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Jazz & Blues Report

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Founded in Buffalo New York in March of 1974; began in Cleveland edition in April of 1978. Now this global e-zine edition is posted online monthly at www.jazz-blues.com



"Buffalorious"

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

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August 26-28
Hunter Mountain, NY

Bluestock Announces 2011 Lineup

Radio Woodstock and Steve & Jeff Simon Presents bring BLUESTOCK to Hunter Mountain, NY August 26-28, 2011. The three-day festival will feature numerous top blues artists at the scenic Hunter Mountain Ski Center, the home of the annual Mountain Jam Music Festival.

Five-time Grammy winner and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, Buddy Guy, will headline the first annual BLUESTOCK. Buddy, a true living icon in the Blues, has been nominated again this year for his latest album, "Living Proof". Blues legend Elvin Bishop, will also be headlining along with a third major headliner and additional surprise special guests that will be announced shortly.

Tommy Castro & The Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue will perform at BLUESTOCK along with their high energy horn section. Tommy just won four Blues Music Awards in 2010 including Band of the Year and the B.B. King Entertainer of the Year.

BLUESTOCK is destined to be the greatest blues show on earth with appearances by Louisiana's favorite

Cajun son Tab Benoit, Chicago blues veteran Ronnie Baker Brooks, blues legend Bob Margolin performing with Matt Hill, IBC winners Trampled Under Foot, soul-blues artist of the year nominee Curtis Salgado & His Big Band, Reba Russell, Alexis P. Suter, Shakura S'Aida, Zac Harmon, Bruce Katz, Albert Cummings, Ty Curtis, Port City Prophets, Mitch Woods, Billy Gibson and Telarc Recording artists Moreland & Arbuckle.

"BLUESTOCK is our vision of 'Woodstock meets The Blues Cruise'.....three days of non-stop world-class Blues entertainment in a magical outdoor setting," stated Steve Simon, Founder and Blues Boss of Steve & Jeff Simon Presents.

"Co-promoting with Steve & Jeff Simon Presents is a marriage made in heaven.....two great festival production companies united by their enormous love for the Blues," said Gary Chetkof, Founder and President of Radio Woodstock.

Non-stop music will take place throughout the weekend on two stages. BLUESTOCK will also host a late

night "Blues Club" at Hunter Mountain that will extend the weekend's entertainment into the early morning hours.

The festival will also present an array of attractions, as well as unique gourmet food and beverages and fabulous craft vendors. Attractions will include a mountain Skyride and New York Zipline Adventures' canopy zipline tour, North America's longest zipline.

Located a few short hours from anywhere in the Northeast, Hunter Mountain boasts breath-taking mountain views amidst rolling green valleys and hills. The Hunter Mountain Ski Lodge provides BLUESTOCK attendees with 24-hour access to both food and indoor bathrooms. Along with on-site tent camping and an RV area, BLUESTOCK offers a variety of alternative accommodations including nearby hotels, lodges, local vacation homes and mountainside condominiums including luxury suites at Hunter's Kaatskill Mountain Club. BLUESTOCK will also offer other first class amenities such as on-site taxis and a special VIP Lounge with gourmet food.

Radio Woodstock and Steve & Jeff Simon Presents are both seasoned festival promoters. Radio Woodstock produces the annual Mountain Jam Festival which, in its short 6 year history, has become one of the top festivals in the country and the premier music festival in the North-

east.

Steve & Jeff Simon Presents has been producing Blues festivals around the world since 2000 including the St. John Blues Festival, the St. Thomas Blues Festival, the Charleston Blues Festival and BLUZAPALOOZA, the celebrity Blues concert tours for U.S. Troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, South Korea, Japan, Okinawa, Egypt, Italy and Kuwait. Also in 2011, Steve Simon will be bringing the Blues to Cuba with his inaugural and historic Blues Without Borders concert tour.

Tickets and Information are now available at BLUE-STOCK.COM

BLUESTOCK 2011 INITIAL LINEUP

(Additional Headliner and special celebrity guests TBA)

Buddy Guy
Elvin Bishop
Tommy Castro & LRBR
Tab Benoit
Curtis Salgado Big Band
Ronnie Baker Brooks
Zac Harmon
Bob Margolin & Matt Hill
Trampled Under Foot
Moreland & Arbuckle
Mitch Woods
Billy Gibson
Alexis P. Suter
Reba Russell
Shakura S'Aida
Ty Curtis
Bruce Katz
Albert Cummings
Port City Prophets

About Radio Woodstock - WDST & Radiowoodstock.com

Radio Woodstock is a global multi-media company that includes the award-winning radio station, Radio Woodstock 100.1 WDST, Woodstock's hometown radio station, as well as internet radio stations, Radio Woodstock 69, and Radio Woodstock LIVE. All three are available online at RadioWoodstock.com.

Radio Woodstock Presents, a major upstate New York promoter, produces 40+ concerts per year in the Woodstock and Hudson Valley area, in addition to Mountain Jam and the new Bluestock Music Festival, which will debut at Hunter Mountain at the end of August. Radio Woodstock Presents also records many of the artist performances for release through its digital distribution company Radio Woodstock Music.

Listen online:
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About Steve & Jeff Simon Presents

Steve & Jeff Simon Presents is one of the largest live music production companies that produce Blues concerts

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and festivals throughout the world. Founded by Steve Simon in 2000, the company is the producer and promoter of celebrity Blues concerts and festivals throughout the Caribbean, South Carolina, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Visit www.stevesimonpresents.com

For more information on Bluestock, visit www.bluestock.com.

Check out the video on the main page or visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=100ZtlaeVjk>.

Lomax Archive starts Global Jukebox label w Southern Journey series

The Alan Lomax Archive is pleased to announce the launch of its Global Jukebox imprint, through which it will make its vast repository of international field recordings available. Global Jukebox will produce LP, CD, and digital albums drawn from the thousands of hours of traditional and vernacular music recordings that Lomax collected around the world from 1933 to 1991.

Partnerships with folklore institutions, indie record labels, university presses, and the digital distributor IODA will ensure both a grassroots and global approach to repatriate Lomax's recordings from around the world, back to the world. The first Global Jukebox release is "Wave the Ocean, Wave the Sea: Alan Lomax's 'Southern Journey,' 1959-1960" which was released digitally on 12/14/2010. There are four more releases coming in its wake, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Lomax's storied "Southern Journey" in the American South.

Alan Lomax (1915-2002) is considered America's foremost folklorist, perhaps best known for making the debut recordings of American legends like Lead Belly, Muddy Waters, Jelly Roll Morton and Woody Guthrie on behalf of the Library of Congress. But his independent explorations into the world's traditional music took him beyond his outstanding recordings of the American South to song-hunting throughout the British Isles, Spain, Italy, Morocco, Romania, the Caribbean, and the former Soviet Union, and won him a posthumous Lifetime Achievement Award from the Grammy Foundation. Over the past twenty years the Archive has overseen the release of over a hundred album, book, and film productions — including the 2006 Grammy-Award winning Jelly Roll Morton: The Complete Library of Congress Recordings box set. This past year the Lomax Archive produced the 9-CD Alan Lomax in Haiti 1936-1937 box set, which is part of their Caribbean Repatriation Program to return copies of the music to its sources. In addition to the commercial releases, the music is being given to museums and schools in Haiti and other Caribbean repositories. Lesson plans have been created from the music and local community welfare organizations have taken the music directly to the temporary camps in Haiti to offer some level of comfort and healing. Large groups at the camps have

heard and sung along to the recordings — the sounds of their traditions and past.

Global Jukebox is the Archive's first independent imprint. Its inaugural releases are five albums commemorating the 50th anniversary of Lomax's storied "Southern Journey" in the American South — the first-ever stereo recordings made of traditional music in the field. Albums forthcoming in 2011 include, Lomax's debut recordings of bluesman Mississippi Fred McDowell; a companion album to the new John Szwed biography Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World; a hardback book and two-CD set dedicated to Alan's trip through Asturias, Spain — "the land at the end of everything"; and the launch of a series of artist curated compilations, for which guest musicians "Play the Global Jukebox," and include an exclusive recording of their own.

Alan Lomax's career was dedicated to the cause of "cultural equity": the fundamental right of every culture to express and develop its distinctive heritage of songs, dances, and stories. The launch of Global Jukebox is an exciting continuation of Lomax's efforts to make sonic space for the world's musical traditions.

Visit:

<http://culturalequity.org/>

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BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

New Release Blues.... While it is cold outside, you can keep your party hot with some of these new discs that will be coming soon to a record rack near you: **Big Joe and the Dynaflo**- *You Can't Keep a Big Man Down*; **The Todd Wolfe Band**- *Live*; **Greg Allman**- *Low Country Blues*; **Roomful of Blues**- *Hook, Line & Sinker*; **Django Reinhardt**- *Plays the Blues*; **Elmore James**- *Hits & Rarities*; **Peter Green Splinter Group**- *Time Traders*; **Sabrina Weeks & Swing Cat Bounce**- *Tales From Lenny's Diner*; **T- Model Ford**- *Taledragger*; **Big Head Todd & the Monsters**- *100 Years of Robert Johnson*; **Blindside Blues Band**- *Smokehouse Sessions*; **Damon Fowler**- *Devil Got His Way*; **Duwayne Burnside**- *Live at the Mint*; **Rich DelGrosso & John Del Toro Richardson**- *Time Slips On By*; **Grana Louise**- *Getting' Kinda Rough*; **Shemekia Copeland**- *Deluxe Edition*; **Carolina Chocolate Drops**- *Carolina Chocolate Drops/Luminescent Orchestr*; **Louisiana Red**- *Sweet Blood Call*; **Dion**- *Bronx in Blue*; **Blue Floyd**- *Live at the Wetlands*; **Ike Turner**- *Rock-a- Bucket*; **Kirsten Thien w/Hubert**

Sumlin-*Delicious*; **Mojo Monkeys**-*Blessings & Curses*; **Bobby Blue Bland**- *It's My Live, Baby: Singles A's & B's 1951-60*. **Diana Braithwaite & Chris Whiteley**- *Delta- phonic*; **Freddie King**- *Bonanza of Instrumentals*; **Freddie King**- *Let's Hide Away & Dance Away with Freddie King*; **John-Alex Mason**- *Jook Joint Thunderclap*; **Big Shanty**- *Collection*; **Pete Anderson**- *Even Things Up*; **Popa Chubby**- *The Essential Popa Chubby*; **Shawn Pittman with the Moeller Brothers**- *Triple Trouble*; **Terry Garland & Li'l Ronnie**- *Live at the Canal Club*; **Ernie Hawkins**- *Whinin' Boy*; **Walter Trout**- *Common Ground*; **Todd Sharpville**- *Porchlight*; **Teresa James and the Rhythm Tramps**- *You Know you Love It*; **Tim Woods**- *the Blues Sessions*; **Matt Hill**- *On the Floor*; **Cathy Lemons and Johnny Ace**- *Lemonace*; **Gina Sicilia**- *Addicted*; **Dennis Taylor**- *Steppin' Up*. That's it for this month. See ya!

