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Issue 336

**jazz**  
& **blues** **report**

now in our 37th year

**SONNY  
ROLLINS**

# jazz & blues report

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Check out our constantly updated website. Now you can search for CD Reviews by artists, titles, record labels, keyword or JBR Writers. 15 years of reviews are up and we'll be going all the way back to 1974.

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## PHOTOS:

Cover and Page 3 by John Abbott  
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Page 4 courtesy of Sonny Rollins



"Buffalorious"

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

# ROLLINS AT 80 IT'S A SONNY YEAR

Tenor sax legend and true giant of jazz Sonny Rollins turned 80 last September 7, and he's been on quite a roll ever since. A few days after his birthday he celebrated with a host of top musicians with a concert at New York's Beacon Theatre on September 10. He's been touring the world since May so many fans will be lucky enough to catch him in concert at a major festival or concert hall. He's also been working on Volume 2 of his CD series "Road Shows," and was also awarded with a prestigious honor at the White House. So we have collected some of the recent news items for our 80th year tribute to Sonny Rollins.



## SONNY ROLLINS ONE OF 10 RECIPIENTS OF 2010 NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS

Saxophonist Sonny Rollins is one of ten honorees who received the 2010 National Medal of Arts for outstanding achievements and support of the arts. The presentation was made March 2 by President Barack Obama in an East Room ceremony at the White House. Mrs. Michelle Obama was also in attendance.

"I'm very happy that jazz, the greatest American music, is being recognized through this honor, and I'm grateful to accept this award on behalf of the gods of our music," Rollins said of the award.

The National Medal of Arts is a White House initiative managed by the National Endowment for the Arts. Each year, the NEA organizes and oversees the National Medal of Arts nomination process and notifies the artists of their selection to receive a medal, the nation's highest honor for artistic excellence.

"The National Medal of Arts recipients represent the many vibrant and diverse art forms thriving in America," said NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman. "From criticism to literature, music, poetry, sculpture, and theater, these honorees' devotion to shaping and sharing American art is unrivaled, and I





join the President and the country in saluting them.”

The 2010 National Medal of Arts Recipients are: Robert Brustein, theatrical critic, producer, playwright, educator; Van Cliburn, pianist, music educator; Mark di Suvero, sculptor; Donald Hall, poet; Quincy Jones, musician, music producer; Harper Lee, author; Sonny Rollins, jazz musician; Meryl Streep, actress; James Taylor, singer, songwriter; Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.

The National Medal of Arts, established by Congress in 1984, is awarded by the President and managed by the National Endowment for the Arts. Award recipients are selected based on their contributions to the creation, growth, and support of the arts in the United States. Each year, the Arts Endowment seeks nominations from individuals and organizations across the country. The National Council on the Arts, the Arts Endowment's presidentially-appointed and Senate-confirmed advisory body, reviews the nominations and provides recommendations to the President, who selects the recipients.

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA ([www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov)) extends its work

through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector.

Past jazz honorees include Ella Fitzgerald (1987), Billy Taylor (1992), Cab Calloway (1993), Dave Brubeck (1994), Lionel Hampton (1996), Betty Carter (1997), Benny Carter (2000), Paquito D'Rivera (2005), Wynton Marsalis (2005), and Hank Jones (2008).

The saxophonist's 2011 concert season opened with appearances 5/8 at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and 5/13 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. He played three concerts in June in Australia and (for the first time) New Zealand, and will perform at several European festivals in July. Rollins heads to the West Coast in September (including the Monterey Jazz Festival 9/18). An extensive European tour, with stops in Basel, Istanbul, Warsaw, and Budapest, among other cities, is planned for October-November.

His summer/fall concert schedule follows that is definite thus far. Make it a point to see this legendary giant of Jazz!

**July 3** • Copenhagen Jazz Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark • [www.jazz.dk/en/copenhagen-jazz-festival](http://www.jazz.dk/en/copenhagen-jazz-festival)

**July 7** • Gent Jazz Festival, Gent Belgium • [www.gentjazz.com/en/](http://www.gentjazz.com/en/)

**July 11** • Vienne Jazz Festival, Vienne, France • [www.jazzavienne.com/](http://www.jazzavienne.com/)

**Sept 18** • Monterey Jazz Festival, Monterey, California • [www.montereyjazzfestival.org/2011/](http://www.montereyjazzfestival.org/2011/)

**Sept 22** • UCLA Royce Hall, Los Angeles, California • [www.uclalife.org/](http://www.uclalife.org/)

**Sept 25** • Segerstrom Center, Costa Mesa, CA • [www.scfta.org/home/default.aspx](http://www.scfta.org/home/default.aspx)

**Oct 14** • Schermerhorn Symphony Center, Nashville, TN • [www.nashvillesymphony.org/](http://www.nashvillesymphony.org/)

**Oct 29** • Tourcoing Jazz Festival / Jazz en Nord – Theatre de Roubaix, France • [//www.tourcoing-jazz-festival.com/wordpress/](http://www.tourcoing-jazz-festival.com/wordpress/)

**Nov 6** • Jazztopad, Wroclaw, Poland • [www.jazztopad.pl/](http://www.jazztopad.pl/)

**Nov 10** • Bela Bartok National Hall, Budapest, Hungary <http://mupa.hu/en/bartok-bela-nemzeti-hangversenyterem/>

**Nov 14** • The Olympia, Paris, France • [www.olympiahall.com/](http://www.olympiahall.com/)

For this tour, the band consists of Peter Bernstein/guitar, Bob Cranshaw/bass, Kobie Watkins/drums, Sammy Figueroa/congas and percussion.

## LIVE BLUES ON THE HIGH SEAS

Read The Review  
click the Notable' button  
[jazz-blues.com](http://jazz-blues.com)





**"ROAD SHOWS, VOL. 2" DUE SEPTEMBER 13  
FROM SONNY ROLLINS ON DOXY/EMARCY RECORDS**

**NEW CD CONTAINS 4 TRACKS FROM SEPTEMBER 2010  
@80 BEACON THEATRE CONCERT**

**INCLUDING "SONNYMOON FOR TWO"**

**WITH ORNETTE COLEMAN, CHRISTIAN McBRIDE, ROY HAYNES**

**PLUS TWO 2010 JAPANESE PERFORMANCES  
WITH HIS WORKING BAND**

Sonny Rollins' forthcoming album, *Road Shows*, vol. 2, is quite likely to revive the delirious excitement stirred up at the saxophonist's sold-out 80th-birthday concert held in New York nearly one year ago. Four tracks on the new CD, which will be released September 13 by Doxy/Emarcy Records, were recorded that night; one of them is the 20-minute "Sonnymoon for Two" on which Rollins and surprise guest Ornette Coleman performed together in public for the first time in their long acquaintance, with electrifying results.

"This material was not intended to be my next album," says Rollins, "but it was so strong that I felt I had to release it."

Bassist Christian McBride and drummer Roy Haynes, who had previously appeared with Rollins at his 50th-anniversary Carnegie Hall concert in 2007, are special guests along with Coleman on "Sonnymoon." Other @80 selections feature trumpeter Roy Hargrove ("I Can't Get Started," "Rain Check") and guitarist Jim Hall ("In a Sentimental Mood") with Rollins's working band: guitarist Russell Malone, bassist Bob Cranshaw, drummer Kobie Watkins, and percussionist Sammy Figueroa.

The remaining tracks on the new CD, "They Say It's Wonderful" and "St. Thomas," were recorded during a Japanese tour one month after the @80 concert. "I wanted this *Road Shows* to comprise performances from 2010," Rollins states. Volume 1, by contrast, presented a range of performances recorded over a nearly 30-year period.

The historic onstage meeting of Rollins and Coleman, whom CD annotator Francis Davis describes as "the two sharpest minds in jazz," was a first, though the saxophonists are friends who used to practice together on the beach in California. Coleman was invited to play at the September 10th Beacon concert, says Rollins, "but I didn't know until the last minute whether he would accept the invitation." Indeed, his participation was confirmed just a few hours before showtime.

