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jazz
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PDX JAZZ
FESTIVAL
2017

jazz & blues report

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



2017 Biamp PDX Jazz Festival Celebrates 14th Annual Gathering of Living Legends, NEA Jazz Masters, and Established and Emerging Artists

Branford Marsalis, Kurt Elling, Maria Schneider Orchestra, The Heath Brothers, Yellowjackets, Roy Ayers, John Scofield, John Beasley, T.S. Monk and 2017 Portland Jazz Master Mel Brown among highlights



Maria Schneider (© Dina Regine)

The 14th Annual Biamp PDX Jazz Festival, a cultural tourism initiative which celebrates Black History Month in partnership with Travel Portland and sponsored by Biamp, is set to commence Thursday, February 16 through Sunday, February 26, 2017 with nearly 30 featured headlining concerts at venues throughout the Portland metro region and dozens of associated partner events taking place as well. The Festival kicks off

with the pairing of NEA Jazz Master and Grammy® Award-winning saxophonist Branford Marsalis with Grammy® Award-winning guest vocalist Kurt Elling on Thursday, February 16 at Newmark Theatre. Other highlights will include the West Coast debut of the Grammy® Award-winning Maria Schneider Orchestra, The Heath Brothers featuring NEA Jazz Master Jimmy Heath, 2014 Portland Jazz Master Ralph Towner in a solo gui-



Branford Marsalis & Kurt Elling © Palma Kolansky

tar performance, “Neo-Soul Godfather” Roy Ayers, and the Portland debut of Grammy® Award-winning guitarist John Scofield’s new Grammy®-nominated project Country for Old Men.

The 2017 Biamp PDX Jazz Festival will also celebrate the legacy of jazz icons Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk in what would have been the year of their 100th birthday. This celebration will be manifested in the world premiere of 2017 Portland Jazz Master Mel Brown’s Big Band featuring Jon Faddis on lead trumpet in a program entitled Groovin’



The Heath Brothers

High: Celebrating Dizzy Gillespie @ 100. In the Festival tradition of exclusive programming billed as For Portland Only, Grammy® Award-winner John Beasley Presents MONK’estra joins the T.S. Monk Sextet featuring Thelonious Monk’s son as bandleader and drummer in a double bill program entitled It’s Monk’s Time!

The 2017 Biamp PDX Jazz Festival will also include headlining international and regional artists at the new Fremont Theater in NE Portland, the Piano Perspectives solo piano series at Classic Pianos, as well as the popular Jazz Conversation interview series with several of the Festival headliners. The Festival will also be augmented by dozens of homegrown jazz shows at popular clubs and hotels throughout the city including the “Dizzy’s Den” at Al’s Den series and the “N.E.J: Not Exactly Jazz” series at The White Eagle Tavern.

If you love world class live jazz, join in as Portlandia turns into Jazzlandia this coming February at the 2017 Biamp PDX Jazz Festival.

WNYC & The Apollo Theater Announce “Where Do We Go From Here? MLK and the Future of Inclusion”

WNYC’s 11th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Celebration Presented as Part of Apollo’s

Uptown Hall Series

Sunday, January 15, 2017

3PM-5PM

Free and Open to the Public

Event presented in collaboration
with March on Washington Film Festival

(New York, NY – December 15, 2016) – On Sunday, January 15 at 3pm, for the 11th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration, WNYC and the Apollo Theater will partner for a fourth year to present “Where Do We Go From Here? MLK and the Future of Inclusion,” as part of the Apollo’s Uptown Hall series.

WNYC’s Peabody Award-winning host Brian Lehrer and Jami Floyd, local host of WNYC’s All Things Considered, will moderate an open and honest discussion on the future of social justice movements in the wake of one of the most divisive general elections in recent history and the inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump.

In 1967– a year that found Dr. King isolated from and abandoned by the individuals and organizations that had once locked arms with him in the struggle for civil rights – he published his final manuscript “Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?” The book detailed his plans for America’s future, particularly related to wage inequality, housing, poverty and education. Through one-on-one interviews, media presentations and a series of panels with leading voices in journalism, politics, activism, and social justice spheres – including New York Daily News Senior Justice Writer Shaun King, Black Lives Matter co-founder Opal Tometi, President of Brooklyn NAACP L. Joy Williams, and Senior Minister Emeritus of the Riverside Church Rev. James Forbes – “Where Do We Go From Here? MLK and the Future of Inclusion” will explore the themes presented in Dr. King’s seminal work, address what the challenges are for the next president, forecast what the Post-Obama years may be like, and recommend how individuals and groups can work together to effect change.

Other guests will include:

- Tamika Mallory – Civil Rights Activist, Justice League NYC
- Joshua Lazard – Writer, minister and cultural critic
- Rabbi Ben Kamin – MLK Scholar and author of 11 books on civil rights and spirituality
- Nisha Agarwal – Commissioner, Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs

The event will also feature special performances by hip-hop recording artist and social activist Talib Kweli and singer-songwriter Marcelle Davies-Lashley, multi-

media presentations by WNYC's Radio Rookies, and poetry readings by Staceyann Chin representing the voices of marginalized groups.

"We're thrilled to partner once again with the Apollo Theater to celebrate the legacy of Dr. King," said Brian Lehrer. "During the last year of his life, he grappled with the realities of an uncertain future, not unlike many Americans today. We're looking forward to convening some of the brightest minds to discuss how Dr. King's work can offer guidance, insight and hope for our time."

"In addition to its rich legacy of presenting world class talent, the Apollo Theater has served as a constant resource and a town hall for its surrounding community as well as for people across New York City since its inception in 1934," said Jonelle Procope, President & CEO of the Apollo Theater. "The Theater has always been a kind of organic gathering place for people particularly at historic moments in African American culture, as when thousands of people flocked to the Theater when Michael Jackson, James Brown and Prince passed away. Apollo Uptown Hall is a natural extension of that role, and so we are extremely proud to partner with WNYC again for the fourth year for their annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration."

"Where Do We Go From Here? MLK and the Future of Inclusion," is free and open to the public, but RSVPs are mandatory at: apollotheater.org/event/uptown-hall/
About WNYC

With an urban vibrancy and a global perspective, WNYC is New York's public radio station, broadcasting and streaming award-winning journalism, groundbreaking audio programming and essential talk radio to the city and beyond. WNYC is a leading member station of NPR and also broadcasts programs from the BBC World Service, along with a roster of WNYC-produced local programs that champion the stories and spirit of New York City and the surrounding region. From its state-of-the-art studios, WNYC is reshaping audio for a new generation of listeners, producing some of the most-loved nationally-syndicated public radio programs including Radiolab, On the Media, The Takeaway and Snap Judgment. WNYC broadcasts on 93.9 FM and AM 820 to listeners in New York and the tri-state area, and is available to audiences everywhere at WNYC.org, the WNYC app and through major digital radio services, all made possible through the generous support of our members, donors and sponsors.

About The Apollo Theater

The legendary Apollo Theater—the soul of American culture—plays a vital role in cultivating emerging talents and launching legends. Since its founding, the Apollo has served as a center of innovation and a creative catalyst for Harlem, the city of New York, and the world.

With music at its core, the Apollo's programming extends to dance, theater, performance art, spoken word initiatives, and more. This includes the October 2014 premiere and 2015 international tour of the dance

celebration project James Brown: Get on the Good Foot, the annual Africa Now! Festival, and the recent New York premiere of the opera Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD. The Apollo is a presenting organization that also produces festivals, large-scale dance and music works organized around a set of core initiatives: Apollo Music Signature Programs—Amateur Night, Salon Series, Apollo Music Café; Legacy Series—work that celebrates and extends the Apollo's legacy through a contemporary lens; Global Festivals including the Women of the World (WOW) Festival and Breakin' Convention, international and U.S.-based artist presentations focused on a specific theme; and Special Projects, multidisciplinary work with partner organizations.

Since introducing the first Amateur Night contests in 1934, the Apollo Theater has served as a testing ground for new artists working across a variety of art forms, and has ushered in the emergence of many new musical genres—including jazz, swing, bebop, R&B, gospel, blues, soul, and hip hop. Among the countless legendary performers who launched their careers at the Apollo are D'Angelo, Lauryn Hill, Machine Gun Kelly, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, James Brown, Michael Jackson, Gladys Knight, Luther Vandross, and Stevie Wonder; and the Apollo's forward-looking artistic vision continues to build on this legacy.

The Apollo Theater is a not-for-profit organization with the mission to extend the institution's role in fostering artistic innovation and in building appreciation of American culture around the world. For more information, visit www.apollotheater.org.

About March on Washington Film Festival

The March on Washington Film Festival, a non-profit program of The Raben Group, strives to increase awareness of the untold events and unsung heroes of the Civil Rights Era, draw connections to the social justice issues of today, and inspire renewed passion for activism. The festival uses the power of film, music, and the arts to share these important stories. It was founded in 2013, on the 50th anniversary of the original March on Washington. The next festival dates are July 14-22, 2017 in Washington, D.C.

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2017 Next Generation Jazz Festival Presented by Monterey Jazz Festival Now Accepting Applications

MONTEREY CA - Monterey Jazz Festival, a leader in jazz education since its inception in 1958, is pleased to announce the 47th Annual Next Generation Jazz Festival, featuring the nation's most talented middle school, high school, conglomerate school, and college jazz musicians and vocalists.

The free Next Generation Jazz Festival will take place in historic downtown Monterey from March 31-April 2, 2017 and will feature bassist/composer John Clayton, drummer Jeff Hamilton and pianist/composer Gerald Clayton as the 2017 Artists-In-Residence. It is the first time in the Festival's history that a father and son have been chosen in this role. Between the three of them, they have won or recorded on 12 GRAMMY-winning albums, with an additional 21 nominations.

An evolution from Monterey Jazz Festival's California High School Jazz Competition which began in 1971, applications are now being accepted from middle school big bands; high school big bands, combos, vocal jazz ensembles and composers; conglomerate high school big bands and combos; and college big bands, combos and vocal jazz ensembles through January 15, 2017. New for 2017 will be the high school vocal soloist category.

Application instructions are found at the Monterey Jazz Festival's website, www.montereyjazzfestival.org/NGJF.

Next Generation Jazz Festival finalists are selected through recorded auditions reviewed and ranked by a panel of nationally-renowned jazz educators. Finalists will include 12 big bands, six combos, and eight vocal jazz ensembles in the High School Division. Six college-level big bands, six college vocal jazz ensembles and six vocal soloists will also be selected, in addition to four high school conglomerate combos, four college combos, and six middle school big bands.

In addition, specially-invited groups will also perform. In 2016, nearly 90 groups from across the United States attended the Next Generation Jazz Festival.

The high school, conglomerate, and college divisions of the Next Generation Jazz Festival are open to superior rated big bands, combos, and vocal ensembles. The top groups will win cash awards and be invited to perform at the 60th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival, September 15-17, 2017.

Auditions for Monterey Jazz Festival's Next Generation Jazz Orchestra will also be held during the Next Generation Jazz Festival. As Monterey Jazz Festival's premier touring student ensemble, this group performs at jazz venues and festivals, both domestically and internationally, and will be featured in a Sunday Arena per-

formance at the 60th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival.

The Next Generation Jazz Festival Presented by Monterey Jazz Festival also includes a big band composition competition, open to high school composers. Judged by college faculty from leading music schools across the country, the winning composer will receive the Gerald Wilson Award and a cash prize, with the winning composition to be performed by the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra on the final day of the 60th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival.

All Next Generation Jazz Festival events and activities, from Friday night's Kick-Off Concert, featuring the Next Generation Jazz Festival Adjudicators, through Saturday and Sunday's High School Jazz Competition, are free of charge and open to the public. The Festival will also conduct clinics, workshops, jam sessions, and auditions in the heart of historic Monterey, with music to be performed at the Monterey Conference Center, as well as on spotlight stages at the Portola Hotel, Monterey Marriott, and Turn 12 Bar & Grill.

Interested schools and students should visit www.montereyjazzfestival.org/NGJF for instructions on how to apply to the Next Generation Jazz Festival.

Three-Time Grammy Nominee Ruthie Foster Set To Release New Album



Ruthie Foster (© Ron Weinstock)

AUSTIN, Texas — In the tightknit musical community of Austin, Texas, it's tough to get away with posturing. You either bring it, or you don't.

If you do, word gets around. Praises are sung. And one day, you find yourself duetting with Bonnie Raitt, or standing onstage with the Allman Brothers at New York's Beacon Theater and trading verses with Susan Tedeschi. You might even wind up getting nominated for a Best Blues Album Grammy — three times in a row. In addition to your six Female Artist of the Year/Koko Taylor Blues Music Awards.

There's only one Austinite with that résumé:

Ruthie Foster. And when she releases *Joy Comes Back*, her eighth Blue Corn Music album, on March 24, 2017, the Recording Academy might want to put its engraver on notice. Because every note on it confirms this truth: It's Ruthie's time.

