from his older brother Big Smokey). Smokey at the time was at the Blue Flame and also working with Howlin' Wolf at the time. Later Smokey would also encourage Paul Butterfield and helped inspire that band. Elvin and Smokey have remained close friends through the years, even while Elvin's career took off with Butterfield and later as a blues-rooted rock act with several smash hits. With his career in rebound at the time, Elvin instigated and participated in the 1993 award-winning album, *Bossman!*, and later recorded a live album with his old friend for Alligator. Later at the 2006 Chicago Blues Festival they reprised their collaborations.

More recently, Smokey's health has been in decline and as Dick Shurman has noted, Elvin seized the moment to compile a new CD, *Little Smokey Smothers & Elvin Bishop "Chicago Blues Buddies"* (Brown Derby), with the proceeds going to Smokey. The CD is a nice retrospective that opens with a couple tracks from "Bossman!" including "Remembering," where the two trade licks and recall their younger days. Next up are five performances from the 1993 Chicago Blues Festi-

val which are the musical core of this disc and strong performances including "Smokey's Shuffle," "Crack Head Woman," and "Mother-in-Law Blues," marked with strong vocals from Smokey and playing from both. It is followed by an interview of the two by Chris Heim and Steve Cushing. The next two selections are from the live Alligator recording from San Francisco's Biscuits & Blues, "That's My Partner," and then the last two selections are from a 2006 Ground Zero appearance shortly after their Chicago Blues Festival appearance.

This serves as a solid retrospective of a wonderful partnership with the release of the first-rate 1993 Chicago Blues Festival performances particularly welcome, as are the tracks that Alligator and Black Magic graciously lent to this project, which can be obtained from BlueBeat Music (www.bluebeatmusic.com) from whom I purchased this. I am not sure if this set is available from other sources, but it is well worth seeking out not simply for the music but for the good cause that it was compiled for.

Ron Weinstock



JOHN SCOFIELD

54

UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Guitarist Scofield here alternately rides atop, jousts with, and gracefully interweaves with bold, powerful orchestration courtesy of the Netherlands Metropole Orchestra.

The ensemble, directed by Vince Mendoza, who charted this set, is reputedly the world's largest jazz & pop assemblage. The MO has a broad repertoire and matching resume and provides diverse, elaborate settings for Scofield's compositions.

His bluesy-toned, rock-tinged beginnings are set aside for full ballad-mode on the fourth track, "Honest I Do", and he and the "band" meet in the middle in the follow-up, "Twang". The horns and strings give way to a number of nice guitar-and-rhythm breakdowns, such as on "Imaginary Time". For fans of Scofield's small-group work, this one may take a listen or two to get used to, but give it a shot.

Duane Verh



MARK HUMMEL

Retro-Active

ELECTRO-FI

West Coast harmonica player Mark Hummel has been around the blues block numerous times and regularly hosts all-star blues harmonica jams that keep his chops razor sharp lest he be left in the dust by the invited guests.

This new disc features Hummel using those chops in his natural element: fronting a hot band that focuses on the classic sounds of electric Chicago Blues. Like the best players of that style, Hummel throws off plenty of fire-works but with solos that are short, economical and to the point.

He also shares plenty of the stage with his band. Check out the round robin soloing on the swinging *Never No More* for a solid taste of the chops offered by Johnny Bones on saxophone, Chris Burns on Organ and Rusty Zinn on guitar who front the song until the very end when Hummel jumps in for a great harmonica counterpoint.

The same is true on *Funky Way* with its cool organ grooves and soul underpinnings that get heated to a boil when Hummel finally joins the mix with a simple but effective solo.

On the Muddy Waters classic *I Want to Be Loved* he solos just enough to stamp his own signature on the tune and then grabs the vocal mike and gives Zinn the floor for some tasty riffs.