"I figured that 'Sonnymoon' would be open enough for Ornette and for everybody," says Rollins. "It could be played in a structured way or an unstructured way. It was malleable enough to suit whatever my guests wanted to do with it."

*Road Shows*, vol. 1 was one of the most highly-praised albums of 2008, placing at the top of many best-of lists and critics polls. *Stereophile*, in a five-star review, wrote that it "represents a new entry on the short list of albums that every serious jazz fan needs to own."

Referring to the three-year gap between the two *Road Shows* CDs, the saxophonist comments that "it is my intention and desire to release more music in a much shorter span of time. I have a lot in the archives, but I am thinking about recent things. I want to capture some of Sonny Rollins 2011—new material that I have, and new ideas that I have and am working on, which are as yet unfulfilled and undocumented. Working in the studio is a definite possibility." We are re-running our review from the archives of Sonny's last album, "*Road Songs* Volume 1" to lead off our CD review section.

Visit these three sites: [www.sonnyrollins.com](http://www.sonnyrollins.com) • [www.emarcy.com](http://www.emarcy.com) • [www.deccalabelgroup.com](http://www.deccalabelgroup.com)

**COPENHAGEN JAZZ FESTIVAL JULY 1-10**

**SONNY ROLLINS • KEITH JARRETT TRIO**

**AMONG HEADLINERS**

The complete program for this year's edition of Copenhagen Jazz Festival is now on the street and contains an impressive fireworks display of strong principal names, exciting themes, cult legends and a record number of venues, spread throughout town – from JazzCup, La Fontaine and Montmartre to Koncerthuset, Tivoli and Operaen.

This year the festival's oldest and most prestigious theme, Giant Jazz, lives up to its name more than ever before. In the space of a few days it will be possible to experience three of our time's greatest improvisers: Keith Jarrett Trio, Sonny Rollins and Bobby McFerrin.

Another important theme at this year's festival is 21st Century Jazz, where one can check out the contemporary jazz scene and its most prominent advocates. These concerts are taking place at Copenhagen JazzHouse (10 eve-





nings) and Skuespilhuset (2 evenings), and involve close contact with names like Charles Lloyd, Gary Burton, Gretchen Parlato, Terence Blanchard, Brad Mehldau and Joshua Redman.

Also on the program are encounters between exciting Danish and international names at Jazzhus Montmartre and

Prøvehallen in Valby. At Prøvehallen saxophonist Benjamin Koppel and pianist Kenny Werner are the two recurrent figures who will be paid visits by trumpet player Dave Douglas, guitar phenomenon Ben Monder, and others. Among other acts, Jazzhus Montmartre (recently named Venue of the Year) is presenting a Danish-American group under the leadership of saxophonist Charles McPherson and a Danish-French-American super trio led by bassist Mads Vinding and including French pianist Jean-Michel Pilc and drummer Billy Hart.

Taken as a whole, Copenhagen Jazz Festival 2011 is offering plenty of surprises - big and small - at Copenhagen's music venues. Cult organist Dr. Lonnie Smith is showing up at Huset on Saturday, July 9th, the same evening as Jazz Club Loco takes over the Vesterbro venue, Vega, with names like Thulebasen, Dj Krush and Maria Laurette Friis. Viften in Rødovre is inviting the public on Thursday, July 7th, to hear Mike Stern, while the northwest venue, Mayhem, is being paid a visit by the Swedish avant-garde icon, saxophonist Mats Gustafsson. At Christians Kirke in Christianshavn one can experience Lisa Ekdahl, Hanne Boel and Marie Bergman, among others.

Besides Giant Jazz and 21st Century Jazz, the 2011 festival is also featuring an African theme at Pressen, called The Sound of Africa, with Oumou Sangaré and Abdullah Ibrahim, among others, while Jazz by the Sea has once again assembled a broad list of jazz-related names - like Larry Graham & Graham Central Station, Poul Dissing, Richard Bona and Randy Brecker - to accompany the beautiful sunset by the harbour at Kulturhuset Islands Brygge.

The announcement of the complete festival program means that the printed program (20,000 copies/ 156 pages) is also available. It contains all the festival's approximately 1,100 concerts and can be obtained for DKK 40 at the shop jazz.dk, at the venues and at chosen shops in the Copenhagen area.

Visit <http://www.jazz.dk/en> for more information.

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## 54th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival® September 16 - 18, 2011



**Headliners Include Sonny Rollins, Herbie Hancock, Huey Lewis & The News, Poncho Sanchez & his Latin Jazz Band featuring Terence Blanchard; Joshua Redman; India.Arie & Idan Raichel; John Pizzarelli Quartet, An Afternoon in Treme with Dumpstaphunk, Soul Rebels, Kermit Ruffins & Glen David Andrews, Hosted by Wendell Pierce; Hiromi: The Trio Project featuring Anthony Jackson & Simon Phillips; Miles Davis/Gil Evans: Still Ahead Orchestra featuring Music from Miles Ahead, Porgy & Bess and Sketches of Spain; and Many More**

**Performances Throughout the Weekend by 2011 Artist-In-Residence Joshua Redman; 2011 Showcase Artist Robert Glasper; 2011 Commission Artist Geri Allen & Timeline Premiering the 2011 Commission, The Dazzler**

**Monterey, CA** - The 54th Monterey Jazz Festival, three-time winner of the JazzTimes Readers poll for "World's Best Jazz Festival" takes place September 16 - 18 at the Monterey Fairgrounds, home to the Festival for 54 consecutive years. Described as "a cultural colossus" by the San Jose Mercury News and "a mecca for true jazz fans" by the San Francisco Chronicle, the Festival features 500 artists, 90 performances, 8 stages and more than 30 hours of live music over 2 days and 3 nights, accompanied by an array of international cuisine, shopping, arts exhibits, educational events, seminars and conversations with iconic and emerging jazz artists.

2011's GRAMMY® Award-winning line up includes headliners Sonny Rollins, Herbie Hancock, Huey Lewis &

The News, Poncho Sanchez & His Latin Jazz Band featuring Terence Blanchard; James Farm featuring Joshua Redman; India.Arie & Idan Raichel; John Pizzarelli Quartet, An Afternoon in Treme with Dumpstaphunk, Soul Rebels, Kermit Ruffins & Glen David Andrews; Hiromi: The Trio Project featuring Anthony Jackson & Simon Phillips; Miles Davis/Gil Evans: Still Ahead Orchestra directed by Vince Mendoza featuring Terence Blanchard, Peter Erskine & Miles Evans, celebrating music from Miles Ahead, Porgy & Bess and Sketches of Spain; and more.

A full list of this year's highlights and performers can be seen by visiting [www.montereyjazzfestival.org](http://www.montereyjazzfestival.org).

Two-time GRAMMY-nominee, saxophonist Joshua Redman serves as the Festival's Artist-In-Residence, and will be performing with his band James Farm, featuring Aaron Parks, Matt Penman & Eric Harland. Mr. Redman will also appear as a soloist with the Festival's All-Star student band, the Next Generation Jazz OrchestraSM, of which he was a member in the 1980s. The cutting-edge pianist, Robert Glasper, serves as the 2011 Showcase Artist, and will perform all weekend on the Grounds with his trio, and twice with the Robert Glasper Experiment (with guitarist Lionel Loueke and singer/percussionist Stokley Williams). The visionary pianist, Geri Allen, acts as the 2011 Monterey Jazz Festival Commission Artist, and will perform "The Dazzler," a Jazz Tap Tribute to Sammy Davis Jr. on the Arena Stage with her band Timeline.