When she recorded these songs, Foster wasn't merely singing about love and loss; she was splitting a household and custody of her 5-year-old daughter. Music was her therapy.

In the warm confines of Austin producer and former neighbor Daniel Barrett's studio, she found a comfort level she'd never before experienced while recording. It gave her the strength to pour the heartache of her family's fracture and the cautious hope of new love into 10 incredible tracks, nine of which are by a diverse array of writers ranging from Mississippi John Hurt, Sean Staples and Grace Pettis (daughter of renowned folk singer Pierce Pettis), to Chris Stapleton and Black Sabbath. Yes, Black Sabbath: Foster reimagines "War Pigs" as a jam session with Son House. She also covers the Four Tops' "Loving You Is Sweeter Than Ever," written by Ivy Jo Hunter and Stevie Wonder.

And she makes each one hers, aided by some special guests. Tedeschi's husband, Derek Trucks, drops slide guitar into the title tune; bassist Willie Weeks (Bowie, Clapton, George Harrison) plays on the Foster-penned "Open Sky"; and drumming legend Joe Vitale (Crosby, Stills & Nash; the Eagles) appears on several tracks. Grace Pettis adds guitar to "Working Woman" and vocals on "Good Sailor," Pettis' co-write with Haley Cole. Local hero Warren Hood ("Champ Hood's boy," as Foster calls him) lays fiddle and mandolin on Hurt's bluegrass-tinted "Richland Woman Blues." Barrett plays guitars, drums and percussion; other contributors include Brian Standefer, Eric Holden, Frank LoCasto, Nicholas Ryland and Red Young, as well as the core members of Ruthie's touring band, Samantha Banks and Larry Fulcher.

At one point, Barrett described the album to Hood as "some blues, some folk, some soul, some rock, some gospel." Hood replied, "Sounds like Ruthie Foster music."

Exactly. And "Ruthie Foster music" is an adventurous trip, harboring in places where stylistic limitations don't exist and anything is worth trying. Which explains how she can turn even a song she was initially unsure about, "Loving You Is Sweeter Than Ever," into a gospel-pop tour-de-force that could make Aretha Franklin jealous. "Once in a while I get a song I just resist, but I go ahead and start feeling what it feels like to sing it," Foster explains. "That was one of those songs; it just felt good to sing."

As for motivating herself in the studio if sparks don't flash immediately, she says that's been part of the job. "I go in, I'm prepared, I sing, and then I go home." What she didn't do in the past was hang out in the studio. Foster and Barrett had already spent

many caffeine-fueled hours discussing music and life before recording; that continued as they worked — with occasional breaks to catch a loose neighborhood dog or entertain an ailing child. "Those small, real-life interruptions made it really nice for me," she says. "They made it less like a job, which opened me up creatively."

They weren't even planning an album at first; they'd just decided to work up some songs, starting with "Forgiven," by the Weepies' Deb Talan. A gorgeous, majestic and moving ballad, it's the perfectly placed final track. "This song said so much about what I was going through," Foster says softly. "To have it be the catalyst for this album was a gift." She cried during the playback — for the first time in her career.

That emotional nakedness is exactly what makes *Joy Comes Back* so extraordinary. On songs such as Pettis' powerful "Good Sailor," Foster, a Navy vet, plunged right into lines like I've been tossed around in the deepest blue/I almost drowned a time or two/ But easy living never did me no favors/Smooth seas never made a good sailor."

"It's written so well, I was upset that I hadn't written it myself," Foster says, laughing. When Pettis heard the track, she told Foster, "It's your song now." Foster also claimed Pettis' "Working Woman," a rousing soul anthem of empowerment — and righteous anger.

She takes listeners to church on the gospel-soul title song, augmenting Staples' lyrics with some of her own. When she told Barrett that in her childhood church, percussion was provided by the sisters' tapping heels, he borrowed a neighbor's high-heeled shoes and miked his well-aged oak floor. They banged away like kids.

"War Pigs" reminded Foster of nights spent servicing Naval helicopters with guys who liked their heavy metal cranked to 11. But her version, with spectral harmonica by Simon Wallace, Barrett's Porterdavis bandmate, is more elemental.

"I wanted something unexpected that would be cool to do at festivals," Foster says. "To get people out of their seats or tents to find out what the heck is that? Who is this little ol' short black woman doing Black Sabbath on a resonator?"

On past albums, Foster says, "It was about being a professional singer, a hallelujah-chorus girl. But I'm a real person, and relaying that through this music and the stories behind it is really important to me. I haven't written much because it's been rough for me to put pen to paper, but Dan, having spent at least a year and a half being a listener and witness to my life, found these songs that have a lot to do with where I was and where I am — and who I am."

For 2014's *Promise of a Brand New Day*, producer Meshell Ndegeocello encouraged her to write originals. But a true artist can make any song his or

her own, no matter who wrote it. And truly extraordinary artists do it so well that their version becomes definitive.

“Putting myself into another person’s words was huge for me,” Foster says. “I connect more to my voice these days than I do to anything. Even speaking — that was something my grandmother worked with me on, because I would stutter. It was a big deal for me to connect to words as a young kid. So I’m coming full circle.”

Adds Barrett, “It was one of the privileges of my artistic life, getting to watch an artist of her magnitude find her voice anew. You could drop her anywhere on earth and people would feel the truth in her voice.”

That truth? It sounds like Ruthie Foster music.

The DC Jazz Festival Announces 2017 Dates and Major Performance Venues

**Festival slated for June 9-18, with final three
days on the Capitol Riverfront**

WASHINGTON DC - The DC Jazz Festival® (DC JazzFest) has announced its 2017 dates and major performance venues, presenting a host of live jazz performances throughout the city from June 9-18, 2017. For the first time, Festival organizers are offering an early-bird pre-sale, detailed below.

The fastest-growing jazz festival in the U.S., the DC JazzFest will include a June 12 return to the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. The Festival’s outdoor showcase on the Capitol Riverfront at Yards Park will again bring three days of world-class jazz and extensions to Yards Park overlooking the Anacostia River.

“The DC JazzFest epitomizes a district-wide cultural event, bringing great music to all four quadrants of our city,” said DCJF Artistic Director Willard Jenkins. “In 2017, we look forward to once again offering a tremendous festival that highlights the range of the music we call jazz.”

Events DC Presents: DCJazzFest at The Yards (June 16-18) The Festival’s outdoor showcase on the Capitol Riverfront at Yards Park returns with three days of performances. The series launches with a free Friday night lineup. A limited number of General Admission tickets will go on pre-sale to the public Thursday, December 15, through January 3, 2017 (or until sold out). With the main stage’s return to the boardwalk, fans can take in the riverfront’s spectacular view of top jazz acts. A fabulous holiday gift idea for the music lovers on any list, tickets are available through Ticketmaster.com Sat. 6/17 and Sun. 6/18. Saturday, using Code: DCJAZZ. These tickets are \$30 each, an incredible 37% savings over the \$49 GA price when regular sales launch in early 2017. The Washington Post is the official media sponsor

of DC JazzFest at The Yards.

Jazz in the ‘Hoods: Presented by Events DC (June 9-18) This series represents an exciting partnership with local clubs, restaurants, hotels and galleries in DCJF’s celebration of jazz in our nation’s capital. Jazz in the ‘Hoods takes place throughout the city, presenting a mix of resident and nationally-recognized artists celebrating the genre. Jazz in the ‘Hoods attracts a large, diverse audiences of DC residents and tourists.

Jazz ‘n Families Fun Days (Prelude Event, June 3-4) In partnership with The Phillips Collection, DC JazzFest celebrates the synergy between jazz and the visual arts with more than a dozen performances by regional artists and rising star ensembles in The Phillips Collection’s Music Room and auditorium. This free, family-friendly event will feature storytelling, unique meet-the-artist opportunities, an instrument petting zoo, art workshops, and more!

For more information about the DC Jazz Festival, visit www.dcjazzfest.org.

With more than 125 performances in over 40 venues across the city, the annual DC JazzFest is one of the largest music festivals in the country. A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the DCJF has experienced spectacular year-by-year growth. As the fastest-growing jazz festival in the U.S., the DC JazzFest celebrates America’s unique original art form during this international event that attracts jazz lovers from around the world to the nation’s capital. The DCJF also presents year-round programs with performances featuring local, nationally and internationally acclaimed artists. The DCJF’s mission is to promote music, particularly jazz, education programs and actively support community outreach to expand and diversify its audience of jazz enthusiasts. The 2017 DC JazzFest will take place June 9-18. For more information about the DCJF and its activities, visit www.dcjazzfest.org

The DC Jazz Festival®, a 501(c)(3) non-profit service organization, is made possible, in part, with major grants from the Government of the District of Columbia, Muriel Bowser, Mayor; and, in part, by major grants from the Anne and Ronald J. Abramson Family Foundation, The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The Mayo Charitable Foundation; CrossCurrents Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation, The NEA Foundation, Venable Foundation, The Dallas Morse Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts, The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, The Reva & David Logan Foundation, and with grant support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, an agency supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts; and The City Fund, administered by The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region. ©2016 DC Jazz Festival. All rights reserved.

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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



Royal dukes are square-jawed. They have no rhythm. And they wear crowns.

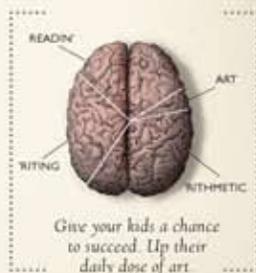


A piano player. A composer. An orchestra leader. Duke Ellington reigned over a land called Jazz.

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.



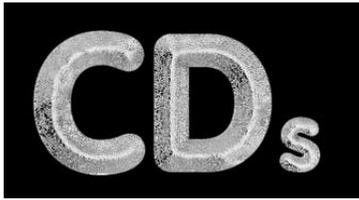
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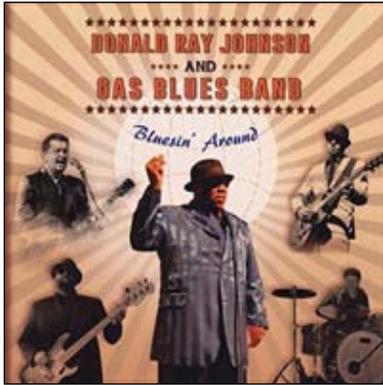


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We only bring you
the Cream of the Crop!



DONALD RAY JOHNSON AND GAS BLUES BAND

Bluesin' Around
MAR VISTA RECORDS

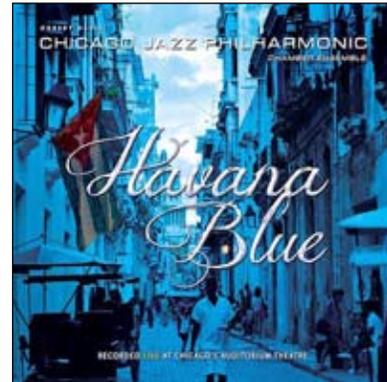
Born in Texas and now living in Calgary, Alberta singer and drummer Donald Ray Johnson has had a fascinating career ranging from playing drums with A Taste of Honey in the disco era but in recent years establishing himself as a blues and soul vocalist. In France he met and toured with guitarist Gaspard Ossikian who leads the GAS Blues Band with whom he recorded a bunch of favorite songs he performed with them over the years. Others in the band include Pierre "Little Peter" Cayla also on guitars, Phillippe "Pompon" Scemama on bass and Yannick "Papayan" Urbani on drums. Others on this recording include Daniel Antoine on organ, Samuel Dumont on saxophone and Nicolas Gardel on trumpet.

9 of the 12 numbers are covers and with one exception are not songs that have been overly recorded. The GAS Blues Band contributed one original and Johnson two. This is a well played, straight-forward release opening with a solid rendition of B.B. King's "Bad Luck" and then followed by a cover of Joe Louis Walker's "Bluesifyin'," with a credible vocal if not as strong a singer as Walker was on the original. The cover of "Ain't Superstitious" perhaps owes more to Jeff Beck than Howlin' Wolf. One pleasant surprise are three covers of songs associated with the late Phillip Walker, the slow brooding "Ninety Proof," the loping shuffle "Big Rear Window," and Nat Dove's "Rocker Dressing Trashy."

The GAS Blues Band's "She's French," sounds like a fragment of a break song while "Distant" is a funky, bluesy rendition of A Taste of Honey recording (I be-

lieve the flip side of "Boogie Oogie Oogie"). Johnson's "Watching You" is another similar number followed by a fairly strong original "Should've Been Gone," with his regrets about overstaying. Lucky Peterson's shuffle "You're the One For Me" closes this album with a solid vocal as he sings about his darling's love and the feeling she gives him, which like the entire recording is supported by the GAS Blues Band's steady, and idiomatic backing. This all results in this solid, entertaining blues recording.