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KATHARINE McPREE
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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.*

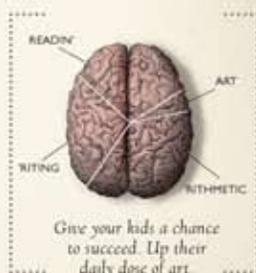
Sentimental Mood," and "Take the 'A' Train." His historical concert in 1953 at the Newport Jazz Festival has entered the lexicon of legendary live performances. There is no doubt about it, Ellington's brand of jazz has contributed significantly to the American songbook and to the lives of anyone who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



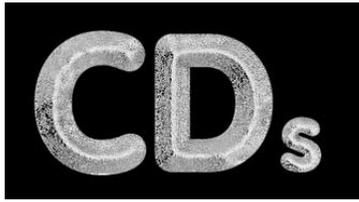
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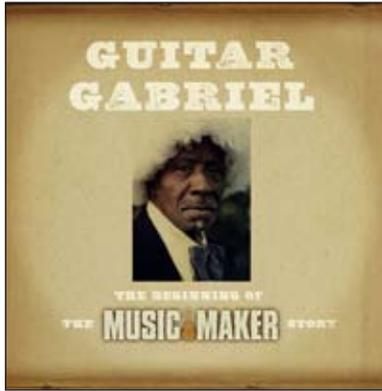


NAMM
Foundation

Image donated by Corbitt-Battmann, TN 3008 Estate of Mercer K. Ellington by CMG Worldwide



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GUITAR GABRIEL AND THE MUSIC MAKER FOUNDATION

My South/My Blues
MUSIC MAKER FOUNDATION

I first became acquainted with Tim Duffy when he was a folklorist as well as promoting a cassette of a downhome blues musician named Guitar Gabriel. It turned out that this Guitar Gabriel was a person who had recorded a marvelous album I had as Nyles Jones, called **"My South/ My Blues"** on an obscure Pittsburgh label, Gemini. The music was small group downhome blues that displayed the influence of Lightning Hopkins and Blind Boy Fuller, with a strong rendition of *"Betty and Dupree"* as well as *"The Welfare Blues"* where he told his woman "what in the world are you gonna do, when the welfare turns their back on you."

Locating Guitar Gabriel took place at the beginning of what would be the Music Makers Foundation, an organization Tim and his wife Denise formed to provide assistance primarily for musicians in southern roots music traditions. Assistance has run from purchasing instruments, arranging for medical care, helping with housing, booking for concerts and festivals, production of CDs for artists to sell and other similar activities. It has been an activity that has attracted the support of many (such as this writer) including well-known musicians Taj Mahal, Bonnie Raitt, and Eric Clapton.

In its early years, the Music Maker Foundation issued some releases through an arrangement with a major US label, and veteran producer Mike Vernon was involved with some releases if I recall correctly. More recently, the Music Maker Foundation has released recordings on its own. In the course of its activities, it has documented the music of many artists and issued new recordings of

artists that more commercial labels would never attempt to do, and also the process of manufacturing CDs has gotten cheaper so small batches of recordings can be produced as needed. These releases range from informal packages with simple cardboard covers and links to the web for liner notes to fuller CD packages with a full CD cover and a liner notes booklet.

MMF has not eschewed totally working with commercial labels, and in recent years has licensed material for release overseas on the French DixieFrog label with commercial distribution. Tim Duffy was in Washington DC recently where we discussed over lunch the ongoing work of the MMF and after lunch handed me a copy of a CD/DVD release from 2009 on Dixie Frog by Guitar Gabriel entitled **"The Beginning of The Music Maker Story."** The CD is dedicated to Guitar Gabriel and includes 21 songs, most of which were recorded in the early part of the 1990s but also included are two selections from his 1970 album, *"Ain't Gonna Let No Woman,"* and *"The Welfare Blues."* These tracks sound like they were dubbed from copies of the vinyl LP. The rest come from tapes and some of these performances have likely been previously released on cassette tapes or CDs by Gabriel.

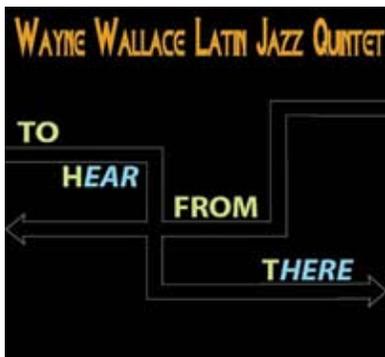
The CD here has over seventy minutes of music and serves as a fine document of Guitar Gabriel's music. His father was Sonny Jones who hung around and recorded with Blind Boy Fuller, one of the great Piedmont bluesmen of the thirties (a big influence on John Cephas, John Dee Holeman and others), and these Piedmont roots are evident throughout the performances here which range from talking blues to a gospel number sung with his brother. There are wonderful renditions of familiar folk-blues like *"Betty and Dupree"* and *"John Henry"* showing that he remained a facile guitarist who had lost little in the two decades since recording **"My South/My Blues."** Tim Duffy is present on many of these tracks as a second guitarist with other folks like pianist Michael Parrish, and fiddler Sam Duffy joining in. His voice may not be as flexible and able to reach the high notes as he was in 1970, but he remained an expressive vocalist and storyteller.

Tracks of special note, in addition to the two reissued from 1970, include *"Wahoo Rap,"* a talking blues about an elixir he used to pitch in his younger days to cure whatever ails one; *"Started Out This Morning,"* with some agile guitar; the lively cover of *"Going to New York";* the terrific fingerpicking on his rendition of *"John Henry";* the charming *"Old Man Rivers"* with his narrative and some flugelhorn added by Mark Levinson; *"I Got the Right to Cry Sometimes,"* with his spare electric guitar employing an atmospheric tremolo; *"Baby Please Don't Go"* done as a string band performance with Sam Duffy's violin adding color; *"Done Got Tired"* with Tim Duffy adding slide-guitar, has a swamp blues tinge in the deliberate guitar and gravelly vocal from Gabriel. One other track to take note of is *"You Got To Watch Yourself"* might seem like a genially sounding talking blues except for Gabriel's expletive filled recitation and

vocal. It is definitely not safe for broadcast. A few bum notes perhaps, and some source material is rough, but this stands as a wonderful testament of Guitar Gabriel's music

In addition to the CD, the DVD contains the film "Toot Blues: The Story of the Music Maker Foundation," a film directed by Chris Johnstone that includes oral history from Tim and Denise Duffy and others involved in MMF over the years along with clips of performances, and, in a casual setting, clips of many of the performers (some have passed on such as Guitar Gabriel) and provides an insight into how the programs of assistance MMF makes started an evolved. One consequence of the MMF's programs that was not initially intended was the community that has formed among the musicians who have been assisted and who have gone from neighborhood performers playing for friends and neighbors to touring the world, singing their blues, country, folk and other music to folk in Europe and South America. One really appealing scene is in Argentina where the MMF musicians are seen playing with Miguel Botofogo, who has fanned the blues flame for decades, himself. A marvelous documentary that explains what Music Maker Foundation does better than mere words.

Together this is a terrific package although MMF shows this as currently out-of-stock at their website, <http://musicmaker.org/>. The music is available on iTunes and from Dixiefrog, http://www.bluesweb.com/p_home.php3?id_rubrique=2, and other European sources. Hopefully Music Maker Foundation will have this back in stock soon as it is a terrific package. *Ron Weinstock*



WAYNE WALLACE LATIN JAZZ QUINTET
To Hear From There
PATOIS RECORDS

Once again, trombonist Wayne Wallace hits the mark with his spectacular Latin Jazz group, performing an 11-tune mixture of splendidly arranged standards and originals.

With Murray Low (piano, vocals), David Belove (bass, vocals), Paul van Wageningen (trap drums, vocals), and Michael Spiro (percussion, vocals), Wallace demonstrates that he has it all – perfection of performance on the trombone (as well as Wagner Tuba) and the ability to interpret, compose and arrange Latin jazz tunes in any tempo. Special guests include vocalists Kenny Washington and Bobi Cespedes and trombonists

Jeff Cressman, Natalie Cressman, and Dave Martell.

On his sizzling "Serafina Del Caribe," (a jazz-tropical tempo, 4:50), Wallace leads a trombone section with his guests over a cooking rhythm team. Trombonist Juan Tizol's classic "Perdido" features vocals and scatting by Kenny Washington and fine soloing from Low. Other Wallace compositions include: a melodic, grooving cha-cha "Los Gatos," a sparkling team jam "Descarga En Blue," a time-switching spiritual tribute to the West African goddess "Yemaya (The Seven Seas)," and, featuring vocal interludes, "¡Bebo Ya Llego!." Wallace's playing is most heartfelt and warm on the J.J. Johnson original, "Lament," performed with Low, Wageningen, Belove, and Spiro. One of the most familiar tunes, "The Peanut Vender (El Manicero)," composed by Moises Simon, has been recorded numerous times but is accomplished here in lyrical, flawless fashion in Spanish by alto vocalist Cespedes. The team closes out the album with a rearrangement of Tito Puente's "Philadelphia Mambo,"

Wallace keeps the listener engaged throughout by varying the rhythms, colors and melodies, by resizing the group, and by inviting fine solos all around. I love this album!
Nancy Ann Lee



TOM PRINCIPATO
A Part Of Me
POWERHOUSE RECORDS

For several decades Tom Principato has been a mainstay of the blues and roots rock scene around Washington, DC, known for his guitar playing with his distinctive mix of swing jazz, rockabilly, blues and rock and roll. He has over several decades mesmerized audiences with his fiery guitar, yet he is also more than a simply capable vocalist and he can play rock and roll, unlike some hard rock players out there. He has shared stages with other legendary guitarists such as Danny Gatton and Roy Buchanan, and showed he was their equal. And while his music often shows rock edges, he is capable of conjuring T-Bone mixed with Johnny 'Guitar' Watson on a straight blues of great originality, while adding a dose of Chuck Berry and James Burton when he is in the mood to rock.

He plays with fluidity and imagination, and a searing tone that grabs the listeners' attention.

His latest CD on his own Powerhouse label is a release that is dedicated to his family, as the collage of family photos of a young Tom and his parents shows

that makes up the cover. He brings some special guests on this including Sonny Landreth on slide guitar, Chuck Leavell and Brian Auger on keyboards and Wayne Jackson of the Memphis Horns on drums.

The eight originals by Principato include three instrumental tracks. The opening "Don't Wanna Do It," with a simple message about not wanting to but having to let his woman go but she wouldn't listen, features crying slide guitar from Landreth to support Tom's gritty vocal. "Sweet Angel" is a celebration of the higher power that helps guide Tom through good and bad times with a lovely melody and some crisp, biting guitar and a very appealing heartfelt vocal with Leavell standing out on the B3 organ.

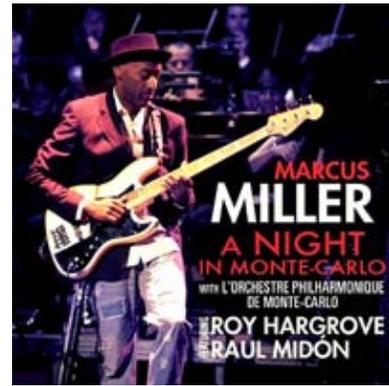
"Part of Me" is a bluesy ballad with horns as Tom reflects about someone who was part of his life and now is gone, with Tommy Lepson on the Hammond here as well as adding a harmony vocal to a real soulful vocal by Principato in addition to some stunning guitar.

Brian Auger is on organ for the instrumental "Down the Road" with its lazy tempo and wonderful guitar from Principato whose fluidity, use of sustain as well as space is noteworthy. One of the numbers that Tom does in concert that is among this writer's favorites is Sonny Landreth's "Congo Square." Tom's celebration of New Orleans' Congo Square, the second line and brass bands, "Down in Louisiana," is a similar exhilarating rock and roll gem that surely will become a staple of his performances, although his vocal sounds slightly stilted. Kudos to Steve Wolf on bass and Joe Wells on drums for the crisp groove here.