#### **2011 TICKET INFORMATION AND MORE**

Arena Package Tickets are on sale now at [montereyjazzfestival.org](http://montereyjazzfestival.org) or call (925) 275-9255. Full Weekend Arena Packages are available for \$225; offering a reserved seat to each of 5 concerts on the Arena/Jimmy Lyons Stage (renewable annually), access to 7 Grounds Stages and all Festival activities. Or, bring family and friends and experience the festival atmosphere with a Full Weekend Grounds Ticket starting at \$125 or Daily Grounds Ticket for as low as \$40; including access to 7 Grounds stages and activities, plus simulcasts of all Arena concerts.

Returning for 2011 are Arena Single Day Tickets, the Premier Access Pass, the Festival's 6th Annual Family Day, the Festival's Front Box Auction, the Family Discount Package, Youth Tickets and the Local's Package for Monterey County residents.

New for 2011: stay on the Fairgrounds in a RV for the weekend! Contact the Ticket Office at (925) 275-9255 or [ticketoffice@montereyjazzfestival.org](mailto:ticketoffice@montereyjazzfestival.org) to request additional information.

The 2011 Jazz Legends Gala will take place at the Hyatt Regency Monterey on Thursday, September 15. This exclusive event honors the contributions and lasting legacies of jazz pioneers. Proceeds from the Gala benefit Monterey Jazz Festival Jazz Education Programs. Contact (831) 373-3366 or [development@montereyjazzfestival.org](mailto:development@montereyjazzfestival.org) for more information.

Coming soon ... the iPhone and Android Monterey Jazz Festival/54 App will allow you to plan your entire Festival experience. Major advancements to this project funded by the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation through the generous support of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

#### **MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL'S PARTNERS IN JAZZ**

Our partners: Verizon, Yamaha Instruments, Remo, Gallien-Krueger, Inns of Monterey, Carmel Road Winery, North Coast Brewing Company, DownBeat Magazine, KGO Newstalk 810 AM and San Jose Mercury News play an important role in helping Monterey Jazz Festival fund the Festival and Jazz Education Programs.

Monterey Jazz Festival also receives support for the Festival and Jazz Education Programs from the Hearst Foundations, National Endowment for the Arts, Verizon, AT&T, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, David & Lucile Packard Foundation, Quest Foundation, Joseph Drown Foundation, Harden Foundation, William McCaskey Chapman & Adaline Dinsmore Chapman Foundation, Dunspaugh-Dalton Foundation, Inc., Monterey Peninsula Foundation, Pebble Beach Company Foundation, Rotary International, Nancy Buck Ransom Foundation, Robert & Audrey Talbott Foundation, and generous individual contributors.

For a complete event details including the full list of performers at the 2011 Monterey Jazz Festival please visit [montereyjazzfestival.org](http://montereyjazzfestival.org). Artists subject to change.

## **BLUESTOCK SET FOR AUGUST 26-28**

### **GREGG ALLMAN AND TROMBONE SHORTY JOIN BLUESTOCK LINEUP**

#### **MOVIE STAR STEVEN SEAGAL TO CO-HOST FESTIVAL & PERFORM**

**Woodstock, NY** – New Orleans sensation Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, blues singer/organist Gregg Allman and top grossing action film star Steven Seagal have been added to the star-filled lineup of the Bluestock Festival which will take place at the beautiful Hunter Mountain ski resort in Hunter, NY on August 26th-28th.

Gregg Allman will join Buddy Guy and Elvin Bishop as one of Bluestock's headlining acts. The Allman Brothers Band leader is currently touring behind his critically acclaimed solo album Low Country Blues, which debuted near the top of the Billboard charts in January. Allman continues to lead the Allman Brothers Band, who kicked off a three-week run at New York's historic Beacon Theatre in March.

Action star Steven Seagal has also joined Bluestock's lineup as a special co-host of the Festival and performer along with his blues band Thunderbox. Seagal has played guitar since the age of 12 and released his first album, the blues-inspired Songs from The Crystal Cave, in 2004. His authentic approach to the blues recalls the work of blues greats such as Muddy Waters, BB King, Bo Diddley and Robert Lockwood.

Bluestock has also added rising New Orleans brass band Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue to its list of emerging artists. Known for his work with U2, Eric Clapton, Lenny Kravitz and Galactic, Trombone Shorty stepped into the spotlight with his 2010 crossover hit Backatown. Trombone Shorty can also be seen on the popular HBO series Treme.



Bluestock's inaugural lineup already includes Buddy Guy, Elvin Bishop, Tommy Castro & The LRBR (featuring Joe Louis Walker, Deanna Bogart and Rick Estrin), Tab Benoit, Ronnie Baker Brooks, Curtis Salgado, Zac Harmon, Bob Margolin & Matt Hill, The Reba Russell Band, Shakura S'Aida, Mitch Woods & Billy Gibson, Moreland & Arbuckle, The Alexis P Suter Band, Trampled Under Foot, Bruce Katz, Albert Cummings, Ty Curtis, Port City Prophets and 2011 International Blues Challenge winner, the Lionel Young Band.

Bluestock will be held at world renowned Hunter Mountain Ski Resort, the home of numerous festivals including Mountain Jam and easily accessible from all over the Northeast. The site is known for its bucolic beauty, natural amphitheater and stage site lines, indoor facilities and delicious gourmet food and beer options. On-site accommodations include camping, condos, cabins and RVs.

Produced by Radio Woodstock and Steve and Jeff Simon Presents, BLUESTOCK 2011 will be a 3-day event with music starting on Friday evening August 26th and ending early Sunday evening August 28th. Weekend tickets and single day Saturday and Sunday

tickets are available at [BLUESTOCK.COM](http://BLUESTOCK.COM). Friday's performances will be reserved for full-weekend ticket holders only.

Additional information available at: [BLUESTOCK.COM](http://BLUESTOCK.COM)

Steve & Jeff Simon Presents is one of the largest live music production companies that produce Blues concerts and festivals throughout the world. Founded by Steve Simon in 2000, the company is the producer and promoter of celebrity Blues concerts and festivals throughout the Caribbean, South Carolina, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Radio Woodstock is a global multi-media company that includes award-winning radio station, WDST, as well as internet radio stations, Radio Woodstock Live and Radio Woodstock 69 and Internet TV channel Woodstock TV. Radio Woodstock also promotes and produces the Mountain Jam Festival and concerts in the Hudson Valley region of New York. Radio Woodstock recently launched its own digital download label that will feature live tracks and full sets recorded at BLUESTOCK 2011, Mountain Jam, in WDST/Radio Woodstock studios and at concerts at local Woodstock venues. Listen online at: [wdst.com](http://wdst.com) or [radiowoodstock.com](http://radiowoodstock.com)

**SPECIAL GUEST CO-HOST STEVEN SEAGAL**

**RADIO WOODSTOCK PRESENTS & STEVE & JEFF SIMON PRESENTS**

**BLUESTOCK**

**PEACE, LOVE & BLUES**

**GREGG ALLMAN • BUDDY GUY**  
**ELVIN BISHOP • TOMMY CASTRO & THE LRBR**  
(FT. JOE LOUIS WALKER, RICK ESTRIN, AND DEANNA BOGART)

**TROMBONE SHORTY & ORLEANS AVENUE**  
**TAB BENOIT • RONNIE BAKER BROOKS**

**STEVEN SEAGAL & THUNDERBOX • CURTIS SALGADO**  
**ZAC HARMON • BOB MARGOLIN & MATT HILL**

**THE REBA RUSSELL BAND • SHAKURA S'AIDA**  
**MITCH WOODS & BILLY GIBSON • MORELAND & ARBUCKLE**

**THE ALEXIS P SUTER BAND • TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT • BRUCE KATZ**  
**ALBERT CUMMINGS • TY CURTIS • PORT CITY PROPHETS • THE LIONEL YOUNG BAND**

**AUGUST 26 – 28, 2011**  
**HUNTER MTN, NY**

**TICKETS – INFO:**  
**BLUESTOCK.COM**

**HERLEIN PRODUCTIONS**

## Veteran Blues Promoter Michael Cloeren joins Steve & Jeff Simon Presents, LLC

Steve & Jeff Simon Presents, the international Blues concert production company, proudly announces that veteran award winning concert promoter Michael Cloeren has joined the company as VP of Artist Relations.