Ron Weinstock



CHICAGO JAZZ PHILHARMONIC CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Havana Blue
316 RECORDS

The Chicago Jazz Philharmonic (CJP), a 55+ piece jazz-symphonic orchestra dedicated to bringing together audiences of diverse backgrounds through multi-genre projects. It was founded by Orbert Davis trumpeter, composer as well as the Philharmonic's conductor and artistic director along with Mark Ingram, musician, composer, producer and performer. The CJP describes its mission, "Chicago Jazz Philharmonic combines jazz and classical to create new, evolved, "third stream" musical experiences at home and around the world. CJP's third stream approach unites diverse perspectives, expanding the potential of what music brings to life for students, musicians, audiences, and communities."

It emerged out of educational activities by Davis and Ingram, along with an invitation to Davis This performance marked the first time for a resident Chicago Jazz artist to "think big" when planning his appearance at the 2004 Chicago Jazz Festival, and he did being accompanied by a 55-piece jazz orchestra. It has engaged in a number of multi-genre projects including "Havana Blue," a collaboration with River North Dance that originally was performed in April 2013. Prior to it, Davis and River North Dance Director Frank Chavez visited Cuba in October 2012 where they interacted with Cuban musicians and were inspired by their talents and personalities.

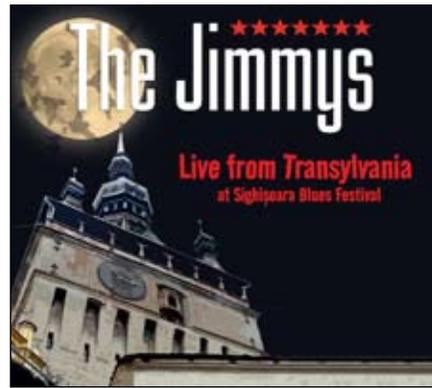
The seven-part "Havana Blue Suite" is the core of this recording, and was recorded on April 23, 2013.

Obviously we only have the music and not the accompanying dance that was performed that evening. It is performed by the CJP's Chamber Ensemble, a 19 piece big band that includes a string quartet along with brass, reeds and rhythm section. The Suite opens with the atmospheric "Sabor" with the strings prominent along with Latin percussion before the Spanish tinged theme is expressed with a delightful interplay between the horns and strings. The orchestration is lush and gorgeous with stately piano and trumpet. The second part "Congri" opens with congas and percussion leading into a tropical Afro-Cuban groove that underlies piano and trumpet choruses against a marvelous orchestration.

Pianist Leandro Lopez Varady opens "Solteras" in a romantic mood joined by some lovely fluegelhorn with the strings joining at the coda of this segment. The morose feel of "El Malecon" is established by a sober, pensive string quartet section that the horns briefly join into. It is followed by the one segment not composed by Davis, Ernesto Lecuona's lovely "Al Fin Te Vi," a duet between clarinet and bass clarinet. The mood changes with the spirited mambo, "Havana @ 12" with high energy trumpet and soaring horn riffs. The suite concludes with a brief cha cha, "Orlando's Walk (reprise)."

There are four studio performances starting with "Chega De Saudade" from Jobim and Moraes, the performance of which is centered around Varady's electric piano and the leader's fluegelhorn. It is followed by Dizzy Gillespie's "Manteca" on an excellent rendition of this classic, and there are some excellent solos and ensemble work to be heard here as elsewhere. Davis' "Seraphim" is a lovely, dreamy performance with lovely fluegelhorn and electric piano, and is followed by a lengthier rendition of the stately "Orlando's Walk" to complete this album. While there are some fine solos, what stands out even more is the writing, orchestrations and the ensemble playing but also in several of the suite sections that sound fully (or almost fully) composed and more jazz-oriented Afro-Cuban jazz segments and numbers.

The music on "Havana Blue" is captivating, energetic and at other times reflective and atmospheric resulting in this wonderful CD. Incidentally proceeds from the CD sales will support the artistic and educational programs of the CJP and for more information visit www.chijazzphil.org. **Ron Weinstock**



THE JIMMYS

Live in Transylvania
BROWN COW PRODUCTIONS

Led by keyboardist and vocalist (as well as one who helps on his family's 1500 acre Dairy farm), Jimmy Voegeli, The Jimmys, is one of the hottest blues bands out of Wisconsin with its mix of modern and jump blues. Recorded at the 2015 Sighisoara Blues Festival in Romania, this new disc is full of hot jump blues grooves with slashing guitar, greasy organ and rollicking piano, and hot riffing brass.

A hot organ instrumental, "Jacqui Juice," kicks things off with the leader starting off with some strong organ before the horns add their voices before Pete Weber takes a guitar solo that sounds like a cross between Pee Wee Crayton and B.B. King, followed by Charley Wagner taking off on trumpet, then some booting sax from Pete Ross before the leader returns with some deep burning organ. Kudos to John Wertenweiler on bass and Mauro Magelian on drums for pushing the groove here and throughout.

It is followed by a jump blues "I Wonder" with the leader on piano with some T-Bone Walker styled guitar from Weber with Voegeli wondering where his love has gone and what she does to him as Darren Sterod's growls on the trombone. Voegeli's straight-forward blues shouting also has considerable appeal. There is a rock and roll feel on a cover of Jim Liban's jumping blues "You Can't Hurt Me Anymore," with Weber and the leader's piano featured. In contrast is "Hell or Heaven," a number in the manner of the pop supergroup Chicago and shows how solid Voegeli and band are playing non-blues material (also displayed on the group's closing number, The Band's "Ophelia").

The buoyant "Love will Find a Way," is followed by a credible interpretation of Mack Rice's "Cold Women," although Voegeli can't quite match Albert King as a singer. Nice to hear a cover that is not the usual overplayed blues standards. The classic Freddie King recording "Lonesome Whistle Blues" is slowed down and reworked into how it might have been performed by B.B. King, with Wagner adding some growling obligatos. Weber sings the gruff sounding vocal on his medium tempo "You Say You Will," with a dedication to Hubert Sumlin as he takes a torrid solo. Voegeli's

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'Lose That Woman' is a Ray Charles' styled romp with the rhythm laying down a terrific groove with short fiery solos from the leader, Ross and Weber.

The sound of this spirited location recording is quite good. Jimmy Voegeli and The Jimmys put on quite a show in Transylvania and listening to one can imagine what a party folks had that evening with this wonderful jumping blues performance. **Ron Weinstock**



CLARE FISCHER LATIN JAZZ BIG BAND iIntenso! CLAVO RECORDS

Four years after the passing of Clare Fischer we have another posthumous recording prepared and produced by his son Brent. Brent states that working with his father they planned and prepared to release the music and he captured his father with a small group at home in his last years so that other musicians could be added one day. The latest project is this Latin jazz big band album with a number of special guests and featuring Roberta Gambarini, Sheila E, Luis Conte, Scott Whitfield, Don Shelton, and others, with Brent sometimes creating new arrangements based on his father's original ones.

The album opens with a terrific "Algo Bueno (Something Good), which is a spirited salsa reworking of Dizzy Gillespie's "Woody 'N' You," with a stand-out solo from Don Shelton. Fisher's own "Gaviota (Seagull)" is one of two selections with Ms. Gambarini adding her lovely vocal with a dreamy Fischer keyboard solo and a serpentine soprano sax weaving in around Gambarini towards the end of this. The Ellington classic "Rockin' in Rhythm" is reimagined with an Afro-Cuban 6/8 groove with a Rob Hardt tenor sax solo set against the imaginative orchestration here. Sheila E. adds her percussion to "Solar Patrol," with its funky feel and Adam Budman's sax solo while Gambarini returns for the lively, breezy "The Butterfly Samba," singing and scatting at the brisk tempo, with trombonist Whitfield joining her as they scat through the changes with the horns trading fours with them.

The breath of Fischer's compositions and arrangements is displayed with "Renacimiento." The title means Renaissance in Spanish and opens with medieval melodies before shifting to quasi-Latin rhythms

with Brian Clancy's robust tenor the first of several fine solos. The "Le Mucura" has Clare Fischer's big band arrangement of this traditional Columbia cumbia with noteworthy soprano sax, trumpet solos and keyboard solos. Another adaptation is Osvaldo Farrés' "Tres Palabras," which Clare Fischer had written and refined arrangements for over time and which Brent and Matt Wong have orchestrated for the lovely performance with an alto flute solo.

The closing "Play Time" is, according to Brent, the last song Clare recorded and appears here on a recording for the first time with a blistering trombone solo from Francesco Torres that fades out as it keeps percolating with its irresistible rhythms. It is a lively close to another fascinating, imaginative and passionate recording that Brent Fischer has brought us as he helps perpetuate his father's amazing legacy.

Ron Weinstock



TAMI NEILSON Don't Be Afraid OUTSIDE MUSIC

Now resident in New Zealand, Tami Neilson was born in Canada and grew up in her family's country group. Following the passing of her father Ron, she moved to New Zealand where she established herself as a major country performer while still writing songs with her brother Jay along with her Kiwi collaborator Delaney Davidson, who also is on guitar. Others in her group include guitarist Dave Khan, Ben Woolley on bass and Joe McCallum on drums.

She has been described as a bit of Patsy Cline with Wanda Jackson's sass with a dash of Sharon Jones. When I listen to the title track, the last song her father wrote, I am reminded of some of Mavis Staples' recent recordings with the atmosphere of the backing, while "Holy Moses" has a bit more rock and roll flair. Listening to "Lonely," a duet with Marlon Williams, one certainly can hear similarities to Cline, a similarity also present on Davidson's original "So Far Away," where a crisp rocking tempo adds an additional edge. "If Love Was Enough" is another slow, lovely country waltz with austere backing.

"Bury My Body," the last song her father heard before he passed, is another performance evocative of Mavis Staples with its austere, mesmerizing back-

ing complementing the fervent, almost shouted, vocal. It is followed by the rockabilly-Latin frenzy of “Loco Mama.” “Heavy Heart,” with astute use of reverb and vibrato in the backing, is another marvelous country lament, followed by the more traditional country flavored, “Only Tears.” The album closes with a moving song for her father, “The First Man,” where she sings he was the first man who she ever loved and who held her in his hands.

Not being familiar with Tami Neilson before, I was impressed, to say the least, by this remarkable and moving recording that anyone interested in roots and real country music with some gospel-soul seasoning should look into.

Ron Weinstock



**CURTIS STIGERS
WITH THE DANISH RADIO BIG BAND
One More For the Road
CONCORD JAZZ**

Singer-Songwriter-Saxophonist Curtis Stigers newest album is inspired by Frank Sinatra’s legendary performances at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas backed by the Count Basie Orchestra.

Backed by The Danish Radio Big Band, Stigers is heard performing at the band’s headquarters, the acoustic marvel that is the DR Koncerthuset in Copenhagen. The liner notes state that band plays “vibrant takes based on the original Nelson Riddle and Billy May arrangements...” which may refer to the arrangements of Sinatra’s original recordings of songs heard here since Quincy Jones arranged and conducted the Sinatra-Basie collaborations. This is not an effort to replicate the original performance (Only 8 of the 10 numbers are from the recording from the Sands) and Stigers suggests Old Blue Eyes as opposed to imitating him with his vocals.

This is an enjoyable recording starting with “Come Fly With Me” through “You Make Me Feel So Young,” “My Kind of Town,” “Fly Me To The Moon,” and the “The Lady Is a Tramp” before closing with “One For My Baby (and One More For the Road),” which like the Sinatra recording with Basie, is with essentially piano accompaniment. The Danish Radio Big Band is terrific throughout and Stigers engaging vocals make this somewhat short (34 minutes) a listening delight.

Ron Weinstock



**MARY JO CURRY
Mary Jo Curry
GUITAR ANGEL RECORDS**

A veteran of touring theater companies, Mary Jo Curry discovered a love for the blues five years ago. Now she has an eponymously titled debut album produced by James Armstrong comprised of four originals and five covers. Curry wrote two of the originals and her husband Michael Rapier wrote two as well as shares guitar duties with Armstrong. Others on the album are bassists Darryl Wright and Lawrence Baulden, drummer Andrew Blaze Thomas, keyboardist Brett Donovan, a horn section of Dick Garretson (trumpet), Mike Gillette (sax) and Larry Niehaus (trombone) and backing vocals from L.A. Davison.

Curry impresses as a singer throughout this nicely produced straight-ahead set of blues. Her pitch, her phrasing and dynamics underlie her very expressive and soulful vocals. The backing is also very nice, handling a nice range of material from the opening Curry original jump-blues shuffle “Ooooo Weeee,” where she celebrates her wrong-doing man having left and she is finally free to Rapier’s closing, funky “Smellin’,” where she confronts her cheating man who is smelling like sex again with nice slide guitar from him as well. Themes of relationships in trouble are also present on Rapier’s “Husband #2,” an urban blues with some solid guitar (thinking it may be Armstrong taking lead here) and riffing horns, as she advises watch what one says and do, as she is looking for Husband #2.