"Back Again & Gone" is a lovely sonic exploration with some swing jazz guitar flavoring while "Stranger's Eyes," again with Tommy Lepson on organ, is another song about relationships changes as he looks as someone now through "Stranger's Eyes," with its light Latin tinge. The album ends on an instrumental take of "Stranger's Eyes," that cranks things up a notch.

"A Part of Me" is a typically strong album by Tom Principato with a varied collection of material, superbly and imaginatively performed and sung straight from Tom's heart. For more information on this release and Tom Principato, check out Tom's website, <http://www.tomprincipato.com>.

Ron Weinstock

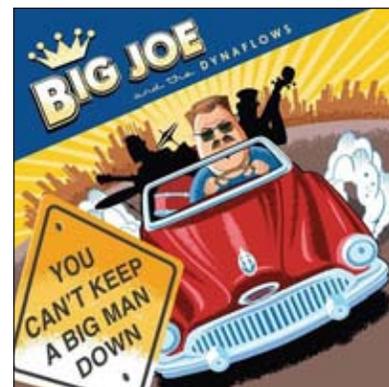


MARCUS MILLER
A Night In Monte-Carlo
CONCORD JAZZ

While a romp in Monte-Carlo may be too rich for most folks' blood, electric bassist-extraordinaire Miller's lavish set from that city is a luxury much more accessible and, for those with a thing for symphonic jazz, a richly rewarding "stay" in these parts. Miller's quartet plus the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra serve up a set that crosses styles and decades, engagingly contrasting and interweaving the small and large ensembles.

A fiery Indo-fusion lead-in, Miller's composition, "Free", is followed by a take on Miles Davis' "So What" that moves somewhere in between strutting and swinging. Here alto saxophonist Alex Han's solid chorus is elevated by well-placed orchestral flourishes. Other solo "moments" come courtesy of master trumpeter Roy Hargrove ("I Loves You Porgy", "I'm Glad There Is You"). The bandleader steps out often enough to apprise of his own solo prowess and provides a haunting close, switching to bass clarinet, duetting with Herbie Hancock on the Billie Holiday classic "Strange Fruit".

Duane Verh



BIG JOE & THE DYNAFLOWS
You Can't Keep A Good Man Down
SEVERN

I remember when the DC Blues Society was putting on its third DC Blues Festival (I was on the Society's Board at the time) that we needed to put together a band to back the legendary blues shouter Nappy Brown, the late Nap Turner was enthusiastic that Big Joe Maher anchor the backing

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band. In the booklet accompanying the new recording on Severn by Big Joe & the Dynafloes, “You Can’t Keep A Good Man Down,” it mentions some of the folk that Joe has shared the stage with, including Earl King and James ‘Thunderbird’ Davis. Lots of acts make similar claims, but few can match Joe in being the drummer and organizing the backing band when such was needed. Joe Maher has been an in demand drummer, vocalist and bandleader for several decades, whose musical forte was swing and jump blues. When he rocks, the music rolls and when he sings, he love for the great blues shouters like Big Joe Turner and Smiley Lewis is obvious.

His new album has him backed by a version of the Dynafloes that is comprised by members of Delbert McClinton’s backing band led by keyboardist Kevin McKendree. Others include Bill Campbell on bass, Rob McNelly on guitar and the late Dennis Taylor on saxophones. If memory serves me correctly, McKendree and Maher go back to Powerhouse, Tom Principato’s jump blues band he reformed in the early 1990’s. And after Principato returned again to showcase his sizzling guitar playing, Maher formed the Dynafloes, whose original line-up included the then still prodigious talent of McKendree.

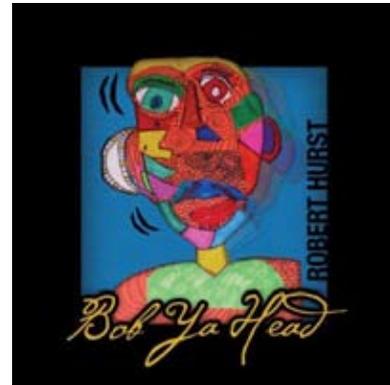
McKendree subsequently left to play with Leroy Parnell and then Delbert McClinton while in the past several years establishing himself as a producer of blues recordings. The two are re-united here for this disc, which they co-produced in Tennessee, and the band just cooks behind Joe’s strong vocals.

The album track opens with the rollicking title song with some strong piano as Maher declares you can try what you want, but can’t keep him down as McNelly rips off a terrific guitar solo. A nice cover of B.B. King’s “Bad Case of Love” is followed by Maher’s solid “Evangeline,” a reworked rendition of King Karl’s swamp pop classic “Irene,” with McNelly evoking Earl King-Guitar Slim in his solo while Taylor’s saxophones add to the performance’s mood. Atlanta shouter Billy Wright penned “Whatcha Gonna Do,” which is a jumping shuffle with Maher in fine form and McNelly standing out some more against Taylor’s riffing saxophones in the background.

The bittersweet blue-ballad “Someday” takes the temperature down with McKendree’s accompaniment standing out here. Jay McShann’s classic “Confessin’ the Blues” benefits from its spirited tempo as Maher belts out the lyrics and McKendree pounds on the ivories while McNelly plays another tough solo. “Supercharger” is a rocking shuffle instrumental where Maher sets just the right tempo (as he does throughout) that provides more space for McNelly’s fluid and imaginative playing. “Nothing But Trouble” is a fine late night, slow blues by Maher with McNelly evoking T-Bone Walker as Maher convinces us about the heartache and trouble he sees. After a cover of Jimmy McCracklin’s “I’m To Blame,” the disc closes with McKendree playing some strong boogie woogie piano to kick off “What the Hell Were You Thinkin’?,” which he composed with Delbert McClinton and Tom Hambridge,” and he adds a solid boogie woogie piano for this lively conclusion to this strong release.

Maher sounds very strong throughout here, even a bit more youthful sounding as a singer than this writer recalls. McKendree has placed well into the context of a terrific band that sounds like they all have been playing for years. The tempos are right, the groove is consistently in the pocket, and the material is strong leading to a fabulous recording of blues that may be the best that Maher has produced.

Ron Weinstock



ROBERT HURST

Bob Ya Head
BEBOB RECORDS

Bassist-composer Robert Hurst is probably best known for his stints with the bands of Wynton Marsalis, Branford Marsalis, Tony Williams, and others. He recently released two albums on his Bebob label and this one is the more interesting.

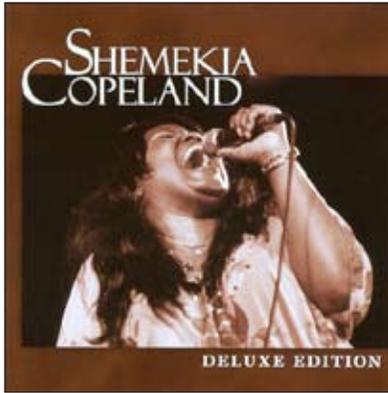
Bob Ya Head is cutting edge, high-tech, political and global, launching with the 1:26 minute “Obama Victory Dance” and 12 other explorations composed, produced and arranged by Hurst.

Featuring Marcus Belgrave, (trumpet), Scott Kinney (keyboards), Darryl “Munungo” Jackson (percussion), Sy Smith (Vocals), Vincent Bowens (tenor sax), Karriem Riggins (drums), and Hurst (on electric bass, mostly) the project took Hurst two years to complete because he was commuting between Los Angeles (where he had been living and working throughout the 1990s as a founding member of the Tonight Show with Jay Leno’s Tonight Show band) and the University of Michigan where, in 2008, he relocated to become an Associate Professor of Music.

Hurst was born in Detroit and began playing bass as a youngster after seeing the Modern Jazz Quartet perform and meeting Percy Heath. Like many young musicians out of the Motor City, Marcus Belgrave was an early mentor. After college, Hurst joined Wynton Marsalis and recorded seven Columbia albums with him. Hurst began working and recording with Branford Marsalis in 1989, staying on for five years and continuing when Branford began working on The Tonight Show. After Branford left, Hurst remained with that band for another six years. He continues to record and tour with Diana Krall and Chris Botti. Hurst’s earliest recordings as leader date back to 1993 and 1994 for DIW/Columbia.

This fascinating album merges jazz, World music, and plenty of percussive and vocal delights. Highlights are too numerous to mention.

Nancy Ann Lee



SHEMEKIA COPELAND

Deluxe Edition
ALLIGATOR

Shemekia Copeland impressed me the first time I saw her perform when she was with her father, Johnny Copeland. I had heard amazing things about this teenager and on the night in 1995 or 1996 at Tornado Alley in Wheaton, Maryland, she sang a few numbers backed by Johnny's band exhibiting a poise as well as power that belied her age. I believe it was Bill Wax (now of XM-Sirius Bluesville) who said she reminded him of a young Irma Thomas. And her dad was beaming on stage listening to his baby perform. Her late father undoubtedly would not be surprised by how far his daughter has come, being one of the biggest attractions in the blues today.

Alligator, for whom Shemekia recorded her first four albums, has just issued the latest in its "Deluxe Edition" series of reissues with 16 selections (over an hour of music) compiled from these four releases as well as an Alligator Christmas release. Along with her live performances, these recordings have established her reputation and this disc provides a good sampling of these recordings. She really shouts these out against solid bands. What is striking is how good she is, and how solid the bands are; but the songs stand out more from what she invests in them as many of them are solid, if somewhat idiomatic. One song that stands out is her father's "Ghetto Child," which has become a cornerstone of her performances, but her lament on the state of current radio, "Who Stole My Radio?" is better sung than the lyrics perhaps deserve. Other songs like a toast to a lady's salon in "Sholanda's" are a bit more original. That song along with the fine late night lament, "Don't Whisper," are songs Shemekia collaborated with others in writing. This latter number has a fine vocal where Shemekia has turned the heat down, but her singing still smolders. Other songs include here include the iconic, for Shemekia, "Turn the Heat Up," and the acidic "Salt In My Wounds."

This "Deluxe Edition" includes a booklet with all the session information of the performances and a poster, containing Bruce Iglauer's reflections on her as well as rare photos of Shemekia on the back. It is a fine retrospective of the music Shemekia Copeland recorded for Alligator and especially for those lacking a CD by her, serves as a welcome starting point to her powerful blues.

Ron Weinstock



ROBERT HURST

Unrehurst, Volume 2
BEBOB RECORDS

Bassist-composer Robert Hurst has polished his chops in the bands of Wynton Marsalis, Branford Marsalis and continues to tour, perform and record with Chris Botti, Diana Krall and others, as well as leading his own groups.

This disc is a followup to his 2001 Bebob release, Unrehurst Vol. 1. Recorded in New York without any rehearsal, Unrehurst Volume 2 is a straight-ahead, acoustic trio set containing five lengthy tunes, a mix of standards and originals (two by Hurst, one by Glasper).

On this CD, Hurst performs with drummer Chris Dave and long-time cohort, pianist Robert Glasper. (Glasper was also featured on Volume 1 but with drummer Damion

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Reid.) There's plenty of synergy among the players. Their musicianship is good and while they don't seem to cut a lot of new paths, they splendidly stretch to the edge.

Highlights include "Bob's 5/4 Tune," a 16-plus minute number that builds to a crescendo in the middle and features Hurst on pulsating acoustic bass with Glasper playing in the piano's upper range and Dave creating splashy work on the cymbals. The trio also agreeably delivers Thelonious Monk's classic, "Monk's Dream," in a 15:32 minute lightly bopping, time-stopping, time-shifting remake.

Hurst was born in Detroit, began playing bass as a young boy and, like many young musicians out of the Motor City, was mentored by Marcus Belgrave. After college, Hurst joined Wynton Marsalis and recorded seven Columbia albums with that group. Hurst began working and recording with Branford Marsalis in 1989, staying on for five years and continuing when Branford began working on The Tonight Show. After Branford left, Hurst remained with that band for another six years. Hurst's earliest recordings as leader date back to 1993 and 1994 for DIW/Columbia.