"We are thrilled that Michael Cloeren has become part of our rapidly growing company. With over 20 years experience producing the Pocono Blues Festival and now the inaugural Pennsylvania Blues Festival, Michael's reputation, experience and style is a perfect fit for us", stated Steve Simon the founder of Steve & Jeff Simon Presents and the co-creator of BLUESTOCK.

"Michael is one of the most passionate and experienced Blues promoters in the business today and we look forward to his being an integral part of our operation for years to come", stated Jeff Simon.

Steve and Jeff Simon Presents is one of the largest Blues concert producers in the world with productions such as BLUESTOCK, BLUZAPALOOZA, Blues Without Borders and the St. John Blues Festival.

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# SMITTY GOES TO NEW ORLEANS

## TAMING THE MUSIC BEAST THE 2011 NEW ORLEANS JAZZ AND HERITAGE FESTIVAL

BY MARK SMITH

The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, now in its 41<sup>st</sup> year, is a massive event spanning seven days over the last weekend in April and the first weekend in May. Taking place at the New Orleans fairgrounds, the event has 12 stages that simultaneously host close to 8 hours each of music that runs the gamut from the traditional and modern jazz you would expect from the event's name to a broad sampling of zydeco, Cajun, blues, brass band, gospel, rock, pop, soul and world music.

In addition to the festival itself, the New Orleans club scene during festival time is rich with variety and impossible choices between your favorite bands. The combination of a full day at the festival and a night at the clubs is like crack to a music addict as you chase from one musical high to another.

Words like moderation and restraint are difficult to embrace by the musical beast I become during Jazz Fest. Like a cruise ship passenger in the buffet line, I pile my music plate as high as it will go- and go back for seconds! Here's a taste of this year's event as seen through the eyes of the beast.

He was a monster of a man, standing in excess of six feet and tipping the scales at well over 250. He paced the bar area of the Chickie Wah Wah like a caged lion as we all waited for Paul Cebar and the Milwaukeeans to take the stage and rip into their syncopated soul funk groove. Unlike the other beer drinkers in the house, who tipped their long-necks back only far enough to move the beer from bottle to mouth, he went straight vertical with his bottles, polishing off one after another to quench a seemingly insatiable thirst. His Schlitz t-shirt barely covered his large frame and exposed his large gut every time he went vertical with his bottle.

As he careened around the room you could watch the crowd shy away from him lest they provoke him into draining more than his beer bottle. Yet, as he made his laps around the room I noticed that despite his general state of disarray he had his pants under control with a token tuck. You see, while he had more body than t-shirt, he made a point of keeping a couple of inches of his shirt tucked into the back of his pants, a sign that despite his manic pacing and massive beer consumption he had not lost all control and knew that if he kept his shirt tucked in he wouldn't lose his pants.

So, what does the token tuck have to do with Jazz Fest? Read on my friends.

### The Warm up Round

My wife and I arrived in New Orleans on the Wednesday evening before the final weekend of the festival. After kicking off the travel day at 4:30 am and then enduring an unplanned five hour layover in Houston we were itchy to dump the travel crabbiness and to get into the festival mind set. We've learned over the years that the best way to do this is to head straight to the Acme Oyster House. Once there, we downed raw and grilled oysters along with massive fried Oyster Po-Boy sandwiches and multiple ice cold Abita Ambers. From there, we made the mandatory trip to Louisiana Music Factory, one of the best records stores anywhere and simply the best for Louisiana-based music. As is customary, the store was hosting a series of live in-store performances and we were lucky enough to catch Joe Krown and Walter "Wolfman" Washington ripping things up while I scored a number of Zydeco, blues and brass band discs that had been on my list for months. Having taken care of food and necessities, it was time for some music!

First up, we wandered over to Lafayette Square Park where Marcia Ball and band were playing a free show that had the park jammed. With a new release, *Roadside Attractions*, serving as the source of much of the performance, Marcia was even more enthusiastic than normal and soon had the crowd moving and grooving as if the tunes were part of their DNA.

After a couple of hours of great music, Marcia had to call it quits to move on to her next gig of the evening and we had to move on to the French Quarter for a couple of drinks. Having accomplished that, and despite a bit of road fog (or was it the French Quarter drinks?) we moved on to the Chickie Wah Wah for the Paul Cebar show. We survived our encounter with the token-tucked beer chugger but the time change to Central time left us unable to outlast the band and by 12:30 even the beast had to call it quits, after a 23 hour day. So what, tomorrow is Jazz Fest!!

### It's Festival Time!

Thursday dawned bright, sunny and hot. Great news for the beach, not so great for Jazz Fest. Since the Festival takes place in the infield of a horse race track, there is precious little shade to be had and a hot day can crank the misery index to new highs. Undaunted, we grabbed the sunscreen, hopped the shuttle and arrived just in time to hear Gal Holiday & the Honky Tonk Revue kick things into gear on the Gentilly Stage with some smokin' hot country, blues and rockabilly.

Soon, though, the siren call of the food booths lured us away for some crawfish, fried green tomatoes and a Cochon De Lait Po-Boy, an awesome mixture of smoked pork and coleslaw on a French baguette. We did a quick detour to the Congo Square stage to catch Kirk Joseph's Backyard Groove laying down some wild brass band music and then bee-lined to the Acura Stage to set up camp for alt-country rocker Lucinda Williams and New Orleans based funk band Galactic. Scoring a pretty good location in the massive expanse of grass that stretches out from the stage, we stretched out and let the afternoon drift by with Lucinda's melancholy soundtrack and then got propelled



back onto our feet when Galactic fired up its engine behind the hard driving beat laid down by drummer Stanton Moore. But, as is usually the case at Jazz Fest, we had to move on before Galactic was done in order to catch a few minutes of Charlie Musselwhite in the Blues Tent and then 20 year old fiddle wiz Amanda Shaw at the other end of the fairgrounds. From there we raced to the Fais Do-Do stage to catch Michelle Shocked leading the audience in all manner of politically charged sing alongs before winding up the afternoon with Wilco's hard rock charge and some sweet blues from Ruthie Foster.

Ah, but the day wasn't done. The beast needed more music. After venturing back to the Quarter for a traditional Cajun meal at Mulate's where locals and tourists alike strut their stuff to traditional Cajun music while feasting on all manner of blackened, fried or sauced seafood, we then headed out to 12 Bar for a Cinco De Mayo party hosted by the Iguanas.

With their double saxophone attack and Tex-Mex beat, the band had everyone in a festive mood that lasted until we closed the place down. The music beast was fully satisfied and, by then, the combination of the full day in the sun, the big meal and a few beers had me only moments away from crashing hard. Fortunately, the hotel was a few short blocks away and so no damage was done.

#### **Here We Go Again!**

Friday brought the same cheery blue sky as Thursday. It also brought the painful realization that the sun tan lotion hadn't found its way to all the required spots, so I took on the day with a face redder than a Fox Network newscaster. With the prospect of more sun, the first stop at the festival ground was the row of arts and crafts tents adjacent to Congo Square where we scored straw hats to add some portable shade.

With the Soul Rebels Brass Band booming from the Acura Stage, the shopping was painless and we spent a chunk of time taking in the amazing artwork and crafts. An early highlight of the day's schedule was Edie Brickell, who has returned to recording and touring after a several year hiatus. Since she was several years removed from her hit-making days with the New Bohemians I wasn't sure what to expect and was pleasantly surprised by her upbeat pop and rock. She walked off stage at 2:00 and by then the heat index was moving beyond hot and into uncomfortable. But the day was in its early rounds so we stepped on over to Congo Square for Kermit Ruffins and the Barbeque Swingers.