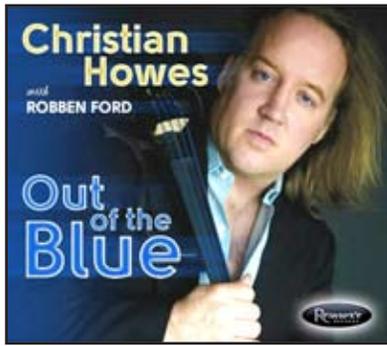
Things change on *Roller Coaster* and *Ready Steady Stroll* where he puts the band mostly aside for a harmonica showcase with the former cut evoking the topsy-turvy rush of the amusement park ride. The biggest change-up here is the atmospheric *Before the Beginning* which simmers with dark desperation.

With a voice that has gained authority over the years he proves an apt front man when the harmonica is at his side even when working through the typical blues lyric book on the simmering, salacious *Honey Bee Blues* where he promises to keep his baby happy with honey three times a day, on the boastful *I'm Shorty* where he's the back-door man and on *Lord Oh Lord Blues* where he deals with the consequences of the choice between his sweetheart and his wife.

Overall, a fine release that features some of the best harmonica you will hear this year.

Mark Smith

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CHRISTIAN HOWES

Our Of The Blue
RESONANCE RECORDS

This writer had the pleasure of seeing violinist Christian Howes perform at the DC Jazz Festival, as he was part of pianist Marian Petrescu's band in a tribute to Oscar Peterson. He dazzled with his technique but his music was playful, thoughtful and passionate. His new recording on Resonance Records is "Out of the Blue" and is with a group including Robben Ford. Besides Ford, other players on this album include pianist Tamir Henderson, organist Bobby Floyd, bassists Ric Fierabracci (electric) and Kevin Axt (acoustic) and vocalist Sharon Hendrix.

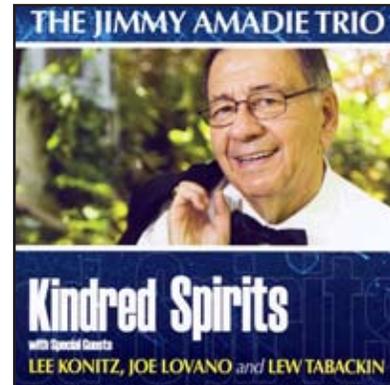
Chick Corea's "Fingerprints," a take on Wayne Shorter's "Footprints," is first up with its exhilarating violin from the leader followed lively solos from Henderson, Axt and then Ford with the tempo taken down. Often labeled a blues-rock guitarist, Ford is quite at home in this jazz setting and eschewing some of the more rock-oriented elements of his playing. His playing adds a nice contrast to Howe's rich, flowing tone. The Fat's Domino classic "I'm Walkin'" is taken at a crisp gait as Howe lovingly embellishes the melody with his marvelous playing. Howes' rendition of Horace Silver's "Cape Verdean Blues" swings under his twisting, driving violin lines, while "Gumbo Klomp" is a light second-line finger-snapper with both keyboards present and Ford's slightly crackling tone adding to the festive feel. Howe's opening playing on the title track evokes to these ears old-timey music before his moody solo followed by some crisp staccato playing from Ford that contrasts with Howes' playing.

Sharon Hendrix handles the vocal on the R&B flavored "Seek and Ye Shall Find," with some really nice organ from one-time Ray Charles organist Floyd, and Ford shines here as well before his playing is the counterpoint for Howes vocalized playing. "Bobby's Bad" is a lively Howes original that is built on a memorable funky riff and dedicated to Floyd, his one time mentor. Carla Bley's "Sing Me Softly of the Blues" is a marvelous performance with both Howes and Ford (arguably the best of his superb playing on this) hinting at "C.C. Rider" in their statements here. Ford is not on the hot pepper tempo rendition of Ornette Coleman's "When Will the Blues Leave," with Howes working off Henderson here along with solos from Axt and Rosenblatt. The disc

closes with Booby Floyd on piano opening a delightful duet with Howes on the classic "Sweet Lorraine."

"Out of the Blue" is a delightful album that with its bluesy foundation is both substantial and accessible. Howes swings and plays thoughtfully, mixes in some humor yet never loses his feeling on this very appealing recording.