Released simultaneously with his more adventurous Bebob album, Bob Ya Head, this album shows that Hurst can play inside just as well.

Nancy Ann Lee

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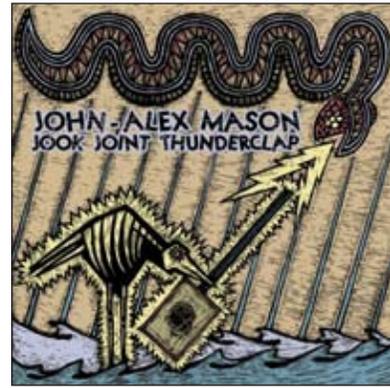
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JOHN-ALEX MASON

Juke Joint Thunderbolt
NAKED JAYBIRD MUSIC

Colorado based John-Alex Mason got the blues bug after hearing Muddy Waters' "Hard Again" album and then seeing James Cotton and Johnny Winter in concerts. He later got the complete Robert Johnson recordings began a fascination with solo country blues. He has had several albums, the most recent having been "Town & Country," which I never got around to reviewing but have it uploaded to itunes and on my ipod and every time I hear a track from it, I take notice. In the context of his new CD, I listened to the CD as a whole again, and remained impressed by his ability to handle the music of Bukka White, Skip James, Charlie Patton and others which shows how much he has learned from the music, but made his 'covers' highly personalized and wonderfully played with his vocals capturing some of the delta haze of those who have inspired him. Mostly solo, the CD also included some juking ensemble tracks including a lively "Shake You Money Maker."

Mason's new CD is "Juke Joint Thunderbolt" which sounds more in the vein of the Hill Country blues of North Mississippi mixed with a bit of Bukka White. The title is explained by the fact that a Juke Joint is an afro-caribe expression for a place or experience to have fun and dance and juke the trouble out of yourself, while Thunderclap is when thunder and lightning are so close together that it seems that the thunder rolls away from you. In any event, the spirit of the title is present on the music here. Mason has an impressive group of guests including Cody and Cedric Burnside, grandsons of R.L. Burnside, Lightnin' Malcolm, Gary Hundt and others. The ensembles vary, but much of this has a trance-like vibe characteristic of the Northern Mississippi Hills Country Blues. I find the playing a bit tighter and the rhythm less thrashing around than some other recent recordings in this vein.

The opening "My Old Lonesome Home" cranks out a hot, irresistible groove on a one-man band rig with Hundt wailing on harp as he moans about the world getting better and we are getting older. Cedric Burnside is on drums for "Gone So Long" as Mason makes use of repetition in his lyrics and his guitar accompaniment as he wonders has it been so long since you been gone

while, Cody Burnside adds a rap that is intertwined seamlessly with Mason's lyrics and vocals. It's one of two tracks where Cody Burnside raps in among the most successful and natural integrations of the blues tradition and rap. "More Than Wind" with Hundt on mandolin, has more of a folk-country flavor as Mason informs us "love don't linger well up cool and fresh."

"Riding On" is the other song with Cody Burnside but in addition to Mason's vocal and droning guitar, the accompaniment includes Cedric Burnside on drums, Fara Tolno and Alya Sylla on djembe, Fasinet Bangoura on balafon, Hundt repeating a harp riff, Lightnin' Malcolm adding searing guitar and Lionel Young playing crosscut saw fiddle creating a mesmerizing rhythm and making Mason's vocal sound more compelling.

Mason, using his one-man band rig, provides a marvelous rendition of "Rolled and Tumbled," with Hundt's simple harp an effective foil for this slow-drag treatment of a pre-war blues standard. The philosophical lyric of "Diamond Rain" is set to a folk country setting with Young adding some nice violin. "Signifying Monkey" is taken from Oscar Brown's recording of this bawdy number but is performed by Mason at a slow, dirge-like tempo with Lightnin' Malcolm and Cedric Burnside helping instill the trance-like groove. "Free" moves back to a hill country stomp groove as Mason, as a one-man band, delivers his message of gonna fly because he is free and see what's left of me, with Fara Tolno's djembe adding to the musical covering. Cedric Burnside and Lightnin' Malcolm contribute to the exceptional rendition of Mississippi Fred McDowell's "Write Me a Few of Your Lines," with Mason adding his own effective harp along with the driving rhythm.

The closing "Whisper" is a solo guitar performance with Mason's bluesy vocal matched by a spare, folksy accompaniment that concludes this superb recording. In addition to the ten selections on CD, one can download two tracks on his website johnalexmason.com - a prologue track, "Delta Bound" and an Epilogue that is a rendition of Robert Johnson's "If You've Got a Good Friend."

Ron Weinstock



JOHN BURNETT ORCHESTRA

Down For Double
DELMARK

Bandleader John Burnett has put together a Chicago based Big band with the intention of maintaining "the real sounds of Miller, Basie, Buddy Rich and Duke Ellington"

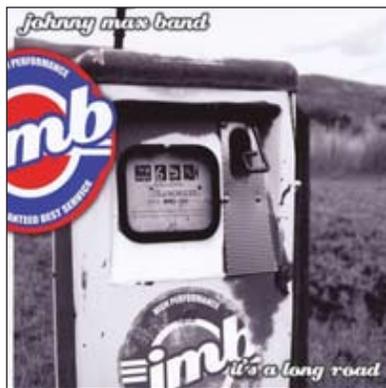
by molding his band's style "into a tight, well disciplined group where each musician in each section is completely rhythm conscious at all times . . ." Delmark has just issued a CD "Down For Double" by the Burnett Orchestra taken from two live performances and a studio date with Buddy DeFranco from 2000 (the earliest of the sides here). It's the second release by this band on Delmark and certainly the primary audience will be folks who celebrate the golden era of big bands (thirties through the fifties).

In the performances of songs that should be familiar to many, Burnett's Orchestra aims to have a strong band sound while showcasing some solid soloists. The most recent performances from 2010 open this disc with a salute to Glenn Miller on "In the Mood," while the rendition of the Ellington classic "In a Mellow Tone" is unusual in having only a trumpet solo, although the band does exhibit to these ears an Ellingtonian flavor. Count Basie seems like more of a model and there is a fine rendition of Phil Wilson's "Basically Blues" and Freddie Green's "Down For Double," both of which spotlight pianist Frank Caruso, trombonist Russ Phillips and tenor saxophonist Dave Kublank. They also get space on the solo driven treatment of "One O'Clock Jump."

Three performances come from 2005 with a spirited take of Sammy Nestico's "Wind Machine," capturing some of the tenor of the New Testament Basie Band of the 50s and 60s with a terrific tenor sax solo by Lenny Roberts. The centerpiece of these three performances is a terrific "West Side Story" suite, with exceptional section work and solos as Bill Byan's drums kick things along on a superb performance. Ellington's "Cottontail" is taken at a somewhat slower tempo (not the jitterbug tempo Ellington used when Ben Webster was featured on this). Lennie Roberts' tenor sax solo suggests a Webster influence in his tone and use of the tenor sax's lower register. The final three performances from 2000 feature Buddy DeFranco's clarinet including a lengthy rendition of "Sing, Sing Sing," obviously modeled on the Benny Goodman recording. Besides DeFranco, drummer Byan gets plenty of space along with tenor saxophonist Frank Catalano and trumpeter Terry Connell. The classic ballad "Out of Nowhere" stands out with some lovely playing from DeFranco and strong charts used by the band. Slide Hampton's exploration of "The Blues" closes this recording with some growling trombone by David Gross with the band vamping behind him setting the table for some wistful clarinet.

In most cases, the recordings here usually suffer in comparison with the originals. This is not to say the performances are poor as they are very good. In this context, lesser known compositions stand out, especially the rendition of "Basically Blues," "Wind Machine" and the superb "West Side Story." "Down For Double" is a solid hour of swing big band sounds that never flags for interest and has some superior moments.

Ron Weinstock



JOHNNY MAX BAND

It's a Long Road
POUR SOUL RECORDS

Hailing from the Toronto, Ontario, Johnny Max has been playing the blues on radio as well as singing and playing the blues for a few decades now. This writer had the pleasure of seeing him perform at a Saturday afternoon pub engagement which impressed me with his vocals and solid band as well as his way of communicating with an audience, leading me to buy a fine CD by him "A Lesson I've Learned" (Pour Soul Records). He has a new release that this writer finds as delightful, if not more so, "Its a Long Road" (Pour Soul Records).

He is backed by his current working band of Vince Maccarone (drums), Wayne Deadder (bass), John Findlay (guitars) and Jesse O'Brien (keys) who are complemented by background vocals and percussion, plus a full brass section led by Johnny Johnson (obviously a different person than the late piano legend).

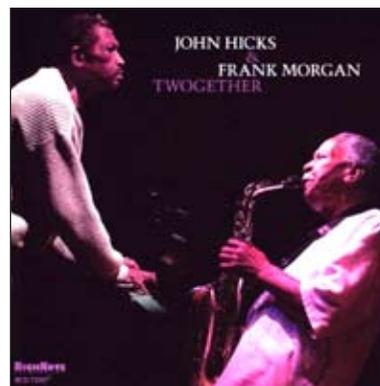
What is striking is how confident and relaxed Johnny Max's vocals are and how strong the support he receives. The band sounds well-rehearsed and crisp as if they have been playing this material for weeks (which they may well have), while Max brings warmth, conviction and more than an occasional sense of sly humor here and his songs sound fresh as he ably brings a gumbo of blues and classic rhythm and blues grooves displayed here.

It helps that Johnny Max also has a way with words in capturing the spoiled "Daddy's Little Girl," about the girl who caught his eye with a short mini-shirt who knows how to get what she wants, with the band playing a lively New Orleans groove. He also can set the mood, as on "Heading Back to You" which is a wonderfully sung ballad, while a jazzier flavor marks "She Don't Love Me Anymore," as he talks about his woman having enough of Johnny's crazy stuff and that he cannot stay.

The country flavor of "Song of New York" serves as a background for an almost casual delivery of a set of short vignettes of the dark side of the Big Apple with a nice short tenor sax break. The lively "I'm in Trouble" has a Latin groove and bright horn arrangement as he notes that every time he opens his big fat mouth, nothing but trouble comes pouring out."

These tracks are not highlights insofar as the songs and performances are all very impressive. This release

hopefully will enable Johnny max to be recognized for the fine performer he is with warm and soulful vocals, strong songwriting and superb musicians playing with him. Highly recommended.
Ron Weinstock



JOHN HICKS, FRANK MORGAN

Twogether
HIGHNOTE

In a performance at the Jazz Bakery in 2005, John Hicks and Frank Morgan teamed up before their deaths (in 2006 and 2007, respectively) to record four duets out of the seven tracks on this disc. Hicks, recorded the year of his death in New Hope, PA, plays solo piano on remaining three tracks.

For his lyricism, inventiveness and command of the keyboard, Hicks was one of my favorite jazz pianists and on the 8:22 minute opener, "Parisian Thoroughfare" by Benny Powell, he demonstrates his skills. He also excels on "Is That So?" and the lovely closing ballad, Billy Strayhorn's "Passion Flower."

Morgan had rebounded after three decades of heroin abuse and a stay in the California penal system to renewed focus on his career for 20 years thereafter. His playing here shows his facility, fluency and imagination.

Together, the duo deftly interweaves their creations on Dizzy Gillespie's "Night in Tunisia," Monk's "Round Midnight," Kenny Dorham's "N.Y. Theme," and the popular ballad "My One and Only Love." Both musicians show penchant for expansive lines, sparse chording and expressiveness at slow tempos.