We weren't the only ones. While the Acura and Gentilly stages tend to get crowded because they host the bigger acts, Kermit had Congo Square filled from front to back and side to side to hear his great mix of New Orleans jazz classics as well as his own material. Despite the heat, which soon caused us to seek refuge in the shadow of the porta-johns, the music was so fun that we stayed for the entire set. To say that Kermit is a showman is to say that Barnum and Bailey has a circus. He's at the top of his game and had the crowd eating out of his hand. Did someone say eat? Time for a fried softshell crab Po-Boy, jama-jama (sautéed greens) and plantains washed down

with a frozen café au lait. Having filled up, we then headed over to the Acura stage to catch Better than Ezra, who rocked the crowd with hit after classic hit. We had high hopes of hanging right there through the end of the day to catch Arcade Fire and maybe a bit a Gregg Allman on the way out.

Unfortunately, our long stint in the sun with Kermit and then BTE had us sweat drenched and reeling and it was clear that there was a choice- finish out the day at the festival or skip the planned trip to the Rock 'n Bowl in the evening to catch Sonny Landreth, Bonerama and Eric Lindell. Since a Rock 'n Bowl show is a must for any Jazz Fest trip, we opted to catch a little of Big Sam's Funky Nation on the way out and bailed early. Hmmm, a rare concession to reality by the beast.

The restorative effects of a hot shower and a few minutes off the feet can't be under-estimated. Re-invigorated, we grabbed a great meal in the Quarter and headed to the Rock 'n Bowl where we were treated to a terrific show by all three bands and got to take in some, um, colorful characters in the form of a couple in their mid-to late 60's who had more colors on than occur naturally in nature and a combination of patterns that was dizzying. Imagine a couple of five year old kids without any sense of what matches- plaids, stripes, checks, you name it, and they had it on.

Her outfit was topped with a pink Rock 'n Bowl bowling shirt while his was topped with a purple fedora. Their

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odd appearance apparently didn't deprive them of friends as they spent Sonny's entire set checking Facebook or e-mails on their cell phones. They were so comical looking that people were approaching them and asking to take their pictures. They seemed to relish the attention and gladly posed several times. Despite their wild appearance, they had a dignified air that made it seem like the rest of us were the odd ones out, living in black in white to their Technicolor. As for the beast, the full day of music gave him all the fix he needed.

### **The Beast Stumbles**

Saturday kicked off a little slow after the late night at the Rock 'n Bowl but we had to get to the Festival Grounds early because two of the big headliner's of the weekend were slated to close out the day: Jimmy Buffett at the Acura Stage and The Strokes at the Gentilly. While the big names make for good ticket sales, they make for a tough festival day because their fans, when added to the normal festival crowd, put so many bodies on the grounds that gridlock can develop on the paths between stages. In addition, the single band fans set up camp with blankets and chairs in front of a stage and hang there all day making it tough to move from stage to stage as many do in order to sample the rich variety of available music.

First up on the Gentilly Stage were Shamarr Allen & The Underdaws, who captivated the crowd with a great mix a jazz and hip-hop. Allen soon had the early morning crowd on its feet when he showcased his circular breathing technique which allows him to hold a single note for an eternity. Shamarr hasn't quite achieved the full polish of Kermit Ruffins but is well on his way with his adroit mix of traditional and modern sounds.

From there we grabbed some crawfish bread, pheasant and sausage gumbo and collard greens with beans before moving on over to the Acura stage to catch the Voice of the Wetlands All Stars (featuring Tab Benoit, Anders Osborne, Mitch Woods, George Porter, Jr., Big Chief Monk Boudreaux, Johnny Vidocovich, Johnny Sansone and Waylon Thibodeaux) who played a terrific set of original blues and funk tunes heavy with the message about the need to take proper action to preserve Louisiana's embattled Wetlands.

Speaking of wetlands, the smoking hot temperatures had turned our clothing into swamplands compelling my wife to head to the shade and me to seek the refuge of a frozen margarita, which was the perfect intro for the balance of the day. The one/two punch of Allen Toussaint and Jimmy Buffett that followed made for a perfect afternoon as they worked their way through their rich catalogs of original material that seemed just right for the festive crowd that had gathered. I wasn't alone in finding the frozen drinks and soon the whole place was a big party. We struck up conversations with a number of the people around us and soaked up great local color and rich stories of life before and after Katrina from an older New Orleans couple.

By taking in the final notes of the Buffett show, we ended up in a massive line getting to the shuttle and didn't get back downtown until nearly 8:30, scuttling our dinner plans as we needed to be all the way out to the Maple Leaf

to catch the reunion show of Jon Clearly and the Absolute Monster Gentlemen. We arrived at the Leaf just before the band was to start at 10:30. The day had been hot and the wait in line seemed even hotter. As we cleared the door and paid the cover it seemed, well, crowded. And then more crowded. And hot. And then more crowded. And hotter. Imagine a garbage compactor. Throw in some people. Smash. Throw in some more. Smash. Repeat again. It was so crowded that you had body contact with every single person next to you and literally could not move your hands from your side to take a drink. And that's not the worst of it. You know how bad it is when your nose itches and you can't itch it? How the itch intensifies?

Now imagine if the itch is the need to use the bathroom and you can't leave the room! Ouch! But the band was so good that I didn't care- until my wife bailed out of the mosh pit. (She's much smarter about these things than me). Here's where the token tuck from the first night comes back around. As crazed as the beast was for more music, enough was enough. By then, it was 1:30 am and we had seen almost two dozen bands over the past three days. I knew it was time to take control of the wild music beast and tuck it into bed. Failure to do the tuck would cost me more than my pants!

Arriving back at our hotel we were surprised by a large FBI swat team swarming the streets. Was there concern that the beast would break out of the cage and head into the quarter for a nightcap? Did it really require guns and flak jackets to control? No, the explanation was a little more mundane. A movie was being shot just around the corner and the swat team was part of the cast. Whew, the beast would live to see another day of music.

### **The Perfect End**

Sunday dawned with a little cloud cover. Good thing, as the last three days in the sun, coupled with the late nights, had us pretty weary. But, it's the last day and we needed to soldier on. (Remember it was only a token tuck and the beast must be fed!) First up, was Mem Shannon at the Blues Tent, kicking things off at 11:30. As usual, Mem laid down soulful blues that soon had the crowd on its feet. We stayed right there when Chubby Carrier and the Bayou Swamp band took the stage and absolutely lit up the place with their hard charging Zydeco and blues.

One of the rub-board players waded into the crowd with a bottle of hot sauce and splashed it down the throat of willing participants as the band ripped through its signature tune, Who Stole the Hot Sauce? Upping the ante on Chubby's energetic set didn't seem possible until we saw Cowboy Mouth's hard rocking set led by drummer Fred LeBlanc who made the energizer bunny seem like a total slacker. The problem was that Kid Rock was slated to follow and the crowd was getting real dense and the heat index was climbing again. So, as much as we enjoyed the set, we bailed and made our way over to the Gentilly stage where we caught the end of Papa Grows Funk who laid down a groove heavy version of the Beatles' "Come Together" which they dedicated to the Earthquake and Tsunami victims of Japan.

As Papa Grows Funk's set ended and the crowd moved



on we grabbed a premium rail location for Michael Franti and Spearhead. And good thing we did. Each Jazz Fest that I've attended has had a magical moment where the music and spirit within the crowd have coincided to transport both performer and audience to a spot where time and place do not matter. This was it. Franti and band locked into a rock/hip-hop/reggae groove that demanded audience participation as Franti exhorted the crowd to jump, raise their hands and otherwise join the fun. To the dismay of the crowd control cops, Franti couldn't be confined to the stage and he was soon in the middle of the audience rocking the groove alongside his ardent fans. Just when it seemed that things couldn't get any better, he was joined on stage by Cajun fiddle wiz, Amanda Shaw.

On paper, the pairing made no sense at all. On stage, it was brilliant as the band segued from its own material to a snippet of Steve Miller's classic rock hit "The Joker" and Shaw found a way to weave her hot-wired string work around the band's heavy groove. From there, the intensity picked up as Shaw pushed the band to dizzying heights as she played faster and faster. Pretty soon, more notes were flying per second than seemed humanly possible and everyone on stage had ear to ear grins as they went to musical places they'd never found before.