Ron Weinstock



JIMMY AMADIE TRIO

Kindred Spirits
TP RECORDINGS

Since his resurgence on the jazz scene in the mid-1990s and overcoming health setbacks, pianist Jimmy Amadie has released an array of satisfying solo piano and group recordings. This eight-tune disc of mostly straight-ahead originals from Amadie may be the best yet.

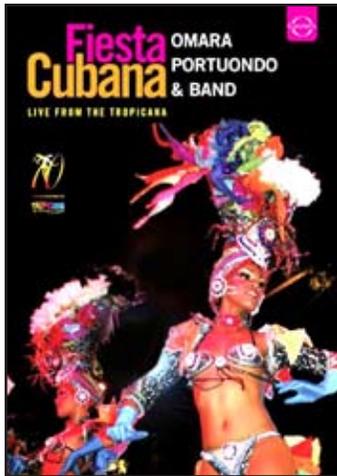
Amadie and his trio—bassist Tony Merino (6 tracks) or Steve Gilmore (2 tracks) and drummer Bill Goodwin—are joined by guest saxophone giants Lee Konitz, Lew Tabackin, and Joe Lovano who are all in best form here. Lovano kicks off the Red Rock Studio set with "Just Friends," and also plays on Thelonious Monk's "Well You Needn't" and the Amadie closer, "A Samba For You." The single ballad, "Live Is Worth Living," is an expressive Amadie tune, featuring a breathy, lush solo from Lovano. The Latinate, time-switching Amadie original "Lee Bossa/Lee Swing" features Konitz who also shines on the standard, "I Want to Be Happy." Tabackin smartly communicates on tenor on the bopping "What Now" and swings "Blues for Thee 'DV,'" on flute. Both tunes are Amadie originals.

Throughout, Amadie's guests admirably step up the pleasure with their individual and combined creativity and skill, but it is Amadie's talents at conceptualizing, performing and composing that truly boost this session. A very enjoyable recording!

Nancy Ann Lee

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OMARA PORTUONDO & BAND
Fiesta Cubana: Live From the Tropicana
Naxos of America & EuroArts

Colorful and exciting, this DVD was recorded on in December 2009 for the 70th birthday celebration of Havana's popular nightclub, Tropicana. Featuring elaborately costumed dancers, a brassy big band, various singers, and special guest vocalist Omara Portuondo and her five-man band, the show is bold, daring and briskly-paced.

The disc opens with scenes of Havana, interspersed with colorful, flashy dancing by the Tropicana Ballet to pulsating tempos from the band. After performances by the dancers and house singers, Omara Portuondo takes the stage with her combo (Harold Lopez Nussa, piano; Jorge Luis Valdés Chicoy, guitar; Omar Gonzalez, double bass; Andres Coayo Batista, percussion; Rodney Yllarza Barreto, drums). Interspersed with two Tropicana show segments, Portuondo sings seven traditional numbers, ranging from the *guajira*, *bolero*, *mambo* and *son*, melded to elements of jazz. She closes her performance with the audience lightly clapping and softly singing along to her lovely rendering of the classic "Guantanamera."

Camera work from eight videographers is excellent, ranging from brilliantly lit, full stage shots to close-ups that capture the rapture and excitement of Tropical Ballet dancers, musicians and singers. This is a dramatic production with dancers moving all over the stage and, at times, into the audience.

Bonus features include another singing performance, "Gracias," which segues into a very informative sub-titled interview with Portuondo (you can select the language: German, French, English). She speaks of her history on stage and film, and film clips, still shots and music accompany her interview. Another bonus performance, "Equilibrists," features two young male gymnasts. Trailers for four other song and dance DVDs are also included.

Born Omara Portuondo Pelaez in Havana, October 29, 1930, Portuondo has accrued more than 50 years

as a singer and dancer since she joined the dance group of Cabaret Tropicana in 1950, following her older sister, Haydee. She participated in other dance groups and sang with various orchestras during the 1950s, with and without her sister. Portuondo recorded a solo album in 1959 that featured both jazz and Cuban music. She embarked on a solo career in 1967. In the 1970s and 1980s, she performed at home and abroad and was featured in films and on television. She gained widespread fame performing with the *Buena Vista Social Club*. She lives and continues to perform in Havana.