In my book, these musicians were two of the statesmen of jazz and although they are gone, their music lives on, especially on this noteworthy CD of mostly ballads.

Nancy Ann Lee

CHICAGO BOB NELSON & THE KING BEES

Rock Them Blues
ROCK HOUSE RECORDS

Born in Louisiana, Bob Nelson grew up in a musical family and remembers his father taking him to barbecues and fish fries where he was exposed to blues, Cajun and zydeco. Taking up harp at the age of 8, he would later be tutored by Slim Harpo and Lazy Lester who along with Jimmy Reed and the two Sonny Boy Williamsons are his

main influences. He spent his summers with an aunt in Chicago and met most of the great blues legends playing there in the 1960s. Muddy Waters gave him his nickname "Chicago Bob." He toured with Luther "Snake" Johnson and John Lee Hooker as well as performing on his own. In recent years he moved to Atlanta where he has been based. In the 1990s he recorded for King-Snake, Ichiban and HighTone, and now Roy Roberts' Rock House Records has issued "Rock Them Blues," backed by the North Carolina band, The King Bees. This is apparently a recording from several years ago that is at last being issued.

The music here is pretty straightforward. Nelson sings without any annoying mannerism, suggesting James Cotton at times. He may not be among the harp virtuosos, but his direct, simple crying attack enhances the overall performances. The King Snakes provides restrained, solid, backing for Nelson.

The opening "Locksmith Blues" is an original where Bob's baby has a locksmith change her lock for free but the part that hurt was him keeping a key, while poor Bob has to knock on his own door. Quit Me Baby is one of several swamp blues covered here and is a nice easy going shuffle. It is followed by a restrained rendition of Sonny Boy Williamson's "Too Close Together." Roscoe Shelton's "Think It Over" is a particularly fine performance with a first-rate vocal and notable playing from Champ Young's organ and Hound Dog Rob Baskerville's guitar here.

At the same time, Penny "Queen Bee" Zamgani's bass and Russ Wilson's drums provide the welcome, understated foundation. Another Silas Hogan tune, "Goin' in the Valley," is a terrific swamp blues performance by everyone, with fine harp in the manner of Hogan's harp player, Whispering Smith.

The title track, a Nelson original, has some of this same lazy swamp blues flavor. Again one can't underestimate the importance of the King Snakes playing to the success here because it is so easy to overplay such material. "Comin' Back Strong" mixes the swamp blues with a dash of Muddy Waters, while there is an appealing cover of Slim Harpo's wistful "Dream Girl." "Juke Joint" is a down home, if occasionally messy, rendition of Little Walter's "Juke."

"Rock The Blues" shows Chicago Bob Nelson to be a genial, engaging blues performer who is heard on an entertaining release that includes some very strong performances.

Ron Weinstock



MARK WEINSTEIN

Jazz Brasil JAZZHEADS

Flutist-composer-arranger Mark Weinstein continues his exploration of Latin jazz on this 10-tune set beautifully performed with Kenny Barron, bassist Nilson Matta and drummer/percussionist Marcello Pellitteri.

To honor Brazil, Weinstein includes two Jobim tunes: a sizzling delivery of "Triste" and a pensive rendering of "If You Never Come To Me." Ary Barroso's familiar classic "Brazil" is given a nearly seven minute workout.

Weinstein is also a huge fan of Thelonious Monk and launches the album with a brisk, melodic take on "I Mean You" and later delivers a lush version of the ballad "Ruby My Dear." He also tips his hat to Wayne Shorter ("Nefer-titi") and Joe Henderson ("Isotope") and both he and Matta each contribute one original. Herbie Mann fans should enjoy the crew's bluesy remake of the gem, "Memphis Underground."

Over the years, Weinstein has worked and/or recorded with several top-names in Latin Jazz – Larry Harlow, Eddie Palieri, Cal Tjader, Tito Puente and others. He toured with Herbie Mann for years, played with Maynard Ferguson, and in the big bands led by Joe Henderson, Clark Terry, Lionel Hampton and more. Weinstein played a number of different instruments before settling on flute around 1978 when he returned to the music scene after earning a Ph.D. in Philosophy and becoming a college professor. He has since recorded numerous albums as leader and sideman.

This album isn't ALL Brazilian jazz but, nevertheless, Weinstein's fluidity, expressiveness and inventiveness and his choice of pianist Kenny Barron (who matches Weinstein's penchant for lyricism) and the tidy timekeepers Matta and Pellitteri, fully combine to make this a top-notch listen.

Nancy Ann Lee

DEVON ALLMAN'S HONEYTRIBE

Space Age Blues PROVOGUE

With a name derived from their "sweet like honey, fierce like a tribe" dichotomy, Honeytribe is a three piece outfit featuring Devon Allman on guitar and vocals, Geroge Potsos on bass and Gabriel Strange on drums. Joined here by guests including Huey Lewis on harmonica and Ron Holloway on saxophone, the band lays down 10 original tunes and a cover of Stevie Wonder's *Sir Duke*. While All-

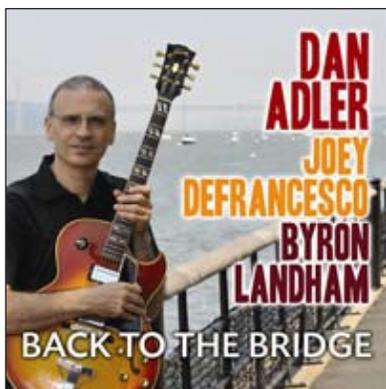
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man comes from music royalty as the son of Gregg Allman and nephew of Duane Allman, he doesn't spend any time trying to mimic their sound and, instead, focuses on blues channeled through 70's era arena rock. Bands like Journey and Foghat come readily to mind when listening to this disc with their big riffs and sing along choruses. *Endless Diamond*, *I'm Ready* and *Could Get Dangerous* are great examples of the band's hard hitting approach while the delicate *Blue Est Le Vide*, the mysterious sounding instrumental *Insh' Allah*, and slow grooving ballads, *Salvation* and *Warm in the Wintertime*, showcase the band's ability to use subtle dynamics to hit just as hard as the rocking tunes.

The title track doesn't take much from the standard blues cannon but the melding of heavy rock with moody, jazz fueled saxophone breaks makes for a fine listen. The psychedelic breakdown on *Take Me to the Bridge* and the straight pop read of *Sir Duke* don't fare as well but do showcase the band's refusal to be shackled by expectations. This refusal is helped along by the fact that while Allman's rich voice shares his father's ability to stretch from a whisper to a shout without sounding strained on either end it lacks the southern seasoning that makes his father so instantly recognizable.

Having his own voice frees Allman and Honeytribe from pointless comparisons to the Allman Brothers and lets it explore its own future. Based on this disc, the future appears to be bright.

Mark Smith



DAN ADLER
Back to The Bridge
 EMDAN MUSIC

Israeli born guitarist Dan Adler has established himself on the New York scene where he has played and studied with saxophonists Steve Grossman and Bob Berg as well as such guitarists as Jack Wilkins, Paul Bollenback, Peter Bernstein and Rodeny Jones. His second recording, "Back to The Bridge" (Emdan Music) is an organ trio session with Joey DeFrancesco handling the keyboards, and DeFrancesco's regular drummer Bryon Landham on drums. The result is a terrific, swinging recording that showcases Adler's solid guitar playing backed by perhaps today's most impressive organist.

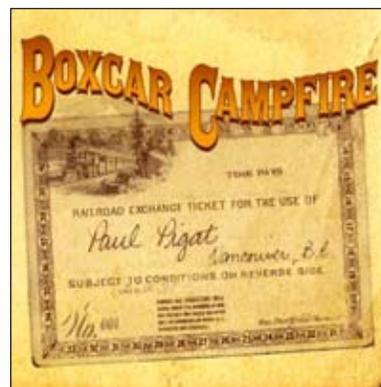
The opening Adler original "Gold and Silver" is dedicated to the great Horace Silver, and is a brisk number that

quickly displays Adler's tone along with his fleet, precise and imaginative delivery followed by DeFrancesco taking over. Joe Bushkin's "Oh, Look At Me Now" a swing era hot one associated with Frank Sinatra, introduced by some unaccompanied guitar before DeFrancesco and then Landham join in behind Adler's nicely articulated and developed solo. An unexpected delight is the organ trio rendition of Clifford Brown's "Joy Spring," with its alternating rhythms at the beginning before the trio gets off on a hot groove. The title track is an Adler original, and is, in his words, an attempt to mix a non-bebop head to some bebop solos and it is a delightful musical trip.

It is suggested that Adler's jazz waltz, "Good Old Days," harkens back to the relaxed feel of the Larry Young, Grant Green and Elvin Jones organ trio, and DeFrancesco's funky playing precedes some strong soloing from Adler. In his liner notes, Scott Yanow observes how Landham sets a tone with a New Orleans march groove before Adler and DeFrancesco set a medium tempo swing groove. Adler plays homage to his homeland with a languid performance of the Israeli ballad, "Yatsanu At (We Left Slowly)," which spends a doleful mood. The calypso rhythm of "Between Jobs" helps lighten the spirits, while "I've Never Been In Love Before" is taken at a quicker tempo than usual with an especially adept and intriguing solo by Adler. This splendid session ends with Oscar Peterson's blues, "The Smudge," concluding this recording with more wonderful playing.

I have not heard Adler's prior recording, but "Back To The Bridge" is a superb, straight-ahead organ trio marked by imaginative material and excellent playing from all involved and has worn well over repeated listening. Dan Adler's website is <http://danadler.com>.

Ron Weinstock



PAUL PIGAT
Boxcar Campfire
 LITTLE PIG RECORDS

Roots-country guitarist-vocalist Paul Pigat would likely be classified in Americana if he were based in the States. Based in Vancouver, he has two new CDs on Little Pig Records. One is by Cousin Harley, "Its a Sin," while the other is under his own name and entitled "Boxcar Campfire." The two discs have very different flavors but are quite enjoyable in their separate fashion.

The Cousin Harley disc opens up with the rockabilly

flavored “Conductor Man,” and listening to Pigat’s vocals along with his sizzling, twanging guitar, one might think of Pagat as a Yankee Marty Robbins crossed with the Johnny Burnette Trio as Keith Picot slaps the bass and Jesse Cahill kicks the rhythm around. The mood can switch to a bit jazzier guitar on the swinging “She’s Comin’ Back,” the old-style Western rocker, “Sweet Little Angel,” and scintillating instrumentals such as the swinging “Beaver Fever,” “Swingin’ Life a Mofo,” and “Spooks.” Cousin Harley will clearly appeal to fans of similar guitar masters with a similar country-roots base as Bill Kirchen and Deke Dickenson. Cousin’s Harley’ “It’s a Sin” is wonderful rocking music and terrific fun.

“Pigat’s own “Boxcar Campfire,” is built upon a mostly acoustic quartet and has a folk-country feel with some blues tinges with Pigat on guitars and banjo, Tommy Babin on bass, Barry Mirochnink on drums and Paul Rigby on mandolin. The ambiance is more of what some might call “Americana,” ranging from the folk oriented “Johnny’s Poorly” to the bluegrass flavored “All Over Now.” A reference point might be the great Leon Redbone, although Pigat’s recordings don’t have his deadpan humor. “John Henry Part 2,” with its dirge tempo, has Pigat on electric guitar and is an original lyric with this John Henry being an offspring of the hero, who never should have driven a spike on the line, being free with his knife and free with his gun. “Corn Liquor” has some nice finger style guitar with a Piedmont blues tinge, while “Nowhere Town” is a reflective solo performance. “Lonesome Whistle” is an invigorating bluegrass-tinged treatment of a Hank Williams number with rousing interplay between mandolin, acoustic guitar and steel guitar and followed by the amusing lyric of “Sweet Tooth.” “Boxcar Campfire” shows another side of Paul Pigat’s music and is the diverse performances are wonderfully performed and so very entertaining.