As you might expect, the crowd shared the enthusiasm and the place went absolutely nuts. We left the set drenched from all the jumping and clapping but totally satisfied.

The Neville Brothers and Radiators were slated to close out the day. While the Neville's are New Orleans royalty and it was promoted as the Radiator's last Jazz Fest, we'd just seen our perfect show and didn't need to chase any more musical highs. The music beast was tucked in for a long rest- until next Jazz Fest!! Oh...no Blues Watch this issue...I was a bit busy!

## **ELLNORA | THE GUITAR FESTIVAL UNVEILS 2011'S ARTIST LINEUP**

### **Diverse Three-Day Event Makes Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, a World-Class Musical Destination in September**

On September 8, 9, and 10, 2011, a prestigious assortment of the globe's greatest musicians will gather for ELLNORA | The Guitar Festival, situated in the vibrant micro-urban setting of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

The biennial event provides an unparalleled mixed-genre experience that features performances from many of today's most distinguished music-makers in a diverse array already being emulated by other festivals.

The internationally recognized event, which in recent years has emerged as a favorite destination for musicians and true guitar fans from around the world, will feature more than 30 performers drawing from guitar traditions rooted in the US, England, Canada, China, Spain, and Mali. Krannert Center for the Performing

Arts, located on the campus of the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, incorporates seven distinctive performance spaces uniquely suited to showcase the event's impressive array of talent.

This year's festival incorporates nine individually ticketed events, along with twelve free shows and more events being planned. This year, ELLNORA's artist roster is headed by Luther Dickinson: member of the North Mississippi Allstars and The Black Crowes and one of Rolling Stone's "new guitar gods."

Dickinson has been selected to serve as the festival's artist-in-residence and will collaborate on stage with Grammy Award/W.C. Handy Award-winning contemporary bluesman Alvin Youngblood Hart and influential pedal steel guitarist Robert Randolph. Dickinson will also interact with festival-goers and read passages from the soon-to-be-published memoirs of his father, Jim Dickinson.

Robert Randolph is one of Rolling Stone's 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time, as are English folk-rock legend Richard Thompson and Sonic Youth member Lee Ranaldo, who will also grace ELLNORA's stages.

The festival will also feature two of DownBeat magazine's 75 Great Guitarists, who'll build on the festival's commitment to film-based projects: Bill Frisell, who'll perform the stirring score to Bill Morrison's film in *The Great Flood*, and Marc Ribot, who'll accompany the bittersweet 1921 Charlie Chaplin film *The Kid*. Ribot will also lead a Cuban music tribute in a free set with his band Los Cubanos Postizos.

ELLNORA 2011's expansive musical palette also includes roots legend Taj Mahal, noted producer/recording artist Daniel Lanois, veteran rock adventurer Adrian Belew, bluegrass/jazz innovator Tony Rice, alt-rock explorers Caexico, noted Malian singer/guitarist Vieux Farka Touré, family music guru Dan Zanes, bluegrass renegades Chris Thile and Michael Daves, contemporary acoustic favorites the Russ Barenberg Trio, string band revivalists the Carolina Chocolate Drops, the experimental sounds of Noveller, and the ambient band Redhooker.

ELLNORA, which bears the name of its venue's visionary founder, Ellnora Krannert, also provides a vital showcase for some of today's most prominent female artists, including the incomparable classical guitarist Sharon Isbin; peerless jazz guitarist Sheryl Bailey; Toshi Reagon, Judith Casselberry, and Catherine Russell of BIGLovely; festival favorites Cindy Cashdollar and Rory Block; flamenco guitar virtuoso Marija Temo; and Meng Su and Yameng Wang of the Beijing Guitar Duo.

Originally known as the Wall to Wall Guitar Festival before being rechristened ELLNORA in 2009, the event is organized by Krannert Center's director, Mike Ross, and his staff, in collaboration with curator and artistic advisor David Spelman, who is also founder/director of the world-renowned New York Guitar Festival.

In the years since its debut, ELLNORA has served as a model for other events in the US and around the world. [www.ellnoraguitarfestival.com](http://www.ellnoraguitarfestival.com)

# 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



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

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

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](http://AmericansForTheArts.org).



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



*Give your kids a chance  
to succeed. Up their  
daily dose of art.*

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## REVISITED SONNY ROLLINS

Road Shows, Vol. 1

DOXY RECORDS/EMARCY/UNIVERSAL (2008)

This compilation of live-recorded concert performances from 1980 to 2007, on tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins' Doxy label, documents the master tenor saxman playing with his various sidemen in settings from trio to sextet.

The tracks culled from the Carl Smith collection and Rollins' personal soundboard tapes feature Rollins performing four originals and three standards in Japan, France, Sweden, Poland, Canada and New York City.

The fare kicks off with a fiery 9:26-minute take of the Rollins original, "Best Wishes" from a Tokyo sextet performance on May 25, 1986 with trombonist Clifton Anderson, pianist Mark Soskin, guitarist Bobby Broom, bassist Jerome Harris, and drummer Al Foster. Rollins blows a seductive, 8:44-minute version of the warhorse ballad, "More Than You Know," from a May 2006 concert with Anderson, Broom, bassist Bob Cranshaw, drummer Victor Lewis and percussionist Kamti Dinizulu.

Other originals featured on the disc are "Blossom" (1980, Sweden), "Nice Lady" (2007, Canada), and his trademark "Tenor Madness" (2000, Japan). Standards include a quartet take on "Easy Living," with Soskin, Foster and Harris, and a trio version of "Some Enchanted Evening" with bassist Christian McBride and drummer Roy Haynes.

Rollins began recording many of his concerts for archival purposes and potential release, but logistics, permission and technical problems prevented many of his concerts to go unrecorded. About one-third of the estimated 600 concerts Rollins performed since the late 1980s are in the archive. For future Road Shows

compilations Rollins and trombonist/producer Clifton Anderson have their own archives and Carl Smith's to glean from.

This disc captures Rollins in rapturous performances assured to please the listener. I eagerly await the follow-up "Road Shows" recordings. *Nancy Ann Lee*

Editor's Note: This is a reprint from 2008 as part of our tribute to Sonny Rollins. Watch for Volume 2 to be released on September 13, and try to catch him in concert if he is coming close to your area.



## GRADY CHAMPION

Dreamin  
GSM

In the liner notes of his new CD "Dreamin'" (GSM), Grady Champion recalls the year that followed his winning the 2010 International Blues Challenge presented by the Blues Foundation. It was a year that brought him recognition, both locally and internationally. "Dreamin'" is a follow-up to "Back In Mississippi Live At The 930 Blues Cafe" which was rereleased on Earwig last year. This recording is produced by Zac Harmon and Christopher Troy who provide most of the backing for Champion here.

About the earlier record I wrote. "The albums strengths include the fact that Grady is a terrific vocalist who exhibits considerable personality and enthusiasm as he sings ... He is an effective, credible harp player if not a virtuoso, with Rice Miller being an obvious influence." These comments apply (although I might suggest Detroit's Little Sonny is a similar harp stylist to Champion) to the present recording opening with a strutting "My Rooster Is King" where he forcefully sings backed by his overdubbed harp about the rooster that spreads his wings and rules the roost. The title song has an effective employment of a vocal chorus, as he sings about dreaming of loving his girl like no one before. There is some effective tremolo laced guitar backing his vocal.