Directed by Henning Kasten and produced by Paul Smaczny, the thrilling Tropicana performances offer superb viewing and listening for fans of the music.

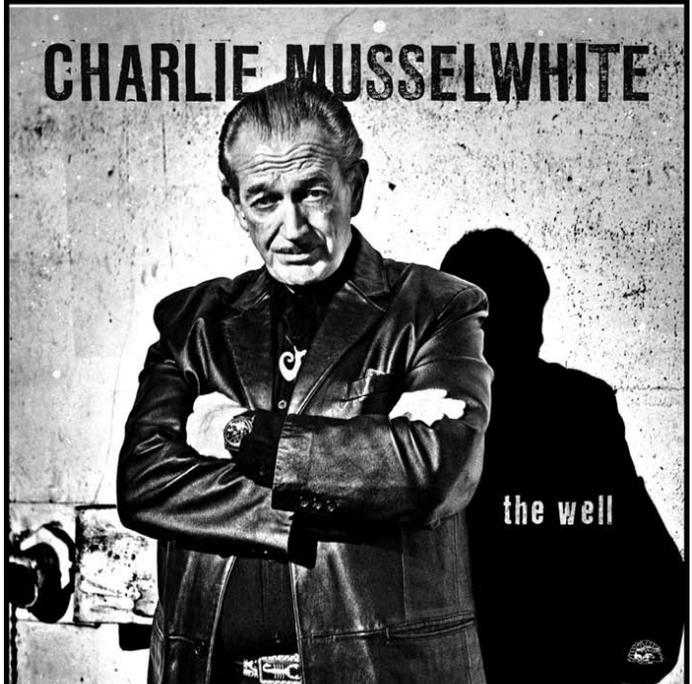
Nancy Ann Lee

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books



PEOPLE YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW: LEGENDARY MUSICIANS PHOTOGRAPHED

By Herb Wise

OMNIBUS PRESS OCTOBER 1, 2010

Herb Wise was an editor for Oak Publications who published Sing out as well as various books on folk and blues (Samuel Charters' "The Bluesman" was originally published by Oak), when photographer David Gahr took him outside, gave him a camera and had him start shooting pictures. While his initial efforts were not productive, it led to him becoming a fixture with his camera at festivals and concerts throughout North America, documenting a wide spectrum of music, focusing on folk and bluegrass with some blues, country and jazz mixed in from Mariposa in Toronto, the Ann Arbor Blues Festival, the Philadelphia

Folk Festival, the American Folk Life Festival, and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

This is a coffee table sized volume of his photos. There is an amiable quality to many of these, which are often informal portraits, although there are some very fine performance images included. Graham Vickers includes brief descriptions of the artists depicted and sometimes the circumstances the photos were made of. Striking images of Richard Havens, Sam Chatmon, Jaco Pastorius, Professor Longhair (one great picture with reflections showing in his sunglasses), Chuck Berry, Charles Mingus, Saul Broudy, Jim & Jesse McReynolds, Frank Zappa, Jackson Browne (great portrait), Sonny Terry (reclining against a trailer), Joan Baez & Kris Kristofferson, Joe Zawinul, Arlo Guthrie, Ray Charles, Doc Watson, Leon Redbone, Stephane Grappelli, Bob Dylan with the Band, an early Taj Mahal and Koko Taylor sitting in front of her van at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival. Its a pretty diverse group of images, and some are devoted to showing dancers at the festival while a young Rosanna Arquette is seen at the 1971 Philadelphia Folk Festival. Blue Lu Barker and Danny Barker are seen in their living room, while Roosevelt Sykes is backstage at the 1981 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. The pictures mostly come from the sixties and seventies.

The reproduction (with a slight sepia tint) seems quite satisfactory and there is a wealth of performers captured here, some famous, others less so. "People You'd Like To Know," is a book you might skim through when you first get it and return to look at the images again and again. It is reasonably priced with a list of \$34.95, should be reasonably easy to find and makes a nice addition to one's collection of music photography books. *Ron Weinstock*

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San Rafael Desert, Utah © David Muench

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