Ron Weinstock



**LUTHER HUGHES & THE
CANNONBALL-COLTRANE PROJECT**

**Things Are Getting Better
PRIMROSE LANE MUSIC**

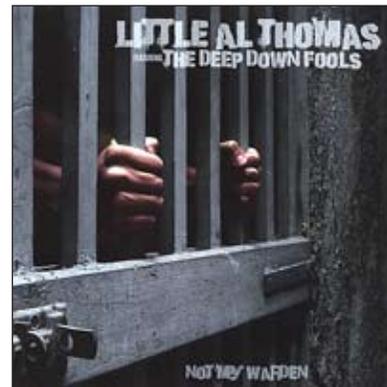
While I have been hearing good things about the Cannonball-Coltrane Project for years, this is the first time I’ve actually heard a CD by the group. I have to say; the good things I’ve heard are ringing true.

This Southern California quintet was formed in 2002 and has been building larger and larger audiences since

then. Leader, bassist Luther Hughes, states on the band’s website that “Initially formed as an homage to the 1959 Cannonball Adderley-John Coltrane landmark album, The Cannonball Adderley Quintet in Chicago, our group continues to pay tribute to these jazz giants with arrangements and original compositions related to or inspired by Cannonball and/or Coltrane.” Cannonball and Coltrane never had an actual band together. Other than the above-mentioned album, they only appeared together as sidemen with Miles Davis in the late 50s. This is the band’s 4th CD and they also have a live DVD.

They do not try to imitate Ball and Trane, but rather play music in the spirit of the band on that ’59 album (which has also been issued as Cannonball & Coltrane). The melodies are bright, the solos are quite interesting and the ensembles featuring the alto of Bruce Babad and the tenor of Glenn Cashman have just the right tightness, resulting in an exquisite listening experience. The opening song, Luther’s arrangement of “Jive Samba,” one of Cannonball’s major staples, sets the tone for a fine set of covers and originals by the band members. The 12-song set closes with a version of Duke Ellington’s “Take The Coltrane.” Rounding out the band are pianist Ed Cezach and drummer Paul Kreibich.

The band plays gigs around Southern California and I’ve heard that they sometimes play at the legendary Lighthouse in Hermosa beach, where so many jazz giants recorded live albums in the past, although I see nothing to that effect currently on the club’s website. Learn more about this fine band at www.cannonballcoltraneproject.com where you can sample the songs and buy this CD. It is definitely well worth checking out. *Bill Wahl*



**LITTLE AL THOMAS
Not My Warden
BLUES BOULEVARD**

Chicago singer Little Al Thomas has been a fixture around south side Chicago blues clubs for decades prior to recording “South Side Story” for Cannonball just before that label folded. He was born in Chicago and grew up with the music and records of Tampa Red, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Lonnie Johnson and had a long stint singing with guitarist Iacy Gibson. Blues Boulevard has issued “Not My Warden,” 2009 recordings of Thomas backed by guitarist John Edelmann and the Deep Down Fools who

also include Marty Binder on drums, Rob Binder on keyboards and either Eddie Galchick or Mike Scharf on bass. Included are thirteen tunes, with twelve being originals for about an hour of music.

For some reason the accompaniment to the opening "Long Ride to the Southside" conjures up a Sheryl Crow recording, but introduces us to Thomas' strong vocals as Edelmann adds some whining slide while Binder takes a nice solo. Thomas has a straight-forward style as he belts out the lyrics. Folks in Chicago I would suspect identify with the message of Edelmann's "I'm Gonna Buy a Politician," with its mesmerizing John Lee Hooker groove as Thomas delivers the message of working too hard as "its time to improve my position, I'm gonna buy me a politician," although the lyrics get somewhat repetitive. The title track is a slow shuffle as Thomas wonders about whether his love is a crime and declares, "you are my wife, not my warden," and "you are no ball and chain, and I'm not doing time," while Edelmann takes a lengthy solo.

"Ready Freddie," is a nice driving instrumental taken at a relaxed tempo allowing Edelmann to stretch out. The slide is out again for the rocking shuffle, "Wonder What You Think," as Little Al asks about whether money can buy love. "Don't take the Keys" has a jazzier feel to it with Binder being more prominent in accompaniment and Edelmann's tone a bit lighter and more directly swinging here. "Anger Heats My House" has some nice guitar while Binder takes us deep down on the B3. "Big Time Operators" sounds like a vintage sixties B.B. King influenced recording as Thomas complains about the seedy side of the music business with the big time operators on the music scene who don't look like politicians but act as thugs. "West Side Wind," another energetic instrumental shuffle, is followed by a cover of "Reconsider Baby," with Edelmann playing with a jazzier feel and tone, mixing in chords with his single note runs, and the jazzy flavor continues on the Latin-accented closing instrumental "Coronado," with Edelmann effectively adding some tremolo here.

While the lyrics on this CD are hardly memorable, it is not noticeable as Thomas is such a robust and soulful singer. The backing also sounds stronger as one gets into the album. They add much more than simply providing varied, rock-steady grooves, and Edelmann and Binder provide plenty of solid solos. It's been about a decade since Little Al Thomas' last recording, and "Not My Warden" has made this wait worthwhile.

Ron Weinstock

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JOYCE COBB

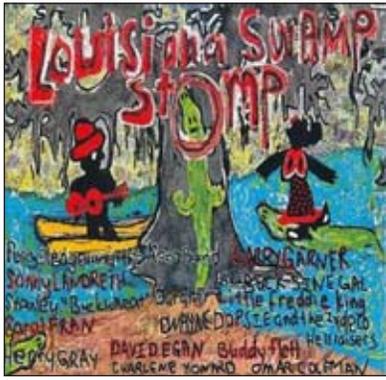
Joyce Cobb with the Michael Jefry Stevens Trio ARCHER RECORDS

Memphis based vocalist Joyce Cobb has been a part of that city's scene for decades, first signing with Stax, later having a hit for Cream Records (later Hi Records) and shared stages with numerous musical legends. Her rhythm 'n' blues stylings decades ago were always imbued with jazzy elements, and in more recent years her focus has been more on the jazz side. She has a fascinating new release on Archer Records, "Joyce Cobb with the Michael Jefry Stevens Trio." Pianist Michael Jefry Stevens is a New Yorker who moved to Memphis and his trio consists of Jonathan Wires and drummer Renardo Ward.

There may be some who may find Ms. Cobb's vocals, described in the publicity materials as "honey sweet," an acquired taste with her sometimes less than precise diction. Her vocals here suggest Jimmy Scott, and if the performances may not quite pull at the heart strings as much as Scott, they still struck these ears in a most positive fashion. It helped that the Stevens Trio provides excellent support and Stevens takes any number of fine solos in addition to his harmonious accompaniments.

She sings classic standards mixed with vocalese adaptations of jazz classics including Bobby Timmons' "Moanin'," Fats Waller's "Jitterbug Waltz," Hoagy Carmichael and Johnny Mercer's "Skylark," the juxtaposition of "I'm in the Mood For Love with Moody's Mood For Love," the Ellington-Strayhorn ballad "Daydream" and "My Heart Belongs to Daddy." Cobb contributes some atmospheric bluesy harmonica before launching into "Moanin'," delivering the Jon Hendricks lyrics with her overdubbing a backing vocal chorus that perhaps lends a sense that her vocal should have been a bit looser. "Jitterbug Waltz" is a delightful performance with Stevens accenting her horn like delivery of the lyrics with Wires taking a solo. "Skylark" opens with several choruses from Stevens in a reflective, lyrical mode before Cobb wistfully sings about her yearning for her lover. Like a horn, she chants Jon Hendricks' lyric for Thelonious Monk's "Well That Was a Dream," capturing the angular aspects of Monk's tune.

A bit more mainstream vocally is her rendition of "My Heart Belongs to Daddy," with the trio's delicious tango accompaniment. There is a delightful extending of the lyrics of "I'm in the Mood For Love" which deftly

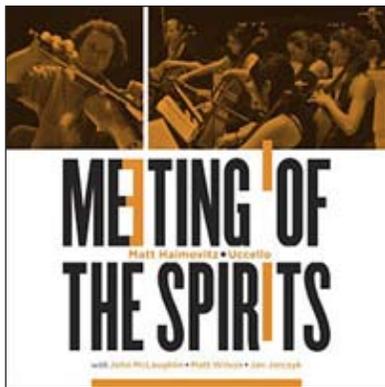


LOUISIANA SWAMP STOMP HONEYBEE

This tasty various-artists collection, populated by natives of- and transplants to- the Pelican State, catches fire in earnest five tracks in with strong, successive efforts from Percy Sledge, Sonny Landreth and Omar Coleman. Soul legend Sledge delivers a totally in-character ballad, "First You Cry". Slide-guitar master Landreth does title-track honors with a blues/zydeco mix. Chicago harmonica stud Coleman relates geographically with a gutsy take on Lightnin' Hopkins "Mojo Hand".

Encasing these numbers are bayou-bound ear-catchers from Carol Fran, "Tou' Les Jours C'est Pas La Meme", Dwayne (son of "Rockin'") Dopsie, "Traveln' Man" and a haunting piece from one-man band Buddy Flett, "Livin' Ain't Easy", among others. In addition, album sales support the Northern Louisiana Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Foundation (Flett is a viral encephalitis survivor).

Duane Verh



MATT HAIMOVITZ & UCCELLO

Meeting of the Spirits OXINGALE RECORDS

A cello ensemble playing big band arrangements is an unusual concept, but cellist Matt Haimovitz and the ensemble Uccello are heard doing material from John McLaughlin and Ornette Coleman to Gershwin on "Meeting of the Spirits," (Oxingale Productions). This very recent release is also a 2010 Grammy nominee as a Classical Crossover product. Haimovitz and fellow cellists handle a program of arrangements by David Sanford with guest appearances by guitarist John McLaughlin, drummer Matt Wilson and the keyboards

of Jan Jarczyk.

It is a fascinating collection of performances as soloing cellos play against others riffing a bass melody line. Arrangements are often taken from solos on the original performances and the unusual setting makes the familiar sound new. Guitarist McLaughlin adds some of his exhilarating playing to the opening rendition of his "Open Country Joy," with the cello solos of Leanna Rutt and Haimovitz adding a celebratory tone. In the notes, arranger Sanford observes he tried to capture the flavor of the Birth of the Cool recordings in the arrangement of Miles Davis' "Half Nelson," with a lovely solo from the leader and some nice pizzicato playing by Dominic Painchaud. Sanford credits John Zorn's punk-thrash recording of Ornette Coleman's "W.R.U." as the inspiration for a performance that has spirited polyphonic solos as well as crisp drums from Matt Wilson. The rendition of John Lewis' "Blues in A Minor" is a duet between the pizzicato playing of Haimovitz and Dominic Painchaud, both plainly precisely and clear articulation of their ideas.