"Weight of the World" is an attractive soul ballad with Troy adding accordion sounding fills on his keyboards. "Guilty As Charged," with an emphatic accompaniment, has an intriguing lyric about proclaiming his love while cheating and breaking his woman's heart as a harp riff punctuates his vocal. Harmon and Champion collaborated on "Same Train" with an urgent vocal of waiting at the station for the train to bring his baby back. "Make That Monkey Jump" is a simple dance number while "Cross

That Bridge” is a southern soul number about a couple sneaking behind their spouses and knowing it’s wrong but unable to stop. A straight down in the alley groove frames “Thank You For Giving Me the Blues,” with a strong vocal. Harmon is striking on guitar here. The backing vocals detract from the country flavor of “Laugh, Smile, Cry Sometimes” (whose melody suggests Ray Charles’ “I Got a Woman”). Zac Harmon takes a spoken vocal on the closing “Walk With Me Baby,” that sounds like a funky 2011 equivalent of “Scratch My Back” as Champion’s harp adds atmosphere.

Grady Champion brings an animated, fervent style to his music and with a varied program of material. If not a world class harp player, his playing does complement his strong singing. “Dreamin’” will undoubtedly please his fans and make him new ones.

*Ron Weinstock*



## CHICK COREA, STANLEY CLARKE, LENNY WHITE

**Forever  
CONCORD**

The link between Return To Forever’s initial Brazilian-tinged identity and their emergence as 70’s fusion demi-gods, was a transitional acoustic trio. Messrs. Corea, Clarke and White’s return to this format results in both inventive, swinging jazz fare and fusion collaborations of a remarkably intimate sort.

Corea’s brilliance and elegance show in equal measure from the leadoff “On Green Dolphin Street” to the acoustic recasts of RTF classics “No Mystery” and “Senor Mouse” that close the first of this two-disc set. Superstar bassist Clarke was always perceived as Corea’s equal partner to RTF audiences and his solo spaces here reflect this. His prowess is a standout feature of the afore-mentioned “Mystery”. White, always one of the naturally swinging drummers of the fusion era, kicks it superbly “old school” during the Thelonious Monk-penned “Hackensack”.

While the first disc is comprised of 2009 tour excerpts, Disc Two is a studio session featuring the trio and guests that emanates a decidedly cordial, collegial atmosphere. Violinist Jean-Luc Ponty and RTF alumnus, guitarist Bill Connors capably assist the transit to

fusion mode. Re-visitations of “After The Cosmic Rain”, “Space Circus” and “500 Miles High” sound as sparked by informality as by the high-energy value associated with fusion. R&B legend Chaka Khan, who first showed off her considerable jazz chops on the excellent 1982 Lenny White-produced release, *Echoes Of An Era*, returns to that form on the Gershwin classic “I Loves You Porgy”. Forever is a fitting addition to the individual and collective catalogs of these fine players.

*DuaneVerh*



## KENNY ‘BLUES BOSS’ WAYNE

**An Old Rock on a Roll  
STONY PLAIN MUSIC**

This writer has been a fan of the blues and boogie-woogie artist Kenny ‘Blues Boss’ Wayne since I first had a chance to see this fine pianist and singer. He is influenced by the great boogie and blues pianists, especially Amos Milburn. On his new Stony Plain CD, “An Old Rock On a Roll,” he is backed by Duke Robillard and his studio band that includes the horns of Sax Gordon and Doug James and the trombone of Carl Querfurth.”

It’s a rollicking set of music as he evokes Milburn’s “Down the Road a Piece” on his opening “Searching For My baby.” The mood continues on the hot “Fantasy Meets Reality,” although the use of a four-piece horn section seems a bit much here. The tempo slows down on “Heaven, Send Me an Angel,” with just Duke and rhythm providing solid support for a straight piano blues with Duke ripping off a solo. “Devil Woman,” has a strutting groove with the Blues Boss singing about trying this get this woman off his mind with Duke adding a biting riff.

The title track has a funky edge as Wayne sings about rolling his baby real slow. It’s pretty straight-forward, both in terms of the lyrics and Wayne’s delivery for a solid performance with nice booting tenor sax. “Don’t Pretend” (to be in love with me) is the message for a nice blues with a late night feel. Duke is in a bit more of a T-Bone vein on this. Other songs include the peppy “Run Little Joe” with nice use of riffing horns, “Wild Turkey 101 Proof,” an amiable song that evokes the late Johnnie Johnson’s “Tangeray,” and “Bring Back the Love,” a Charles Brown styled blues ballad. “Way Overdue” is a sweet rocker with spectacular, rollicking boogie woogie piano in the Milburn-Little Willie



Littlefield vein and a groove suggestive of Milburn's "Walkin' and Talkin'," while "Rocking Boogie Party" continues the festive mood.

It is a solid effort, which to these ears is strongest when the Blues Boss delves into boogie woogie and stomping West Coast jump blues. Wayne is a real good singer and writes solid songs, but he really hits his stride when he evokes the vintage days of Milburn, Little Willie Littlefield, Floyd Dixon and others. Wonderfully recorded, "An Old Rock On a Roll," is a solid addition to his body of recordings and hopefully will bring him greater visibility.

**Ron Weinstock**



**ERNIE KRIVDA**  
**Blues For Pekar**  
**CAPRI**

Cleveland, Ohio born and bred tenor saxophonist Ernie Krivda pays tribute to the late international jazz writer/critic and author of American Splendor comics with this seven-tune disc featuring his quartet and guests.

Teaming up with Krivda on all of the tracks is the "Detroit Connection" featuring 78-year-old pianist Claude Black, the matriarch of Detroit jazz cats bassist Marion Hayden and Renell Gonzalves, the son of Ellington tenor player Paul, on drums. Trumpeters Sean Jones and Dominick Farinacci perform on two tracks each.

The album features all arrangements by Krivda and kicks off with an uptempo take on the Edward Reading standard, "The End of a Love Affair," featuring Farinacci on the front line with Krivda.

The capable Midwest quartet follows that with a lush version of the 1920s Vincent Youmans ballad, "More Than You Know." Jones enhances the lilting 11:41-minute rendition of the Sonny Rollins composition, "Valse Hot." Also included on the disc are Krivda's gorgeous, warm interpretation of Jimmy Van Heusen's "Darn That Dream" and a bopping version of Dexter Gordon's "Fried Bananas," plus two Krivda originals: "One For Willie" (dedicated to the late Cleveland saxophonist-composer Willie Smith) and the title tune finale.

Tunes range in duration from eight to nearly 12 minutes, which gives Krivda and his accomplished team time to work things out.

Krivda has recorded more than 30 albums as leader. This one, funded through the Cuyahoga County tobacco

tax that supports the arts, adds nicely to his existing discography. Krivda nurtured both Jones and Farinacci through Cleveland's Tri-C high school jazz program at Cuyahoga Community College. Both young artists have also recorded on their own.

An attractive 16-page, full-color, annotated liner booklet with photos of the musicians makes this a must have addition to your Krivda collection.

**Nancy Ann Lee**



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**35 Years of Stony Plain**  
**STONY PLAIN MUSIC**

Arhoolie Records and Alligator Records are not the only important independent labels that are celebrating an important milestone this year. Canadian Stony Plain Records is 35 years young and the label has a double CD celebration "35 Years of Stony Plain" to celebrate that fact. In addition to the 41 varied tracks, there is also a bonus DVD with some performances such as Jay McShann and Johnnie Johnson together and special material such as a tour of Stony Plain's headquarters.

The booklet that comes with this release contains an essay from Richard Flohil that provides a concise overview of Stony Plain and the remarkable Holger Petersen who has been the force behind this remarkable label. The booklet also provides a concise overview of the marvelous contexts of the two CDs and the DVD.