Covers include a nice rendition of Junior Wells’ “Little By Little,” as well Koko Taylor’s “Voodoo Woman,” although she doesn’t quite match Koko’s original (which few could reach in any event). Then there’s “When a Woman’s Had Enough,” originally recorded by Bettye Lavette and later by Shemekia Copeland, on which Curry produces a fine vocal that perhaps best displays her vocal range on this marvelous song. Not previously having heard of Mary Jo Curry, this listener was delighted by this solid debut. Kudos to James Armstrong for the tight, uncluttered production and to the musicians who played on this fine recording.

Ron Weinstock

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MISSISSIPPI HEAT

Cab Driving Man
DELMARK RECORDS

No surprises with Mississippi Heat's new album, "Cab Driving Man." It is another release in the 25 year career of this Chicago-based band, and the seventh by Pierre Lacocque and band for Delmark.

In addition to the harmonica of Lacocque (who contributed most of the songs), he is joined by the present line-up of vocalist Inetta Visor, guitarist and sometimes vocalist Michael Dotson, bassist Brian Quinn, and drummer Terrence Williams, with several tracks having Giles Corey on guitar (and he shares a vocal on one track with Visor), Ricky Nelson on bass and Kenny Smith on drums. Chris 'Hambone Cameron' plays keyboards except on two tracks by Sumito Ariyo. Sax Gordon adds horns to five selections, Dave Spector adds guitar to one and Ruben Alvarez adds percussion to four tracks. Lacocque wrote ten of the 16 tracks, co-wrote one with Cameron, Dotson wrote three, and there are two covers.

Those familiar with Mississippi Heat from having seen them perform live or previous recordings will find little to surprise them. This is a nice collection of Chicago blues performed in a sterling manner from the opening notes of "Cupid Bound," a solid shuffle (with melodic hints of Little Walter's "Just Your Fool") with strong harmonica, a typical fine vocal from Visor and blistering guitar break from Dotson to the closing instrumental feature for Lacocque's chromatic playing, "Hey Pipo!"

While it is hard to single out specific tracks, "Flowers on My Tombstone" has a terrific lyric as Visor sings "it would be a miracle when I die, if you lay flowers on my tombstone," as she feels like a wild goose with a hunter aiming at her to claim his prize and if her dad beat you and did the same to her as she swallows her pride and could have left a long time ago, but staying for the kids to watch them grow. The backing is simply classic Chicago band blues with pumping piano, solid drumming from Kenny Smith and great harp. In contrast, the following track, "Icy Blue," has a more funky feel with some slide guitar adding to its flavor.

Giles Corey joins Visor for a solid cover of the Fontella Bass and Bobby McClure classic "Don't Mess Up

a Good Thing." Michael Dotson may not be as distinctive singing, but he provides a contrasting approach on his straight-forward style perhaps best sampled on the boogie blues "The Last Go Round." Also nice is the jazz-tinged "Life Is Too Short," as Visor again captivates with her vocal. The rest of this recording is of a similar level with wonderful playing, blues singing and strong, varied, mostly original material. Lovers of Chicago blues can not go wrong with Mississippi Heat, as "Cab Driving Man" again provides proof.

Ron Weinstock



DAVID WISE

Till They Lay Me Down
SELF-PRODUCED

"Till They Lay Me Down" is a debut of multi-instrumentalist and composer David Wise. Originally from Richmond, Virginia, Wise went to Oberlin College as well as the Oberlin Conservatory of Music where he studied under Gary Bartz. Now Resident in Los Angeles, he regularly plays with the quartet featured on this: Bruce Forman, guitar: Alex Frank, bass; and Jake Reed, drums, while he is on baritone and tenor sax here. Also on this session are special guests Jason Joseph, Laura Mace, Josh Smith, Mitchell Cooper, Glenn Morrisette, R.W. Enoch, Amy K. Bormet, and Mikala Schmitz.

In his liner notes, Wise quotes Gary Bartz "If I'm locked into a category, I'm in a room with walls around me. But music is the universe." This explains the variety of the performances here that open with a jazzy piece of soul "What More Could One Man Want?" sung by Jason Joseph, with Amy K. Bormet adding electric piano and horns fill the backing with a strong sax break and a fiery blues-rock styled guitar solo from Josh Smith. His quartet is augmented by a cellist for his lovely ballad written for his grandmother "Sylvia," which is where he emerges as a marvelous ballad player with a feathery tone while Forman's chording adding nice accents. It is followed by a lengthier performance, a lovely interpretation of the standard, "Here's That Rainy Day," dedicated to his grandfather with most of his playing being the middle register of the tenor and with Forman adding a fleet, lyrical solo.

"Home" is another ballad that Forman introduces before a ruminative Wise solo with lovely chording by

Forman with soft backing from the rhythm. A most unusual selection is the traditional Jewish Yom Kippur prayer “Kol Nidre” that is played on the baritone, and then followed by the title track, a low-key, moody blues performance. “Lullaby” is an aptly titled short performance. It is followed by the closing tracks; “Life is But a Song” starts as a dreamy song which he sings over his saxophone with cello added to the quartet, transitioning into an upbeat celebration well he tells us how happy life is. It is a buoyant end to a recording full of warm saxophone and fresh, simple melodies. David Wise impresses on his debut. **Ron Weinstock**



SHARON LEWIS & TEXAS FIRE

Grown Ass Woman
DELMARK RECORDS

While some artists seem to be releasing new recordings at least annually, it has been 5 years since Sharon Lewis last recorded her impressive “The Real Deal.” She returns here with her band Texas Fire for her latest release “Grown Ass Woman,” with her fine band of guitarist Stephen Bramer, keyboardist Roosevelt Purifoy, bassist Andre Howard and drummer Tony Dale. Guests on various tracks include guitarist Joanna Connor, harmonica wizards Sugar Blue and Steve Bell, and the horns of Kenny Anderson, Hank Ford and Jerry DiMuzio. Both Lewis and Bramer each contribute 6 originals and there are two covers on the performances here.

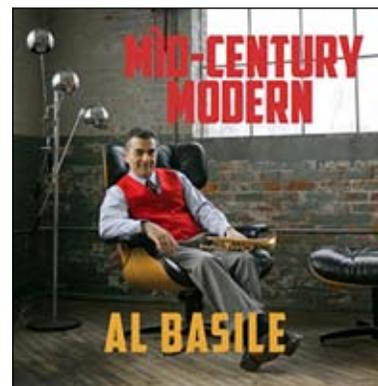
The late Washington, D.C. street singer Flora Molton referred to her gospel-rooted music as “Truth Music.” Similarly, Sharon Lewis is quoted in David Whiteis’ liner notes, “The blues tells stories about life. This was part of our oral history. The blues is about struggle - about surviving and overcoming.” It is also celebrating good times as well. In any case, Lewis’ powerful, nuanced vocals, the strong backing and excellent material make for some solid listening starting with the opening “Can’t Do It Like We Do,” a celebration of blues as Black expression where she notes of the imitators she sees touring the world “can’t shuffle like Billy Branch, slow blues like Magic Sam,” and if you think she’s being a snob well she proudly says she is and notes you can’t fully learn it because it is more than learning books. Sugar Blue adds some magic in

his backing and soaring solo. It is notable that one of the covers here is a fervent rendition of the B.B. King-Dave Clark classic “Why I Sing The Blues.”

Lewis certainly knows how to party with the blues (“we ain’t gonna play no rock and roll”) on the horn driven “Hell Yeah,” while she then tells a story about a woman born and raised on mean streets and a big city girl, “Chicago Woman” who won’t be denied as she is an independent bitch set against a somewhat heavy backing with blues-rock flavored slide. While this listener was not enamored with the backing on this, Lewis still sings powerfully. “They’re Lying” is a marvelous original with a southern soul styled vocal. Bramer’s “Don’t Try To Judge Me” is melodically reminiscent of Johnny Winter’s “Don’t Take Advantage of Me,” as Lewis sings that she don’t intend to play the game of those who want to judge her. There is a terrific organ solo from Purifoy on this.

Steve Bell’s harmonica enlivens the Earl Hooker styled “galloping horses” groove on her marvelous take on a vintage blues theme “Old Man’s Baby.” She rather be wined and dined than be a young man’s fool. The title track is a celebration of Black Women, delivered with plenty of sass as well as panache. “Walk With Me” (if you’re going my way) again shows her soulful manner and is followed by Bramer’s topical number “Freedom” with its references to violence directed against blacks and the refrain freedom can’t be freedom unless its freedom for everyone,” with Joanna Connor’s slide adding to the atmosphere here.

The album closes with a moving interpretation of Warren Hayne’s modern classic number, “Soul Shine” which she opens saying she wants to reach out and touch the listener’s hearts. That she does here and throughout. Lewis is a powerful, expressive singer, whose vocals are full of conviction, warmth and humor. She certainly is a “Grown Ass Woman,” and with the mostly excellent backing has produced another fabulous recording. **Ron Weinstock**



AL BASILE
Mid-Century Modern
SWEETSPOT

Al Basile not only plays a mean trumpet, he also sings up a storm and writes solid tunes. With several Blues Music Award nominations since just 2010, he’s

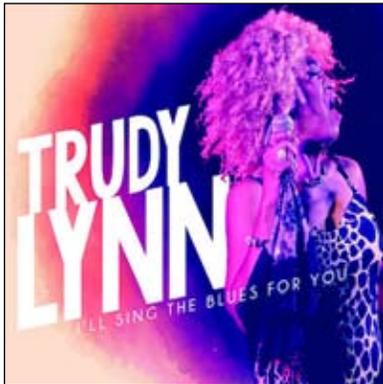
back with another thoroughly enjoyable disc of jumping, rollicking, horn-driven blues.

Backed by an all-star cast including Duke Robillard and Monster Mike Welch on guitars, Bruce Bears on keyboards, Brad Hallen on bass, Mark Teixeira on drums, Doug James on baritone and tenor sax, Rich Lataille on alto and tenor sax and Jeff "Doc" Chanonhouse on trumpet, Basile turns his attention to his desire to keep people guessing what he thinks of them, "Like You or Despise You," his involvement in a late night seduction, "Midnight Blue Persuasion," the love tricks from both genders he has to offer, "Like a Woman, Like a Man," the flight from the hellhound on his trail, "Blank Dog," the unfortunate disconnect between mind and body, "Tickle My Mule," and even an homage to the carnivores of the world, "I've Got to have Meat (with Every Meal)."

For the most part Basile is heavy on humor, light on anger but he unleashes a big dose of the later on the blowhards who don't hesitate to share their fact free opinions as the truth, "No Truth to the Rumor." He also waxes a bit nostalgic on "Big Trees Falling," where he laments the passing of the giants, and a bit preachy on "Listen to the Elders" where he warns the youngsters that they need to listen to the seniors because they've already done more than youth can contemplate and "the Elders are just you plus time."

While many of the tunes fall into the jazz/blues category, Basile has been around long enough to throw in musical references like the "Riot in Cell Block #9" groove at the end of "Blank Dog" that will pull knowing grins from his listeners. Not a bad note in the bunch.

Mark Smith



TRUDY LYNN
I'll Sing the Blues for You
CONNOR RAY MUSIC

Houston vocalist Trudy Lynn has to these ears been an under-appreciated blues and soul vocalist. She has appeared in various contexts including the big blues band of the late Calvin Owens. Her latest album features her unique takes on songs from Big Mama Thornton, Lowell Fulson, Memphis Minnie and Johnny Copeland, among others, as well as the funky original, "Thru Chasin' You." Backing Trudy on the new album are a tight small group comprised of label

president Steve Krase on harmonica, David Carter on guitar, Terry Dry on bass, Randy Wall on keyboards and Matt Johnson on drums.

There is a good selection of material starting with the rollicking, down home feel of her interpretation of a lesser known Big Mama Thornton number "Alright Baby," with Krase's harmonica along with Wall's piano adding to the fun. The Lowell Fulson hit "Black Night" has a different tenor to it with a nice guitar solo by Carter and restrained backing for her nuanced vocal. "Honky Tonk Song" is a song Koko Taylor recorded on one of her earliest Alligator albums. Lynn's rendition is a bit cooler but equally satisfying. Other notable selections include her small group reworking of (and powerful vocal on) Big Maybelle's "Ramblin' Blues" with Krase's horn like harp solo.

After her jaunty reworking of Memphis Minnie's "Kissin' in the Dark," the album closes with an insistent vocal on Johnny Copeland's "Down on Bended Knee," where she begs her man to please come back to me. A solid performance that ends another solid recording by this Houston blues queen.

Ron Weinstock



COLIN VALLON TRIO
Danse
ECM

Dual threads of minimalist posture and elegant ballad sensibility intertwine in throughout this engaging trio set. Swiss pianist Vallon and partners Patrice Moret (bass) and Julian Sartorius (drums) use this weave to create a distinctive and compelling sound space in which intensity and serenity alternately prevail.