"Meeting of the Spirits" is another John McLaughlin number with Haimovitz recreating McLaughlin's original solo, while Amaryllis Jarczyk recreates Jan Hammer's solo on the original recording. Their solos sandwich a Fender Rhodes solo by guest Jarczyk while Wilson's drums propel the performance. It is followed by Billy Strayhorn's "Blood Count," written from his hospital bed with Haimovitz attempting to recreate the inflections of Johnny Hodges alto saxophone to honor him here on a lovely, sober performance. An original by Haimovitz and Uccello is "Triptych," inspired by the works of an artist friend as well as jazz pianists Vijay Iyer and Nik Bartsch, which comes across as somewhat melodramatic. A lighter tone is heard on a rendition of the Gershwin standard "Liza," inspired by the Quintette of the Hot Club of France with Haimovitz's pizzicato work evoking Django Reinhardt, followed by the arco playing of Leanna Rutt whose enlivening playing is a homage to Stephane Grappelli followed by spirited ensemble playing.

The final performance is of Charles Mingus' "Haitian Fight Song," which scores Booker Ervin's tenor saxophone and Jaki Byard's piano solo," and is another fascinating performance as they capture much of the spirit of the original performance despite the very distinct instrumentation. The performances convey a range of musical flavors and emotions. It is a change of pace for listeners that is worth exploring. *Ron Weinstock*

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ROOMFUL OF BLUES

Hook, Line & Sinkers

Alligator

After 43 years, Roomful of Blues shows no sign of slowing down. From its early days with Duke Robillard leading it in its reworking of classic jump blues with pianist Al Copley, saxophonists Greg Piccolo and Rich Lataille, the band has expanded from an initial focus on the R&B of the late forties and fifties to span more recent blues and rhythm grooves. Guitarist Chris Vachon has been a main driving force of the band for at least the past two decades and saxophonist Lataille still rips off his solos while they have a new vocalist in Phil Pemberton. They have a new album on Alligator, their fourth for the label, "**Hook, Line and Sinkers**," that shows the band not slowing down in the least.

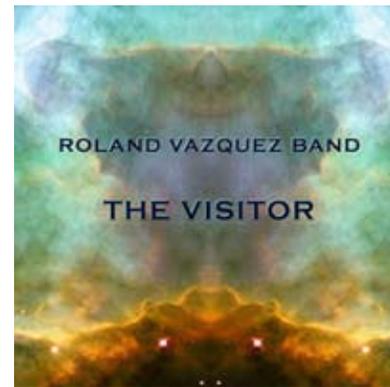
The present release opens with a hot rendition of the Big Maybelle classic, "*That's A Pretty Good Love*" that opens with some slashing guitar by Vachon, a bit of Johnny 'Guitar' Watson crossed with Lafayette 'Thing' Thomas. It's interesting to hear a male sing this, and while Pemberton has a strong voice he is *almost* over the top here while the horns riff in support and rhythm cooks. Gatemouth Brown's "*She Walks Right In*" is a hot jumping number with some nice sax obbligato behind the vocal, before Vachon treats us to some fifties-styled Gatemouth Brown guitar followed by some booting baritone sax from Mark Earley as the other horns riff like a mini Count Basie Band. Then we go to New Orleans for a cover of the Smiley Lewis recording from which the album gets its title, although Pemberton's vocal can't cut "**Deacon John's Jump Blues**" cover much less the original.

Pemberton's frenzied rock and roll vocal along with Vachon's slashing fretwork are front and center on "*Kill Me*," from the Don & Dewey songbook, followed by a lively reworking of a Gatemouth Brown instrumental from the early fifties, "*Gate Walks the Board*," where Vachon, Lataille, Earley, trumpeter Doug Woolverton and pianist Travis Colby get solo spots. Pemberton can be quite an evocative singer when he cools down a bit as on the remake of Amos Milburn's "*Juice, Juice, Juice*," while "*Ain't Nothing Happening*" cranks the tempo up on a hot Crescent City boogie (earlier waxed by Paul Gayten and Little Richard) on which Pemberton sounds

at home. "*Win With Me Baby*" is another Peacock Gate-mouth Brown recording that for some reason Robey is given here sole composer credit. Solid vocal and guitar are heard on this with the horns providing the right atmosphere. Lieber and Stoller's "*It*" is a relatively obscure Jimmy Witherspoon recording with nice vocal and good playing while the rendition of "*Come On Home*" is a bit less frantic than Louis Jones' original of this early sixties R&B rave-up. It is followed by a reflective Pemberton on "*Time Brings About a Change*," from Floyd Dixon's songbook, with Vachon almost in a Johnny Moore vein, Woolverton adding lovely muted trumpet and a terrific tenor sax solo. A remake of a Nappy Brown recording "*Just a Little Love*" closes this out with Pemberton sounding very nice and the performance sports a booting tenor sax solo.

While some of my comments with certain points on specific songs may have sounded critical, the simple fact is that taking this album as a whole, it may be the best Roomful of Blues recording in a very long time. Roomful of Blues has shaken up the house and that is a very good thing.

Ron Weinstock



ROLAND VAZQUEZ BAND

The Visitor

RVCD

Composer-Arranger-Drummer Roland Vazquez has been on the scene for sometime and in the late 70s was a member of Clare Fischer's all-star band "Salsa Picante." Later working in New York, he attended the Manhattan School of Music, obtaining a Masters in Music and while continuing to play, lead ensembles and compose. He also started teaching at the Manhattan School. He has also taught at University of Michigan and the American Academy in Rome. His compositions have not been limited to jazz, but also chamber music, and have been performed in a number of contexts including one that was for a string quartet and orchestra. His new recording, "The Visitor" (RVCD/Roland Music) is a big band recording that includes several of his compositions that he has been performing, but with the help of a grant from The Aaron Copland Fund For Music, he was able to get this recording memorialized in a studio and issued.

Besides composing six of the seven selections, Vazquez conducts the wonderful big band heard here. I confess not being familiar with most of the musicians

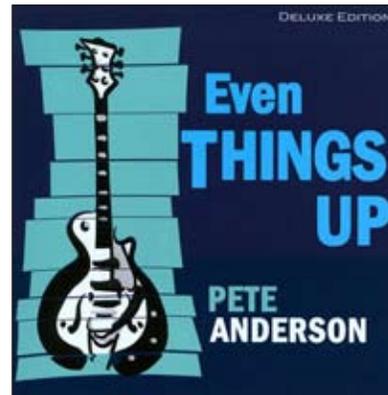
on this recording. Joel Frahm on saxophones was the most familiar name but many of the participants have made a strong impression including the rhythm section of pianist Luis Perdomo; guitarist Pete McCann; electric bassist James Genus; drummer Ignacio Berroa; and percussionist (also on congas) Samuel Torres. The compositions are inspired, the arrangements vital and the solos are striking.

The opening composition, "Urantia," is taken for a mythical name for earth and after an opening section with some wonderful piano by Perdomo, both Aaron Heck on alto sax and Alex Norris on trumpet solo propelled by the Afro-Cuban rhythmic foundation laid by the rhythm section. "Thru a Window," opens with a languid unaccompanied piano section by Perdomo before the tempo kicks up a notch with Christos Rafaelides adding coloring on the vibes with the composer's exhilarating arrangement for the reeds and brass. There is also strong tenor from Dan Willis, soprano sax from Roger Rosenberg, and striking percussion playing from Berroa and Torres. Torres' percussion evokes the ocean tide coming ashore at the beginning of the title track, which is a feature of Frahm's saxophone and Perdomo's piano. One easily is delighted by Vazquez's layering of sounds and the interplay between the brass and reeds.

One might find it impossible not to be at least tapping one's feet on "Whirlpool" with its driving and funky Latin rhythm, with Heck's strong alto playing benefiting from the imaginative musical colors Vazquez's has provided him. "Sevilla" is a reflection of a time in medieval Spain when there was co-existence between Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities and the inspiration of that time compared to contemporary intolerance with some exquisite playing by Perdomo. Clare Fischer's "Guarabe'" was part of a Grammy Award winning recording, "Salsa Picante," and this lively big band re-casting serves as a fitting salute to a mentor with more spirited piano and alto saxophone, with Perdomo providing a tempo change introducing a blustery baritone sax solo by Rosenberg followed by the horns soaring behind Norris' fiery trumpet and to the performances exciting conclusion.

The concluding "The Path of Change" is described as "an episodic 'Latin rhythmic chamber jazz,'" that was more recently translated from small group to full big band orchestration and provides a vehicle for guitarist McCann to take the forefront with some Santana inspired playing prior to Berroa and Torres taking the spotlight as a baritone sax and responding horns provide a musical backdrop. This is a strong conclusion to one of the best big band recordings I have heard in some time. Highly recommended. This is available from Amazon, cdbaby and downloadable at i-tunes. His website is <http://www.rolandvazquez.com>.
Ron Weinstock

jazz-blues.com



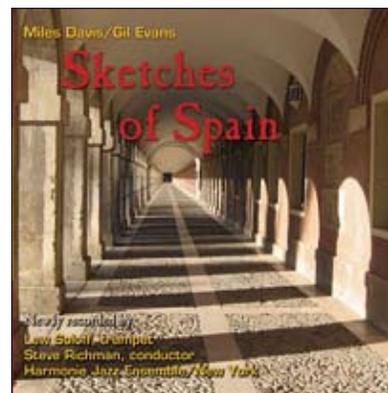
PETE ANDERSON

**Even Things Up
LITTLE DOG/VIZZTONE**

Veteran guitarist/producer Pete Anderson patrols the same blues/fusion turf traversed by players such as Robben Ford and Chris Cain and his new release abounds with the freshness this hybrid form can yield in the right hands. Divvied up roughly half and half between instrumentals and vocal tunes, *Even Things Up* frames Anderson's roots-bound technique in varied, sometimes unexpected, backdrops, making for a set that calls one back for another listen.

A good journeyman vocalist knows his limits and Anderson works comfortably within his dusky confines, delivering Mose Allison-like wisdom on the breezy "That's How Trouble Starts" and hitting a late-night emotional mark on the minor-keyed "Still In Love".

Duane Verh



SKETCHES OF SPAIN

**Lew Soloff, Harmonie Ensemble New York, Miles Davis, Gil Evans, and Steve Richman
SHEFFIELD LAB**

A new recording of one of the iconic jazz recordings of the twentieth century "Sketches of Spain" features the trumpet of Lew Soloff along with Harmonie Ensemble New York conducted by Steve Richman. Both Soloff and Richman have connections to the classic Miles Davis recording. Soloff had a long association with the late Gil Evans, and Richman had a close family friend who played trumpet on the original classic Miles Davis recording and had regaled him with recording

session stories of the Evans-Davis collaborations. As George Avakian observes in his notes, the original recording was first performed in the studio with little rehearsal time. Evans' adaptation of two Spanish composers works and three originals along with his orchestrations made for a celebrated recording, which has been sporadically performed over the years.

Harmonie Ensemble New York is known for the ability to handle both classical and jazz works, including "Gershwin by Grofé" and "Symphonic Jazz," and performed Gershwin's symphonic orchestrations for over 50 years. A claim is made that they are better able to handle the Evans scores than the original session five decades ago. In any event, before this complete rendition of "Sketches of Spain" was recorded, there was rehearsal and a concert at the Church of St. Peters in New York City, marking one of the rare complete performances of this masterwork. It was also an opportunity for trumpeter Soloff to play the entire "Sketches," as he had played parts at different times, in part through his association with Evans. One interesting fact that is revealed is that many lines and passages of Davis' trumpet on the original recording were written by Evans, so for those who would say Soloff is merely copying Davis, that is a partial explanation. For the improvised portions, Soloff takes inspiration from Miles, and "trying to convey the depth of expression" of Davis, but admittedly can only be himself.