Sartorius' approach, in particular, on each of the eleven, typically brief, tracks stands out consistently for its inventiveness, providing more often a distinctive layer rather than a foundation to the proceedings.

Bassist Moret alternates between providing a necessary anchor and serving as an extension of the leader's thematic probes. Speaking of which, Vallon's ballad touch shines on tracks including "Sisyphé" and "Kid." His minimalist character is center stage on tracks such as "Smile" and "L'onde". Always interesting, this set provides a genuinely fresh take on a classic format.

Duane Verh

www.jazz-blues.com



BACKTRACK BLUES BAND

**Way Back Home
HARPO/SELECT-O-HITS**

Although influenced by Little Walter (what blues driven harp outfit hasn't been?), let me say right off the bat if you are in any way, shape or form a fan of Paul Butterfield's Blues Band, you are going to want to track this down. The big blues honchos in Tampa, Florida, Backtrack Blues Band is out with their 10 cut, fifth release that is basically a battle to get your attention with harpist Sonny Charles squaring off with guitarist Kid Royal.

Though most of the songs are originals, two by Sonny Boy Williamson II pop up, including "Your Funeral, My Trial." The other retread is the Big Joe Williams' warhorse "Baby Please Don't Go" being let out for another run around the recognition track. Also of note is the paeon to the big chicks in the audience, "Heavy Built Women" as guest pianist Victor Wainwright gets some licks in during "Rich Man's Blues" and "Help Me Just This Time." Otherwise, it is Sonny Charles on harp and Kid Royal on lead guitar, fighting it out on every tune to get your attention.

A juke joint house party, "Way Back Home" will light up the room like no other music you play that night.

Peanuts



**VARIOUS ARTISTS
Jazz Loves Disney
VERVE**

A new album offers jazz interpretations of songs associated with Disney Movies. Jay Newland produced this album of mostly big band orchestral settings (including strings) for jazz vocals that was arranged and

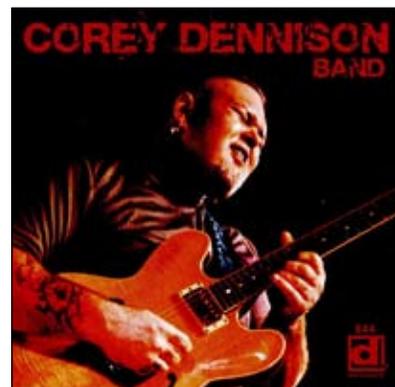
directed by Rob Mounsey. Such vocalists as Gregory Porter, Jamie Cullum, Melody Gardot and Stacey Kent lend their talents to this project that brings forth songs from such films as "Cinderella," "Lady and the Tramp," "The Jungle Book," "101 Dalmatians" and others.

Jamie Cullum gets things off with the playful "Everybody Wants To Be a Cat," with Mounsey's arrangements handsomely providing the setting for the first part before the band and Cullum erupts into a quasi Dixieland frenzy. Melody Gardot lends a smoky and sultry flavor to "He's a Tramp," with strings adding a lush, but not syrupy feel, with a marvelous saxophone solo. Stacey Kent is delightful singing in French, "Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo," followed by Gregory Porter delivering a dreamy "When You Wish Upon A Star."

I am not familiar with China Moses, whose rendition of the Lil Green classic "Why Don't You Do Right" is patterned on Peggy Lee's famous rendition, with the bass very prominent in the backing. I am also not familiar with Raphael Gualazzi but he delights on the Latin rhumba groove of "I Wanna Be Like You." He and Melody Gardot duet on the peppy "The Bare Necessities." The Rob Mounsey Orchestra is featured on "A Dream Is A Wish Your Heart Makes," opening with some atmospheric muted trumpet to play the lyrics.

Hugh Colman's vocal on "You've Got A Friend In Me" is suggestive of Harry Connick without being imitative. I found Anne Sila sort of out of place with her pop-flavored styling on "Let It Go," while Laika's romanticism sounds matched well with "Once Upon A Dream." Nikki Yanofsky delightfully transforms "Some-day My Prince Will Come" into French on "Un Jour Mon Prince Viendra," while The Hot Sardines, only the only track without the Mounsey Orchestra, closes this thoroughly delightful recording with a spirited "I Wanna Be Like You."

Ron Weinstock



**COREY DENNISON BAND
Corey Dennison Band
DELMARK RECORDS**

Corey Dennison has been playing and singing soul and blues for sometime around Chicago. He played eight years behind Carl Weathersby, but also got to know folks like Howard Scott, Chico Banks and Walter Scott. Around 2007 he met multi-instrumentalist (gui-

tar and organ) Gary Hundt and they are the core of the Corey Dennison Band who also consist of Nik Skilnik on bass and Joel Baer on drums. The band has just issued an eponymously titled release on Delmark that certainly will wake up some listeners with the dynamic and riving soul-blues stew.

Dennison's singing has a pinched quality but comes out so soulfully and matched by his biting guitar and the insistent, punchy backing by the band that superficially might be likened to the swamp rock of a Tony Joe White meeting Magic Slim & the Teardrops; starting with the opening track about moonshine, "Getcha' Pull," with a swampy feel to the closing Jimmy Reed-styled shuffle "Good Enuff" played with the drive of Magic Slim and the Teardrops with penetrating guitar.

The mix of tempos and moods on the 13 originals makes for entertaining listening. There is the funk groove of "The Deacon," with terrific, and unpredictable, guitar while "Room To Breathe" is a solid southern soul styled blues ballad and "She's No Good" is an easy rocker with the melody suggesting the Valentino's "It's All Over Now." Another strong number is "Don't Say You're Sorry," with its country soul feel followed by a terrific slow, early in the morning slow blues, "A Fool's Goodbye" with echoes of Albert King in Dennison's guitar playing. It is followed by the instrumental, "Jasper's Hop."

The consistency of performances from Dennison's guitar and vocals along with the fine support his band provides makes for a sterling Delmark Records debut by the Corey Dennison Band. *Ron Weinstock*

and the spirited musicianship of this great lady. There are a couple of terrific instrumentals, Randy Weston's "Hi-Fly," that opens this program, and the Rodgers and Hart classic "Isn't It Romantic," that make it clear that she would have been remembered as a pianist even if she never sang a note, but when she interprets "You'd Be So Nice To Come To," one feels the magic her singing has that led to such great artists as Miles Davis and Wynton Marsalis adoring her.

There are so many treasures including a couple of Jobim penned gems, "Meditation," taken as slow a tempo as possible followed by her playful "The Boy From Ipanema." There is a stunning "Lover Man (Oh Where Can You Be?). The nuances of her singing might lead to comparisons with Billie Holiday. However she does not imitate Lady Day. Instead, like Holiday, she has a rare ability to move a listener while employing a narrow vocal range.

Along with Ms. Horn's wondrous performances, the CD comes with a 56 page booklet with reminiscences of her along with background on her career and these performances, recollections of Richard Seidel, who produced her for Verve and Steve Williams discussing his time playing with her, vocalist Sheila Jordan's memories about her friend as well as the recollections of Shirley Horn's Washington by her friend and neighbor, Washington DC radio personality Rusty Hassan. This booklet is also available as a pdf file for those purchasing this as a download on iTunes. This booklet is part of the packaging that adds to the many pleasures of Shirley Horn's music on this excellent release.

Ron Weinstock



SHIRLEY HORN

Live at the Four Queens
RESONANCE RECORDS

Following up recent recordings by Larry Young, Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra and Stan Getz-Joao Gilberto, the non-profit Resonance Records has just issued Shirley Horn "Live at the Four Queens," recorded by KNPR on the night of May 2, 1988 at a lounge in that Las Vegas casino and hotel. She was accompanied that night by her regular trio of bassist Charles Ables and drummer Steve Williams.

Over a decade after she passed away, these recordings are wonderfully restored and capture the elegance



JOHN LONG

Stand Your Ground
DELTA GROOVE MUSIC

It took John Long decades or so before this old schooled country blues musician recorded a full album, the 2006 Delta Groove release "Lost & Found." I wrote of that album a decade ago, that it was "comprised of originals that sound like remakes of classic country blues recordings from the pre-World War II era. He sounds as if he has channeled Son House, Robert Johnson, Big Bill Broonzy, Lonnie Johnson and others." It reflected his being mentored by Homesick James Williamson among others and his love for these older

blues artists and their recordings.

It is appropriate he opens his new album with a small group rendition of Homesick James' "Please Set a Date," taken at a relaxed tempo with the type of restrained slide attack that contrasts with say Hound Dog Taylor. As good as it may be, it is followed by the stunning "Red Hawk," where he channels Johnny Shines and Robert Johnson in a stunning reworking of the "Terraplane/Dynaflow Blues" melody to his original lyrics. The following "Things Can't Be Down Always," with him adding harmonica, is a solid one-man blues band performance while the title track is a peppy slide number with a message as Bill Stuve on bass and Washington Rucker add adept backing, while he evokes Joe Hill Louis on "Welcome Mat," another one-man band performance.

There seems to be several selections where Long may be reflecting about his own mortality. "No Flowers For Me," is a topical blues where he sings that he has been shaking, he asks folks to remember him but don't spend money on flowers, but rather find a cure for that Parkinson's Disease, while his slide on the rendition of "I Know His Blood Can Make Me Whole" is evocative of Mississippi Fred McDowell. There is also a reflective feel to his fresh interpretation of Blind Willie McTell's "Climbing High Mountains (Trying To Get Home)," and a very moving "Precious Lord," with bass and drums backing that has the ambience of some of Sonny Boy Williamson's European recordings.

The closing "Suitcase Stomp" is a brisk, brief one-man band number as Long sings about leaving St. Louis and just doing what they want and doing the suitcase stomp. Ten years ago about his prior album I said "Long comes off as a real contemporary master of acoustic blues." It has taken ten years for John Long to follow up that recording, but the wait was definitely worthwhile with this terrific recording.

Ron Weinstock



JACK KIDNEY

Sealin' Up The Past PROVENS DRIVE

For any music fan in Northeast Ohio in the last 40+ years, at some point, they must have seen 15-60-75 (aka The Numbers Band). I wish my thesaurus had a better word than "eclectic" to describe their music, but it doesn't, so that is what I'm going with. 15-60-75 is led by the Kidney brothers, guitarist Robert and his multi-instrumentalist brother Jack. The latter has come out with a solo effort, "Sealin' Up The Past," and it shows the acorn doesn't fall far from the tree.

The eight song EP has a mix of styles and is solo in every sense of the word, outside of a couple drum and bass loops, Jack Kidney did all the instruments here himself. "Take It In Stride" has a slow glide to it, with a punching sax mixing it up with piano. The instrumental "Border's End" is a jungle ride of sorts, led by a plaintive sax. You don't have to be a history buff or know what started World War I during "Footprints On The Moon," but the lyrics do become cryptic when lost in the sands of time.

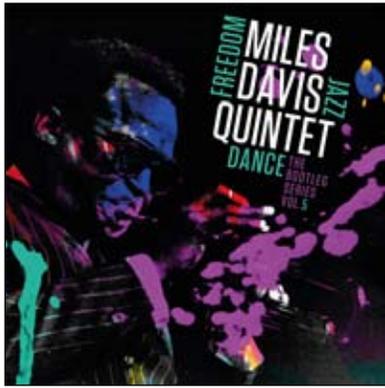
"First Take" is a flowing instrumental, powered by sax and piano as "Circus Work" leans more towards R&B with, I dare say, a touch of southern boogie woven in via harmonica. The title cut is a slow moving stream of consciousness put to words, much like beatniks use to do decades ago.

I could just make it easy and say "Sealin' Up The Past" has something for everybody when it comes to a brewing of styles.

Peanuts

The advertisement is for "Let's Go Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise". It features a black background with the text "LET'S GO" in large, white, bold letters at the top. Below this is a blue, teardrop-shaped graphic containing the words "Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise" in a white, cursive font. A white guitar is positioned diagonally across the graphic, with a white cruise ship sailing on the water below it. At the bottom, the word "BLUESIN'" is written in large, white, bold letters. Below that, in smaller yellow text, it says "The World's Only Fully Chartered Blues Cruise!" and "BluesCruise.com • 888-BLUESIN".

The advertisement is for "jazz-blues.com". It features a yellow background with the text "jazz-blues.com" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.



MILES DAVIS QUINTET

Freedom Jazz Dance

The Bootleg Series Volume 5
SONY LEGACY 3 CD SET

As a part of Columbia Legacy's ongoing Miles Davis reissue series, the latest release is this 3-CD set featuring nine songs that were recorded by Miles' second great quintet of the late sixties featuring Miles with Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams. Now, of course these songs were issued before and nearly every big Miles fan already has them. But nobody has them the way they are offered here. What makes these songs different is that each is presented twice.

The first is the complete Session Reel where you can hear them starting to work on the song and keep running through parts, changing things, trying something new, scrapping part of that, changing up a drum part or whatever. They just keep changing things and doing another take until they finish and present the Master Take, which is presented as a separate track right after the Session Reel.

It is fascinating to hear how they develop each song as Miles works with them until they get it right. Each one is a look into Miles' creative thinking. The nine featured songs are "Freedom Jazz Dance," "Circle," "Dolores," "Orbits," "Footprints," "Gingerbread Boy," "Nefertiti," "Fall" and "Water Babies." The first six I listed are all of the songs that were originally released on the album "Miles Smiles." To give an example, we'll use their treatment of Eddie Harris' classic "Freedom Jazz Dance." It opens with Miles working with Ron Carter on the bass part. They all try something together and Miles says "That sounds terrible," to which someone else answers "It sure does." They try something else, and Miles says to producer Theo Macero "Theo - I can't play this shit." Theo says "Yes, you can."

Then comes take 4. They keep working on the head. On take 6 they go through the head several times. On take 7 they go through it several times again and it is starting to sound like the song we know and love. Take 9 they blow off quickly. By take 12 they have it as it goes right into the Master Take. The Session Reel for "Freedom Jazz Dance" is over 23 minutes. "Fall" is almost 20. Some are much shorter.

There are four additional previously unreleased tracks

on the CD - alternate take 5 of a song released on the "Sorcerer" album - "Masqualero," then "Country Son," which is a rhythm section rehearsal so Miles and Wayne sit it out, and the third, "Blues In F (My Ding)," is a visit by Wayne to Miles' place and they talk about stuff - like hamburgers and who can they get to play bass (Carter was leaving the band) - while Miles plays a blues on the keyboard. The final track is six-seconds of Miles talking to Tony about time signatures during the recording of the E.S.P. album. Miles gets the final word here....

The Producers' Notes recommend that this set be listened to with headphones so you don't miss anything in the studio dialogue on the Session Reels. Great idea! There is over two hours of previously unreleased music newly mixed and mastered in high resolution audio in this set, which will make for some interesting, insightful and fun listening for any Miles Davis fan. As we have said many times before over the years, hats off to the folks at Sony Legacy for another excellent Miles Davis release.

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Bill Wahl



SI CRANSTOUN

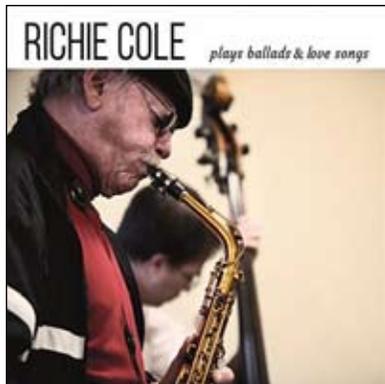
Old School
RUF RECORDS

From busking on British Streets for a couple decades to being dubbed "The King of Vintage" by a British newspaper, Si Cranstoun's latest recording (the first I have heard) is a retro-rock release with a touch of rockabilly, blues, R&B and more. With a vibrato in his voice that shows a bit of a Jackie Wilson influence he kicks off running with the rockabilly-laced "Old School" followed by "Vegas Baby," which is in the spirit of Elvis. "Nighttime" is an offshoot of the Nappy Brown blues nicely delivered followed by the bouncy "Run Free" where he sings of running to free his soul.

"Right Girl" comes off as a pastiche to some of the vocal groups of the fifties, while "Elise The Brazilian" is a delightful novelty with a Latin groove with a melodramatic vocal, while "Count on Me" is 60s style country number (think perhaps Porter Wagoner meets Jackie Wilson), and "Around Midnight" is a blues performance with a dash of Sam Cooke in his vocal. "A Christmas Twist" is a bouncy holiday number as he sings everyone have a ball and peace and happiness for all. A honking baritone sax kicks off a cover of "Big Bess," a spirited cover of a

less known Jimmy Rushing recording followed by another cover, a rendition of Jackie Wilson's "Lover Please."

I am not sure of the source of the closing "Happy Birthday" which is not the Birthday song most are familiar with and includes a booting tenor sax solo. It provides a peppy end to this most entertaining recording that does a fine job of evoking the classic tunes of the fifties and sixties in a most original way. *Ron Weinstock*

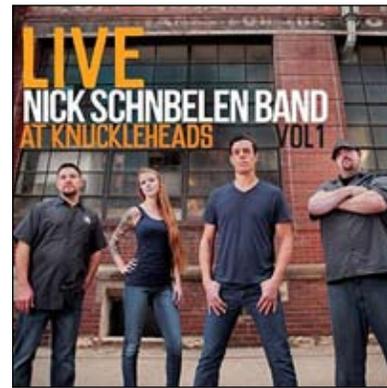


RICHIE COLE
Plays Ballads And Love Songs
RICHIE COLE PRESENTS (RCP)

Alto saxophonist Richie Cole as always been one of my favorites at playing ballads. Back in my concert promotion days many, many moons ago, I had the pleasure of presenting both Richie Cole and another alto master, Phil Woods, in separate concerts a couple of times each. They each excel at playing both exciting bebop and sweet lovely ballads. What a treat it was to be so close to the action on those wonderful nights back in Buffalo and Cleveland.

This recording happened almost by mistake, as Cole's Pittsburgh Alto Madness Orchestra was supposed to record an album during this session's studio time, but the horn section of the orchestra got called out for a big gig, leaving Cole and the rhythm section to fill the slot alone. They recorded 11 songs, and 8 of them were ballads. After the session, they decided to do a whole album of ballads, so they went back to the studio and recorded 3 more ballads to replace the 3 non-ballads from before. The result is a gorgeous set of 11 sweet ballads that should bring some joy to lots of ears. The band consists of Eric Susoeff/guitar, Mark Perna/bass, Vince Taglieri/drums, and, of course, Richie Cole on the alto saxophone. The program is nicely chosen, with mostly versions of songs we have become familiar with over the years, and a few not so much. Some of the known fare includes "Emily," "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," "Alfie," "Chances Are" and "Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most." An odd inclusion is "The Internationale," which is the Soviet National Anthem, but it sure is a pretty melody.

In all, this is a super-fine release for Richie Cole and his Cohorts In Ballads (I made that up — corny I know...). Check it out — you can sample the tracks at Amazon. Phil Woods has left us, but I certainly hope to be able to catch Richie Cole live again soon. Very nice. *Bill Wahl*



NICK SCHNEBELEN BAND
Live at Knuckleheads Vol. 1
VIZZTONE

Part of the International Blues Challenge winning sibling band, Trampled Under Foot (and selected for the Albert King Guitar Award at the time), Nick Schnebelen now leads his own band and VizzTone has issued their debut album, "Live at Knuckleheads Vol. 1," recorded at the famed Kansas City club. The singer and guitarist is joined by Heather Newman on guitar and vocals, Cliff Moore on bass and Joe Voyer on drums for a hard rocking collection of blues and blues-infused roots rock.

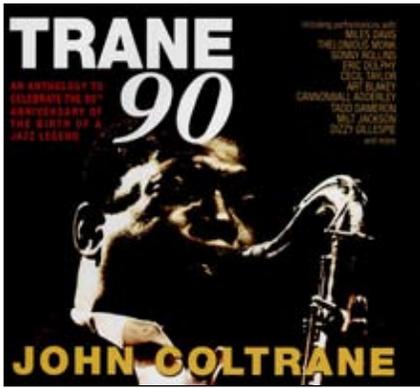
Schnebelen and Newman share vocals with Newman being the more engaging singer, while Schnebelen is uneven. He comes across well on the rockabilly tinged opening track "I'm Goin'" but his heavier approach on the blues-rock Muddy Waters' influenced "Break of Day" (akin to "Walking Blues") is not as natural sounding. There may be a touch of country and there are times I wish Newman would tone her singing down at spots, but this is a quibble as her phrasing and pitch is spot on, and this is a live performance.

Schnebelen's guitar is quite fiery and inventive. He might rock a bit for my taste, but when he picks up the slide and quotes Muddy's "I Be's Troubled" backing Heather on "Tailgate Swing," his considerable technical skills and musical sense are quite evident. He is quite a player and he ably takes the heat down on the low-key "Who Will Comfort Me." Perhaps he bellows his vocal a bit on his forceful, and fresh, rendition of "Spoonful," with Heather adding a vocal backing. Then he picks up the steel guitar for a nice cover of the Santo and Johnny's hit "Sleep Walk."

A terrific cover of Dolly Parton's "Jolene" further illustrates the band's virtuosity followed by an high-energy rendition of the Gary US Bonds hit "New Orleans," with some Hound Dog Taylor meets George Thorogood slide backing with an apt husky vocal that ends this very animated and highly engaging live blues and roots set that will have many wanting more.

Ron Weinstock

www.jazz-blues.com



JOHN COLTRANE

Trane 90 ACROBAT

Issued to coincide with the 90th Anniversary of the birth of John Coltrane, Acrobat's public domain 4-CD small box "Trane 90" provides a brief survey of the bulk of John Coltrane's astonishing musical career. It doesn't fully cover Coltrane's career because of changes in copyright law in Europe that made the original studio recording of "My Favorite Things" (issued in the UK 1964), along with "A Love Supreme" and his last (free jazz) recordings including "Interstellar Space" unavailable.

I trust most of those reading this will be aware of a fair amount of Coltrane's recordings, so a brief summary describing each disc will probably be most helpful. Disc 1 is subtitled "Stablemates - Coltrane the Sideman" and includes Coltrane as a member of assorted Miles Davis groups along with a couple of performances with Thelonious Monk. Included in the selections on this disc includes "Stablemates," the composition by Coltrane's close friend Benny Golson with Miles and other selections with Miles include Stan Getz's "Dear Old Stockholm," Monk's "Straight No Chaser," "So What" from "Kind of Blue," and a live performance of "On Green Dolphin Street," along with "Monk's Mood" and "Trinkle Tinkle" with Monk himself.

Disc 2 is titled "Straight Street - Coltrane the Leader" and opens with "Straight Street" from an early Prestige date, followed by "Moment's Notice" from his Blue Note album "Blue Train" with a terrific band that included Lee Morgan, Curtis Fuller, Kenny Drew, Paul Chambers and Philly Joe Jones. Other noteworthy tracks include "Giant Steps," "Naima," and "Blues For Bechet," in which we see the evolution of Coltrane's quartet (except Steve Davis is on bass on this last number). This disc concludes with the lengthy "Africa" with the classic quartet with orchestra and the spectacular live "Chasin' the Trane" that is almost a duet with drummer Elvin Jones.

Disc 3 is "Just Friends - Coltrane Collaborations" and opens with his guest appearance on Sonny Rollins' "Tenor Madness." Noteworthy here is Tadd Dameron's "Soultrane" from a Dameron led prestige date, "Two Bass Hit" from a Red Garland recording, his participation in a George Russell Orchestra date that produced

"Manhattan," playing on a Cecil Taylor date for "Just Friends," a session with Milt Jackson that produced "Bags & Trane," and his own "Grand Central," from a Cannonball Adderley session with Miles Davis' then rhythm section.

Disc 4, the final disc is titled "Impressions - Coltrane broadcasts and private tapes," has some fascinating selections starting with Trane with Dizzy Gillespie and Johnny Hodges, then a performance with Miles that was on the Tonight show hosted by Steve Allen in 1955 and another with Miles in 1956 from Philadelphia. The disc and the music closes with classic Coltrane performances of "My Favorite Things" from Newport, "Impressions" from Finland and "Body and Soul," from Birdland in 1962.

As can be seen, there is a generous amount of Coltrane, including some material that most may not be familiar with (thinking about the early live performances on Disc 4). In addition to the four hours and 45 minutes of music, the set comes with a booklet with a fascinating essay by Simon Spillett that discusses Coltrane's legacy, the controversies his music generated and the veneration he still holds over us today. This is very reasonably priced and likely would make a wonderful gift for a more novice jazz listener.

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ASHLEIGH SMITH

Sunkissed CONCORD JAZZ

When it comes to female singers, my personal taste leans way in favor of rather unique sounding altos, and the soulfully sweet alto voice of Georgia-born and currently Dallas-based 27-year old wonder Ashleigh Smith fits into that slot perfectly well. She was the winner of the 2014 Sarah Vaughan vocal competition and "Sunkissed" is her Concord Jazz debut. Although marketed as a jazz singer, she cannot be pigeonholed into a single category. She grew up listening to, and singing along with recordings which included artists such as Ella Fitzgerald, Stevie Wonder, Prince, Sting and Bill Withers among others. The end result is a wonderful voice that is at home in many different styles. Her music is a mix of jazz, soul/R&B and some funk.