I have not listened to Davis' original recording in some time and I did not revisit it for purposes of making comparisons. If I did a blindfold listening I suspect I would be far from able to detect differences from Davis' original recording. In the context of a 'jazz' recording, its unusual to respond to it as a performance of a repertory item as one might do to a symphonic recording of Beethoven. However, this is wonderfully recorded and played. It is a luxurious listening experience, as was Davis' original recording. Soloff's trumpet cries, moans and soars and the orchestral background pulses and dances making this music exhilarating to listen to. Even viewed simply as a revisiting of the original, the performance here reminds us of Gil Evans' stellar works. Half a century after originally imagined and recorded, the new rendering of "Sketches of Spain" shows its continuing vitality.

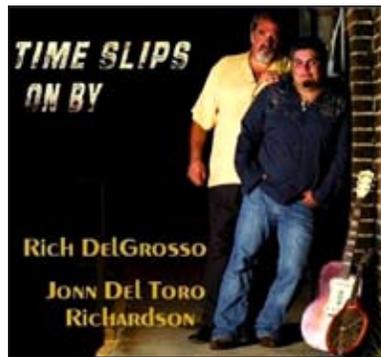
Ron Weinstock

RICH DEL GROSSO & JONN DEL TORO RICHARDSON

Time Slips On By MANDOLIN BLUES

Having done blues reviews here for over a couple decades, is it a surprise I'm now reviewing a disc where mandolin is the lead instrument? Naw, not even close. No doubt next month I'll be critiquing some act that uses Delta-style kazoo (don't get any ideas, Bill).

This time around we head to Houston, Texas, for a 14 song project that mandolin master Rich Del Grosso and guitarist John Del Toro Richardson have cooked up. Now to throw you a curve right off the bat, the

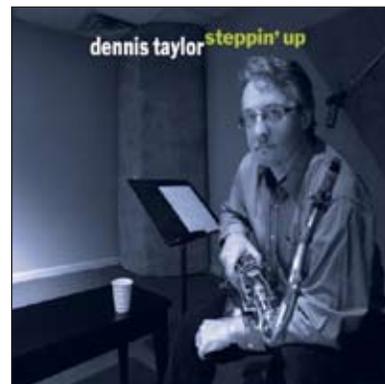


disc opens with the boogie blues of "Baby Do Wrong" with Del Grosso on mandola, the super-sized version of the mandolin. While "Mandolin Man" throws everything but the Chicago sink into it, "The Real Deal" is sparse as Nick Connolly's B-3 sets the tone.

"A Gig Is A Gig" has a familiar, deep fried opening riff helped along by Connolly's piano and a little riff channeling of Deep Purple via Richardson. The horn section, led by Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff of Black Top Records fame, funks up "Shotgun Blues," as Richardson cracks off a clean solo. Plus, during the instrumental "Where's Laura?," Del Grosso and trumpeter Al Gomez get center stage, so it is a wide mix of instruments in the presentation.

Another refreshing twist to the blues and trust me: after a couple or more listens to TIME SLIPS ON BY, you won't be getting that visual of the mandolin guy in tights playing while following Robin Hood around Sherwood Forest.

Peanuts



DENNIS TAYLOR

Steppin' Up KIZYBOSH RECORDS

Saxophonist Dennis Taylor had established himself as a saxophonist on the roots music scene with tenures in the bands of Gatemouth Brown, Buckwheat Zydeco, Duke Robillard and most recently Delbert McClinton, among others. His sudden passing this past October was a shock to many friends he had made while performing. Shortly after joining McClinton's Band in the summer of 2008, Taylor approached Delbert's keyboard player, Kevin McKendree, about doing a project that resulted in the posthumously issued "Steppin' Up" (Kizybosh records). This a album of organ trio performances with Taylor's saxophone, McKendree on the Hammond B-3 and one of three drummers (Chester Thompson (Weather Report, Frank Zappa, Genesis), Kenneth Blevins (John Hiatt) and Lynn Williams (Delbert McClinton), with McClinton himself making a cameo appearance, singing on "Since I Feel For You."

This is album of blowing tenor, funky B-3 and finger-popping grooves kicked off with the New Orleans groove of "Lee's Lick," which one might guess was dedicated to the legendary Crescent city tenor man Lee Allen. Issac Hayes' "Cafe Reggio" has a mellow groove before Taylor takes a robust solo displaying his full tone. Dr. John's "I Walk On Guilted Splinters" is an interesting choice and Taylor really gets gutbucket here, although the accompaniment is rather simple. McClinton takes a low-key approach to the vocal on the Buddy Johnson penned standard with Taylor's tenor complementary to the vocal before his very lyrical solo as McKendree comps.

Taylor's rendition of Ray Charles' "Hallelujah I Love Her So" will get the fingers snapping and after McKendree's solo Taylor takes us out in rousing form. Leroy Johnson's "Lady Day" is a moody ballad performance followed Taylor's lively original "Stepping Up," with McKendree adding the right amount of grease on his solo. There is more second-line groove on Taylor's "The Gospel Truth" which is followed by Taylor's marvelous ballad playing on the Lennon-McCartney chestnut, "And I Love Her." Nice renderings of Percy Mayfield's "The River's Invitation," and the Fats Domino classic "Josephine and three other Taylor originals complete this recording of which "Here's The Deal," a hard bop burner and the closing late night blues, "Back at the Teddy Bear Lounge are especially worth pointing out.

There are about 70 of minutes for the 14 performances collected here, the recording of which was completed two weeks before his passing. Delbert's widow, Karen Leipziger and Kevin McKendree completed this as a labor of love and a chance to leave us with this solid musical statement of a marvelous musician and person. This should be available from Amazon and cd.baby.com

Ron Weinstock



LAUREN HOOKER

Life of the Music
MILES HIGH RECORDS

Husky voiced Lauren Hooker is a multi-talented jazz vocalist, composer, lyricist, pianist and educator. Based in the New York area, she has just issued her second recording "Life of the Music" (Miles High Records), for which bassist Rufus Reid contributes the liner notes. Reid observes about Ms. Hooker that, "Her voice is mature, rich and robust, and full of emotion that only experience can bring." On this session, which she co-produced, she has a nice group of musicians including Jim Ridl

on piano and Scott Robinson on reeds and brass while Mike Richmond guests on cello and bass on several selections. The program has four interpretations from the American songbook, and seven originals for a diverse program that, as Reid notes, has "something here for everyone's tastes."

The title track was inspired by a poem an anonymous person left Hooker a few years back after being inspired by her performance. She evocatively delivers the lyric of "the jazz coming slow, crashing-blasting, ... shattering on the wall before it stops," as the rhythm swirls under her and poet Jeanette Curtis Rideau who recites "Your Music Brings Out the Poetry In Me." Throughout Robinson's soprano responds to the vocals and pianist Ridl takes a marvelous Tyner-esque solo. "If That's What You Feel" is a lovely vocal sung against a samba rhythm as Scott adds trumpet and flute with an assured trumpet solo before another masterful piano solo by Ridl. Reid in his notes observes the Blakey-ish opening for "Love Me or Leave Me," before Hooker starts her vocal with a horn-like delivery over a rather narrow vocal range, but quite effective. While Robinson plays trumpet and tenor for the opening, he takes a fairly robust solo on this track.

A lovely original ballad, "I Am Doing Very Well." has some sweet trumpet from Robinson and is followed by a dreamy interpretation of Joni Mitchell's "Song to a Seagull," with Mike Richmond adding cello while Tim Horton plays a lot of small instruments (including a rubbie duckie) as part of his percussion playing, and Hooker exhibits a bit more vocal range here. Rogers & Hart's "Spring Is Here" is a delightful jazz waltz with Robinson's flute fluttering and soaring with bassist Martin Wind taking a solo break before Robinson come in on flute. "Countin' On the Blues" is a straight-forward blues number with Robinson adding punchy horns while John Hart adds some jazzy blues guitar. The lyrics are fairly generic and her vocal sounds a bit too calculated although Ridl and Robinson take nice solos as she is countin' on her blues, since she can't count on her man. This track, and the funky "Walkin' on Down the Line," as she is walking away from her man, do not come across as convincing and in tune with the lyrics and music as elsewhere on this disc. Much better is her intimate rendition of Leonard Bernstein's "Some Other Time," where her legato phrasing better displays her considerable strengths as a singer.

Lauren Hooker is has a way with crafting lyrics and music and is a marvelous singer. There are a couple of minor mishaps perhaps, but the performances on "Life of the Music" are generally on a very high level, and I suspect those capturing her live performances get to witness some superb music.

Ron Weinstock

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TODD SHARPEVILLE

Porchlight
MIG MUSIC

UK Bluesman Todd Sharpeville, mentored by Joe Louis Walker and others, impressed the likes of B.B. King, Hubert Sumlin and Duke Robillard and played with the likes of Van Morrison, Peter Green, Georgie Fame and the reformed Yardbirds. He has a new recording produced by Duke Robillard, "Porchlight" (MIG Music). This is a double CD with a song or two more than could have fit on a single CD. The recording serves well to showcase his considerable abilities as a songwriter, vocalist and musician.

Sharpeville is literally a 'blueblood' who plays the blues having been born into one of the UK's oldest, titled Aristocratic families, and his late father was Viscount St. Davids with him being the "Heir Presumptive" to these family titles. A budding blues career was interrupted when his marriage collapsed and he suffered a nervous breakdown after being separated from his children, leading to a long court battle for contact to his children. His own experiences inform a number of the songs on "Porchlight" and there is a real authority in his vocals, in part from singing about things so personal. He is a fiery guitarist characterized by a strong focus in the development of his solos and riffs behind his vocals.

The opening "If Love Was a Crime" has some fine harp from Kim Wilson to help with the tune's atmosphere as a one-person horn section as he insistently sings the memorable line, "If love is a crime she's got me doing time for sure." The humor of the title for "Lousy Husband (But a Real Good Dad)" is a bittersweet lyric based on his experiences as he declares "He's gonna lose his house, honey ain't that the truth; So who thinks it's fair to take them children too?," and he trades solos and fours with Robillard with Bruce Bears adding some rollicking piano here. The bleakness of mood is reflected in "Used" with his line of "The black hole in my heart's been widening all my life," set against an insistent riff as he lets go the demons of being used by the system and used by friends.

"Why Does It Rain," is a ballad where Sharpeville pleads that he is down on his knees with Doug James and Carl Querfurth among the solid horn section. He puts so much heart into his performances, but at the same time he is able to cleanly articulate his lyrics as well lay down a searing guitar solo. His mix of passion

and precision stands out throughout the 13 tracks here. Toss in a biting bit of contempt towards Tony Blair and George Bush on "Can't Stand the Crook," with its Ten Years After hyper-drive tempo and Wilson wailing on harp with Sharpeville taking a few scorching unaccompanied boogie riffs. A crisp second-line groove helps lend to the more optimistic mood of "Everything Will Be Alright," with its message of times may be hard but in the end everything will be alright.

Joe Louis Walker joins in "When The Blues Come Callin'", another lyric from one wizened by experience in romance as he tells her "You play me like a sucker woman, put on your waterworks; And make me change my mind ..." with Walker adding biting stinging notes behind Sharpeville's fervent singing and taking the first solo with the two trading choruses at the end. Shel Silverstein's "If That Ain't Love What Is?" is the one number Sharpeville did not pen with the caustic irony of its lyrics dealing with "if you'd rather be with him than me; than you're a stupider bitch than I think you are ..." Another interesting piece is his paean to the larger lady, as he wants a "Whole Lotta Lady" to keep Todd warm at night. The title track is a touching song showing the great love he had for his father.

"Porchlight" contains 15 strong performances that show Todd Sharpeville to be a strong talent. His music is thoughtful, but full of emotion and producer Robillard has surrounded him with strong backing resulting in a terrific recording full of personality and compelling performances.

Ron Weinstock

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