The album contains ten songs all of which are well

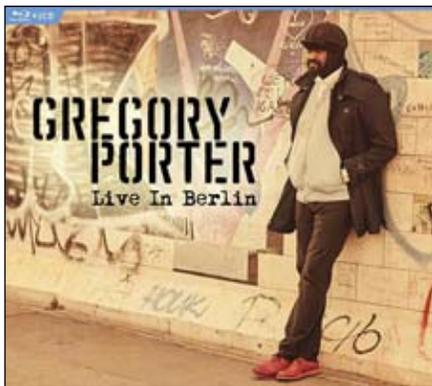
performed and nicely arranged. The program is split between admirably written originals, which Ashleigh co-wrote with bassist Nigel Rivers or guitarist Joel Cross, and fresh sounding treatments of covers, such as The Beatles' "Blackbird" (a song which has been covered often, and this might just be the nicest version I've heard) and Hall & Oats' hit "Sara Smile."

She used many different musicians from a jazz camp she attended in college, so you won't recognize the names, but that's just fine, because they all do a first rate job throughout. Different groupings of musicians are heard on various tracks including piano, guitar, bass, drums, percussion, saxophone, trombone, trumpet, harmonica and four tracks feature strings. One gorgeous song, "Pure Imagination," which has been covered by many over the past several decades, she sings a cappella and harmonizes with herself utilizing overdubs. It only clocks in at just under two minutes, but it is a lovely way to bring this very fine album to a classy close.

You can sample all these tracks at Amazon.

Bill Wahl

DVDs



GREGORY PORTER

Live In Berlin
EAGLE ROCK DVD+2CD SET

If you are looking for a gift for a fan of the robust voiced jazz singer Gregory Porter, you need to look no further than this brand new (November 2016) DVD + 2 CD set on Eagle Rock. "Live In Berlin" features 16 songs, most of which are Porter originals and are the songs that have made his career since he hit the scene six years ago. All of the songs are contained on the two CDs as well as the DVD – a nice treat. In addition to the May 2016 concert, the DVD also contains a 13-minute bonus feature mostly consisting of Porter talking about his vocal style and his music while riding on a speedy train, and we also hear some words from the other band-members. The sound on both versions is fantastic, and the video on the DVD is very well done and crystal clear.

His topnotch band consists of Tivon Pennicott/tenor

sax, Chip Crawford/piano, Jahma Nichols/acoustic bass and Emanuel Harrold/drums, and they shine throughout in backing Porter, playing as a unit and in their individual solos. Some of the original songs here are "Liquid Spirit," "Holding On," "Take Me To The Alley," "Hey Laura," "Don't Lose Your Steam," "Consequence Of Love" and "Water Under Bridges." The few covers include "Papa Was A Rolling Stone," Nat Adderley's "Work Song" with Oscar Brown's lyrics and a quote from Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On" at the end of "On My Way To Harlem." Visually, the band is nice to watch, with both Porter and bassist Nichols right behind him smiling throughout. Porter, of course, has his trademark hat with the sides of his face and his neck covered and the turned up brim, and everyone else in the band except pianist Crawford are sporting cool hats as well. My only complaint about the DVD is that about half of the songs intros are interrupted by a short clip of Porter on the train describing something about the song. But, that is a pet peeve and I doubt that it will bother Gregory Porter's fans much, if at all.

During the Bonus DVD feature Porter says that he considers himself a jazz singer, but he is borrowing and using all the cousins of jazz – gospel, blues and soul. That he does, and he does it all extremely well.

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SANTANA

Santana IV

Live At The House Of Blues, Las Vegas

EAGLE ROCK 1DVD + 2CD SET

Longtime Santana fans will be thrilled with this new live set recorded in March of 2016 at the House of Blues in Las Vegas. This set is a follow-up to Santana's last studio album, "Santana IV," released earlier this year containing 16 new songs. The big hype for that album was that it would feature a reunion of musicians from the first three Santana albums, going back to 1969 through 1971. That reunion is carried on with this new live recording and concert DVD set.

The musicians from that early era here are Santana, Greg Rolie/Hammond B3 organ and lead vocals, Michael Shrieve/drums and Michael Carabello/congas, percussion & background vocals. Then there is guitarist Neal Schon, who played with Journey, but was

on Santana's "Santana III" and "Caravanserai" albums from '71 & '72. Rounding out the band are members of Santana's later bands, some still with him today including Karl Perazzo/timbales & percussion, bringing the total on stage to eight.

The program consists of several songs from the above-mentioned "Santana IV," and many others from Santana albums from the early years. As good as the others are, the treat for my ears, as well as many of the bands longtime fans, are the classic songs we've heard so many times and never get sick of-such as "Soul Sacrifice," "Jingo," "Evil Ways," "Everybody's Everything," "Batuka," "No One To Depend On," "Black Magic Woman," "Gypsy Queen," "Oye Como Va," "Samba Pa Ti" and "Toussaint L'Overture." It is simply wonderful not only to see and hear this core of the band from so many decades ago together again, but also to hear Greg Rolie handling the lead vocals again. The Santana band has had many lead singers over the years, and Rolie continues to be at the top of the list, with Greg Walker who shined on the double disc "Moonflower" album ('77) being right up there to. Speaking of vocalists, Ronald Isley, lead singer of the Isley Brothers, joins the band for two songs near the end of the show - "Love Makes The World Go Round" and "Freedom In Your Mind."

The audio and video in this set is very good throughout, and there are lots of nice closeups of the main players. One thing that might confuse some who buy this set is that the inside booklet lists two songs as being in the concert - Jimi Hendrix' "Third Stone From The Sun" and Carole King's "I Feel The Earth Move." Well, they are not really there - the former is simply briefly quoted within "Gypsy Queen," and the latter is likewise quoted within "Oye Como Va."

All in all, this is an excellent set to feast on for Santana fans who were on board many, many moons before "Supernatural."

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JANIS JOPLIN

Janis

Little Girl Blue

FILMRISE DVD

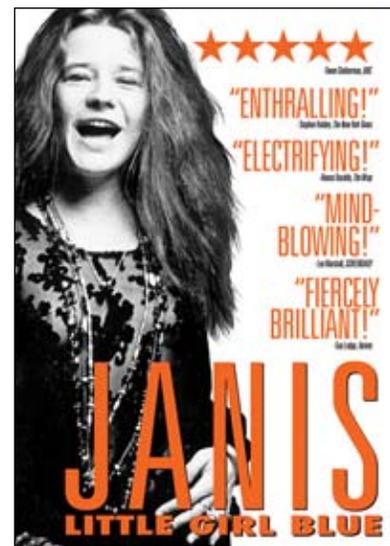
In mid 2016 FilmRise Film & TV Distribution released "Janis - Little Girl Blue" - a DVD that will most certainly be of interest to the many Janis Joplin fans out there. The one hour and 45-minute documentary covers Joplin's days growing up in Port Arthur, Texas, where she was bullied and tormented by her classmates in high school, and on through to her death in 1970 from a heroin overdose. While there are many performance clips, there are dozens of interview clips with not only Janis, but many of the people who knew her the best, such as her sister and brother and many musicians, such as the members of Big Brother & The Holding Company (which we'll refer to as Big Broth-

er), the band Janis recorded with that released an album on Columbia in 1968. That album, "Cheap Thrills," turned gold and included "Summertime," "Piece Of My Heart" & "Ball & Chain." Big Brother's guitarist, Sam Andrew, was one of the people who was closest to Janis throughout her life as a singer and he says quite a bit throughout. Some of the many others who offer tidbits are TV host Dick Cavett, Bob Weir (Grateful Dead), Country Joe McDonald (Country Joe & The Fish), Clive Davis (Columbia Records), Kris Kristofferson, two of Janis' former girlfriends and David Niehas, a former boyfriend.

We hear about her leaving Port Arthur for San Francisco and later returning to Port Arthur to clean up, and subsequently returning to San Francisco. She recorded with Big Brother for Mainstream Records, then they were signed to Columbia for "Cheap Thrills" and they really took off big time. And now...Janis was a star. She left Big Brother to do a solo career and had two more bands that recorded for the label - the Kozmic Blues Band and the Full Tilt Boogie Band.

In addition to video clips, there is a slew of fantastic still photos in color and black & white as well as many letters to her family narrated by Cat Power, which she signs Love, Janis. This is the first time I have seen footage from her performance at the Monterey Pop Festival where the crowd went absolutely bananas with a long and loud standing ovation, except for one guy who just sits there like a zombie, but then give the era he might just have been really, really stoned. There is also footage I've not seen before from the "Cheap Thrills" recording session for "Summertime" as well as Janis listening to the playback. There are also clips from a train known as the Festival Express with Janis partying along with other musicians including Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead.

Near the end of the film Janis returns to Port Arthur for her 10 year high school reunion and some footage was captured there. Later, living in Los Angeles, she recorded the "Pearl" album in the fall of 1970. On October 4 she apparently scored some heroin that was stronger than she was used to and she died from an overdose in her room at the Landmark Motor Hotel in Hollywood. She was just 27. The album was released after her death and included her best selling song and number 1 hit "Me And Bobby McGee," written by Kris Kristofferson. One thing I noticed that was either missing, or I missed it, is Joplin's signature psychedelic



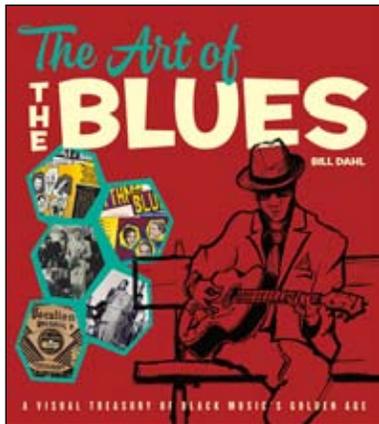
Porsche roadster, which I saw many moons ago at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame + Museum in Cleveland.

This film was written and directed by Amy J. Berg and produced by Academy Award winner Alex Gibney. It is very well done and recommended for current & former hippies and all other Janis Joplin fans.

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books

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THE ART OF THE BLUES

By Bill Dahl

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS 2016:
224 PAGES (INCLUDING INDEX)

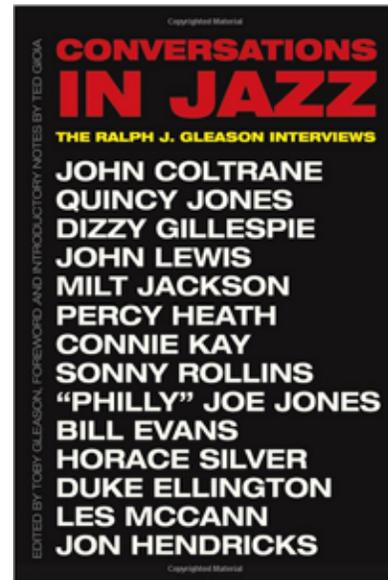
“The Art of the Blues” is a coffee table sized volume subtitled “A Visual Treasury of Black Music’s Golden Age.” Released in time for the holidays in 2016, it is visually a marvelous collection of blues (and jazz) ephemera including old song-sheet covers, publicity photos, record company catalogs, 78 and 45 labels, music magazine covers, record album covers and concert photos. Interspersed are brief overviews on a variety of themes relating to the history of blues recordings, specific artists, photographers and record companies and more by long-time blues journalist and scholar Bill Dahl. Dahl also captioned the hundreds of illustrations in this handsomely produced and printed volume. Guitarist Chris James assisted on the selection of the images.

It is not a perfect volume as there are some occasional, minor inaccuracies (unavoidable with the actual range of subjects that Dahl writes about) in the text (Jimmy Rushing was a member of the Blue Devils and recorded with them prior to joining Bennie Moten) and one wishes there was more consistent crediting to photographers or artists of the images included. At the same time, even I, who have been following this music (and reading about it) for decades, learned quite a bit

such as about the Hook Brothers photographers (best known for the publicly known Robert Johnson images), along with the companies that made concert and tour posters that are highly prized collectors items today.

Dahl takes us from the days of minstrel shows and cakewalks to great rhythm and blues revues of the ‘50s and ‘60s and the three guitar Kings of the Blues. It is quite a wonderful text as well as visual treat. I purchased this and am quite pleased I did. This will be truly a wonderful gift for the blues and jazz lovers.

Ron Weinstock



CONVERSATIONS IN JAZZ

The Ralph Gleason Interviews

Edited by Toby Gleason

Foreword and Introductory Notes by Ted Gioia

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS 2016:276 + XVI PAGES

It has been several decades since Ralph Gleason passed away. Gleason was a pioneering jazz and music journalist, host of a legendary television show “Jazz Casual,” and one of the founders of “Rolling Stone” magazine. “Conversations In Jazz; The Ralph Gleason Interviews” brings together interviews Gleason conducted in the 1960s around the time he was producing the “Jazz Casual” series, although these interviews were conducted at home, separate from the conversations he had with performers on that show, with the exception of the one with Duke Ellington.

As Ted Gioia observes in his Foreword, these interviews take place at a most interesting period of time as 1959 saw the release of so many classic jazz recordings. John Coltrane is interviewed at the time he is stepping forth as a leader, while Sonny Rollins was interviewed a few weeks before he took his sabbatical from playing and Philly Joe Jones is interviewed during the most productive time of his career and the conversation with Bill Evans was less than a year after “Kind of Blue” and when he was working with his most influential trio.

These conversations are quite fascinating. For example Coltrane notes he had only played in three big bands as of 1961 (Dizzy Gillespie, King Kolax and Jimmy Heath), that one thing he likes about being the only horn in his own group is that he likes to play long, that he plays different tempos with different horns, how he went about writing tunes, and various thoughts relating to playing in clubs or concerts. His interview with Quincy Jones opens with Gleason asking why can't they record a big band so it sounds like the big band does live, before getting into the issues with running a big band, contrasting what he will be doing with Count Basie and other points such as touring Europe. With Dizzy Gillespie, Gleason explores at first how Dizzy first heard jazz and his development as a musician.

Gleason interviewed all four members of the Modern Jazz Quartet opening with John Lewis who provided a history of the MJQ along with some of the lessons learned as they developed their 'quiet' mode of jazz. Milt Jackson recalled his experiences as well as discussed challenges playing with the MJQ as opposed to other settings while discussing some of his other recording projects. Percy Heath tells about growing up with other musicians in the family, not adopting the bass until after coming back from the Service, while Connie Kay recalls playing with Lester Young replacing Roy Haynes and then starting with the MJQ when Kenny Clarke left the group. A couple common threads are in the four interviews here such as how the nature of the MJQ restricted what they played. It is fascinating to read the thoughts of all four (and their acknowledgment of their common ties to Dizzy Gillespie).

Other chapters are devoted to Sonny Rollins, Philly Joe Jones, Bill Evans, Horace Silver, Duke Ellington, Les McCann and Jon Hendricks. The discussions of how they started, influences, what motivates what they play and the like, made for intriguing conversations and fascinating reading. This is an invaluable addition to the jazz literature. There is no index which is the only flaw in this wonderful volume. *Ron Weinstock*

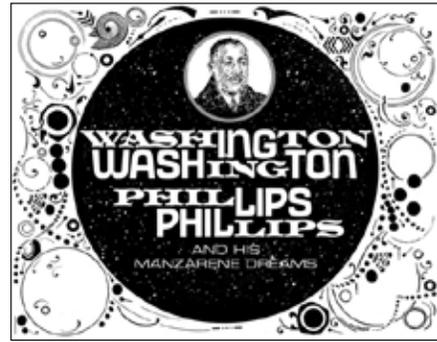
WASHINGTON PHILLIPS

Washington Phillips and His Manzarene Dreams

Atlanta GA: Dust-To-Digital 2016: 76 pages
plus 16 track CD

Atlanta-based Dust-To-Digital has another important Book-CD combination with "Washington Phillips and His Manzarene Dreams." As noted on its website, Dust-To-Digital's inaugural release, 2003's "Goodbye, Babylon," included two recordings by a mysterious gospel musician from Texas named Washington Phillips. Now, this book and CD by this unique singing evangelist who played a very unusual instrument provides much new information on this artist as well new masterings of all of his extant recordings from pristine copies.

Michael Corcoran has uncovered new information on Phillips, just like he did on another great Texas



evangelist, Blind Willie Johnson. He was able to track down Phillips family history, including that his grandfather was a slave born in Kentucky and was in Texas during the Civil War. He uncovers the facts of Phillips death, refuting the story he died in a mental asylum (it was a cousin, also named Washington Phillips who died there), but rather died after falling down the stairs in a Texas State building in 1954. Corcoran also refutes the generally accepted idea he backed himself on the duceola, a rare kind of portable piano. Rather he cites a 1907 newspaper clipping that refers to what Phillips called the Manzarene. This may have been one or two zithers (which he was photographed with at one of his recording sessions) to which he may have employed a self-invented stringing along with a unique tuning.

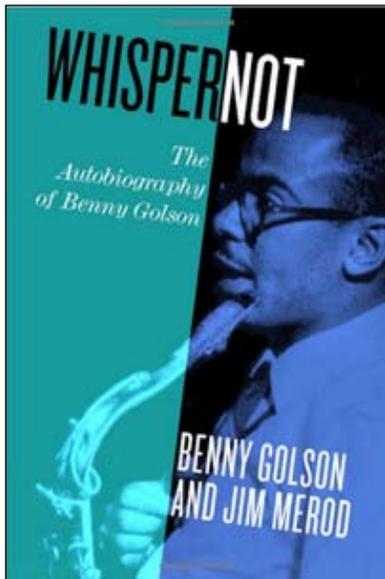
Additionally, with interviews of persons who knew Phillips, Corcoran rounds out our knowledge of this evangelist and his life. There is also discussion of his recording sessions and a consideration of several artists who have been affected by the unique, almost ethereal recordings he made. Compared to Blind Willie Johnson he lacks perhaps the overt, fiery passion, but when Phillips sings "Mother's Last Word To Her Son," "I Was Born To Preach The Gospel" or the two-part "Denomination Blues," there is a smoldering intensity to his singing along with his unique accompaniment resulting in these often mesmerizing performances. There also are lyric transcriptions included in this handsomely packaged and illustrated music reissue and book.

I purchased this from Dust-To-Digital and for more information on a book-CD package that would make a marvelous gift anytime, check out <http://www.dust-digital.com/>. *Ron Weinstock*



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WHISPER NOT

The Autobiography of Benny Golson
BENNY GOLSON AND JIM MEROD

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY PRESS: 2016; 336+XVI PP.

Anyone who has had the pleasure of seeing the marvelous saxophonist and composer Benny Golson has been treated to not simply marvelous music but also his storytelling in introducing the tunes performed, whether recollections about growing up with John Coltrane, or the origins of some of his classic compositions such as “Along Came Betty,” “I Remember Clifford,” “Stablemates,” and so many more. Now, Benny has put some of these stories and more in this new volume that was written with Jim Merod.

This is not a usual autobiography where the person provides a chronicle of his life. Instead the book is more of a systematic organization of vignettes of the manner he would tell in performance, except perhaps he gets into more depth about some and a number of them are matters that would not normally come up unless he was being interviewed.

The book is organized into eight parts and it would give an overview of the contents to describe each of the parts and some of the contents of that part. After Merod’s preface, which provides an overview of Golson’s life and contribution, his own introduction is an indication of the positive, as opposed to negative, messages he hopes to provide in detailing his story.

Part 1 is entitled John Coltrane and in its three chapters discusses his interactions with Coltrane including John and him meeting Bird and Diz and then being the musical dynamo. Part II is entitled “The ‘Hood’ and Youthful Reckonings” and includes some of his early musical adventures as well as his Uncle Robert and Benny’s first visit to Minton’s, early musical experiences and then hard times. Part III, entitled “Great P People,” takes us to his experiences with the likes of Bull Moose Jackson and Earl Bostic, Art Blakey, Tadd Dameron, Clifford Brown and Fats Navarro, Jimmy and

Percy Heath, Betty Carter, Art Farmer, and others, as well as discussing going to Howard University and further matters. Part IV, “Hollywood,” was a revelation for me as I was unaware he had left the jazz world to spend several years scoring for film and TV. Included are his recollections of what was musically involved along with his three years with the show, “M*A*S*H.”

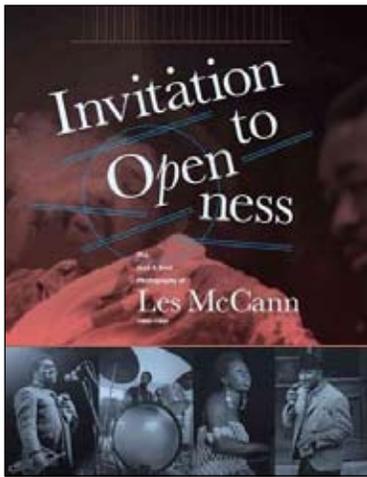
Part V, “Amazing Friendships,” has his recollections of Quincy Jones, Harry ‘Sweets’ Edison, Dizzy Gillespie, Philly Joe Jones (who he went back with to his youth), Thelonious Monk, Max Roach, Dinah Washington and Curtis Fuller as well as tells the story of The Jazztet that he and Art Farmer co-lead. Part VI, “Music and Writing,” includes his discussion of how his approach to writing music developed along with discussions of “Stablemates,” his first recorded song, “Along Came Betty,” and “I Remember Clifford.” He was (and still is) not happy with changes Miles Davis made in his composition in the first recording of “Stablemates” (which included John Coltrane in Davis’ Band). Elsewhere he recalls very sad circumstances of learning of Clifford Brown’s passing that led to one of his most famous compositions. The last chapter in this part, “The Ballad and ‘Weight,’” is one of the most thought provoking, as Golson considers playing of ballads such a great factor in the music’s art and the import of the ballad as almost a genre in itself while in playing ballads emphasis is on the weight given to each specific note played.

Part VII, “Icons,” has his recollections of persons he had met that stand apart from simply great musicians. Included is his recollections of Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks, and performing in the film, “The Terminal.” There are also recollections of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, Coleman Hawkins, Art Blakey, Kenny Dorham, Lee Morgan, Peggy Lee, Diana Ross, Sonny Rollins, Miles Davis, Milt Jackson, Charles Mingus, Benny Goodman, Gigi Gryce, Larry Young, Mickey Rooney, Redd Foxx, Jersey Joe Walcott, and Muhammad Ali amongst those discussed. Part VIII, “Verses And A Coda,” includes how he resumed his musical performing career after his Hollywood hiatus, the centrality of the blues and the Coda which is a brief discussion of his becoming a Jehovah Witness.

The text is clean and readily accessible as a Golson melody and a photo album includes a number of memorable images. Golson is such a positive person, and that is conveyed throughout his graceful telling of his story. This is an important addition to the body of jazz biographies and autobiographies. *Ron Weinstock*

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INVITATION TO OPENNESS

The Jazz & Soul Photography of Les McCann
 CURATED BY PAT THOMAS AND ALAN ABRAHAMS
 SEATTLE: FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS 2015: 200P

With the holidays coming up this book focused on the photography of keyboardist-vocalist Les McCann is one that might well be high on your list for the jazz lovers on your gift list. McCann is of course famous for his recordings, including a classic album that helped launch Lou Rawls career and the epic live performance with Eddie Harris at the Montreux Jazz Festival that was issued as the legendary album "Swiss Movement."

This book's title derives from a 1972 album on Atlantic. Not only a musician, McCann is also a photographer who has photographed a wide variety of performers as well as political figures and others. Now, from thousands of photographs we are treated to a wonderful coffee table book of his Black and White photography.

One of the selling points of books of musical photography are the specific individuals presented. Here, one will find a wealth of photographic treasures with images of such greats as Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Sonny Payne, Gerald Wilson, Miles Davis, Paul Chambers, Jimmy Cobb, Yusef Lateef, Cannonball Adderley, Gene McDaniels, Louis Armstrong, B.B. King, Roberta Flack, Nina Simone, Dave Brubeck, Paul Desmond, Gerry Mulligan, Sarah Vaughan, Dizzy Gillespie (including a shot with Herb Albert), Ray Charles, Jean Luc Ponty, Ray Nance, Grover Washington, Ben Webster, Toots Thielemans, Richard 'Groove' Holmes, and others along with shots of Redd Foxx, Bill Cosby (taken far before his present disgrace), Aretha Franklin, B.B. King, Wilson Pickett, Richard Pryor, Tina Turner, Sammy Davis Jr., Jack Lemmon, Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael, and Muhammad Ali.

These pictures range from concert and nightclub shots, backstage images, and informal ones taken outside. We see Cannonball Adderley relaxing and smoking a cigar backstage, Roberta Flack both performing and sitting on a garbage pile. There are street scenes such as a boy on a bicycle in Washington DC as well as a Man on a bicycle. Redd Foxx is shown at

the microphone and back stage, and Wilson Pickett with a fan in Ghana.

Then there are some contact sheets such as those of Dizzy and Bobby Streisand in performance, and one contact sheet has pictures from the Los Angeles Lakers (Jerry West-Elgin Baylor years) playing the Boston Celtics and also off-court pictures of Johnny Mathis with Red Auerbach and Bill Russell. The negative size shots suggest that he was a more than capable sports photographer as indicated by a terrific picture of then San Francisco Warrior Wilt Chamberlin going up against Lakers Gene Wiley, Jerry West and Elgin Baylor.

Interspersed are comments on some of the famous people and others. There are so many pictures that brim with their subject's personality whether capturing them informally or in performance.

The reproduction strikes my amateur eye as quote good and having looked at this for the first-time in months, I am reminded how much I enjoyed this after I purchased it. Les McCann joins Milt Hinton among jazz musicians to have their photography documented so well. Highly recommended. *Ron Weinstock*

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This photo of Gary Bartz captured by Ron Weinstock at the 2008 Duke Ellington Jazz Festival is just one of hundreds of Ron's photos you can view online at www.flickr.com/photos/novaron



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San Rafael Desert, Utah © David Muench

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