I am not as familiar with the Stony Plain catalog, particularly since it's catalog is not devoted to simply blues and related music. Calling it a roots label is accurate and the first of the two CDs is subtitled "Singers, songwriters and much, much more ..." The contents include folk, country and some swing jazz. Maria Muldaur is heard on a Dan Hicks song with backing that includes David Grisman and John Sebastian. Other highlights are one of the explorations by the late Jeff Healy into early jazz with a wonderful revival of "The Wildcat" by Eddie Lang and Joe Venuti; country-folk troubadour Steve Earl; Canadian legend Ian Tyson; Tim Hus' "Country Music Lament" on the sad state of today's country music; Asleep at the Wheel's Western Swing version of a Count Basie hit, "That's Your Red Wagon: the New Guitar Summit of Duke Robilliard, Jay Geils and Garry Beaudoin; Emmylou Harris singing Gram Parsons' "Wheels"; Rodney Crowell; and three

previously unissued Bob Carpenter demos. Most of this disc was totally new to me and delightful

The second disc is subtitled “Blues, R&B, swing, jazz, and even more ...” and contains more familiar material with some nice highlights from Joe Louis Walker, Jay McShann, Kenny ‘Blues Boy’ Wayne and Rosco Gordon from various recordings Duke Robillard has produced for the label.

The McShann albums Duke produced may not have been the very best of the recordings he made in the past thirty years but are indeed very good and the Kenny Wayne is from his upcoming CD for the label. On one of the McShann CDs on Stony Plain, there is a bonus lengthy interview of McShann by Holger Petersen that is worth getting the CD for even if the music was not good, but in fact it was very good. There is a terrific instrumental by Ronnie Earl from his most recent CD, “Spread the Word,” as well as a Rory Block song from her marvelous Mississippi Fred McDowell album.

It’s nice to hear selections from Sonny Rhodes and Billy Boy Arnold. This disc closes with an unissued recording from Richard ‘King Biscuit Boy’ Newell, who was a fine harp player and singer and four unissued sides from 1965 by Robert Nighthawk that may be his last recordings and the performance of Tampa Red’s “You Missed a Good Man” features superb slide guitar.

This is a fine release that I will be returning to listen to. Stony Plain, may in fact, be slightly cutting back on its release schedule compared to past years because of the changing nature of music and recording distribution. This reflects the hard reality of the fact few that mortar and brick record stores still exist and digital downloads are increasingly important. This is a release well worth obtaining in hard copy and savor the music, videos and the booklet. Here’s to Stony Plain having another 35 years.

*Ron Weinstock*

## ANGIE DOCTOR AND DAN SCHUMACHER

### He Said, She Said: Duets For Two Voices VOCOLOCO RECORDS

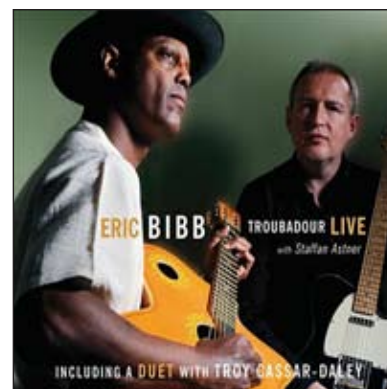
Grammy nominated a cappella vocal arranger and producer Richard Bob Greene has put together a unique recording of two voices, those of Angie Doctor and Dan Schumacher on “He Said, She Said: Duets For Two Voices” (Vocoloco Records). The two voices share and split the lyrics, wordless scatting, and provide a musical counterpoint to the other. They deliver twelve delightful and original performances of some standards and even some surprising pop and rock choices.

The things get off to a delightful start on “Honeysuckle Rose” followed by Jobim’s “One Note Samba,” while producer Greene supplied the lyrics for Dave Brubeck’s “Brandenburg’s Gate,” and one can chuckle to Schumacher singing about the crossing guard being in the KGB as Doctor sings the more descriptive lyrics about meeting a date in a trench coat. “Tanguedia,” from the Astor Piazzolla songbook, is a terrific wordless duet with one scatting and the other scats a riff for the performance’s foundation.

Kern/Hammerstein’s “In the Heart of the Dark” allows Doctor to sing beautifully while Schumacher hums the accompaniment, followed by an unexpectedly amusing take of Queen’s “Another One Bites The Dust,” as they clap to provide a steady groove as bullets fly out of the doorway to the groove of the beat. The playfulness of much of this is evident on “Let’s Go Wild,” where they sing about throwing out the dishes, go out the front door and not look back as they release their inner child. Wordless echoes of Charlie Parker’s “Birds of Paradise” introduce the fetching rendition of “All the Things Your Are.” One performance is a trio as producer Greene provides the bass for a trio wordless rendition of Astor Piazzolla’s tango, “Milonga del Angel.”

A cappella vocal performances similar to this recording are not new, but they have generally employed larger groups than the duets heard here. While the twelve performances only last a half hour, “He Said, She Said,” is indeed a splendid half hour.

*Ron Weinstock*



### ERIC BIBB Troubadour Live TELARC

A New York native, now an expatriate in Sweden for many years, guitarist Eric Bibb comes from a long line of musicians and artists and has made the most of his new surroundings since the 1970’s, to the point TROUBADOIR LIVE is his seventh release on Telarc. Recorded live in Uppsala, about 50 miles north of Stockholm, the project has mostly live cuts with two new studio efforts thrown in at the end.

Assisted by Staffan Astner, his right hand man on lead guitar, the majority of the cuts lean toward the country blues side of things with “New Home” as a major example. Different views of life like “Shavin’ Talk” are explored, along with the channeling of B.B. King’s moved during “Tell Riley.” Assisting on a couple cuts are the gospel trio Psalm 4 (Glen Scott, Andre De Lange and Paris Renita), who give extra vocal spark to “Connected “ and “New World Comin’ Through.” The studio songs include “If You Were Not My Woman,” which was lightly sprinkled with reggae while it was being recorded.

True to his blues roots while adding some of his own taste to it, TROUBADOIR LIVE is about as far as you can get from the blandness of Swedish meatballs.

*Peanuts*  
**jazz**  
**& blues**





## BUTCH WARREN

### French 5Tet BLACK & BLUE

Butch Warren is a bassist who five decades ago was a vital part of the New York City scene and a regular on Blue Note album dates along with pianist Sonny Clark and drummer Billy Higgins - think about some sessions by Dexter Gordon, Joe Henderson, Booker Ervin, Jackie McLean, Kenny Dorham and McCoy Tyner. I have become aware that was playing regularly in the Washington DC area, although having a number of issues including spells of homelessness. Pianist Peter Edelman has been part of groups that featured.

Giovanni Russonello, at the excellent DC jazz website, [www.capitalbop.com](http://www.capitalbop.com), had a review of several recent releases by DC area artists and Warren's first date as a leader, "French 5Tet" (Black & Blue) was one of them. The album was a result of French saxophonist Pierrick Menuau, in Washington for a concert at the French Embassy, catching Warren playing at a club and then putting together a brief tour of France including a public concert for Radio France that was broadcast and then issued as "French 5Tet."

Menuau and Warren are joined on this recording by Jean-Phillipe Border on guitar, Pierre Christophe on piano and Mourad Behammou on drums. The recording has the same flavor as those classic Blue Note recordings Warren was a part of. It opens up with Warren's bass on the original, "A Little Chippie," before Menuau displays a strong fluid tenor sax style (and like Dexter Gordon inserting some musical quotations) followed by some fleet guitar as the rhythm section swings. Hank Mobley's "East of The Sun" follows with nice cymbal work by Behammou, and then the classic ballad "Laura" with more lovely tenor (Menuau perhaps sounding some like Long Tall Dexter).

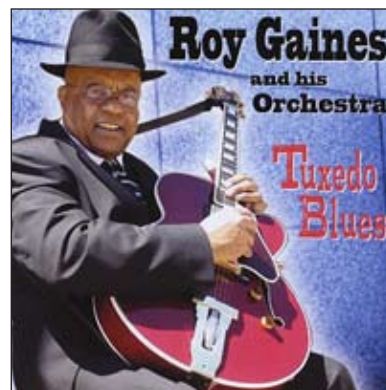
There are three more Warren originals with performances titled "I Remember Monk" and "Eric Walks." The tune labeled "I Remember Monk" is somewhat suggestive of Mingus' "Goodbye Eric," while "Eric Walks" is a swinging performance that kicks off with terrific guitar before another nice sax solo.

I enjoyed the other original, "Barack Obama," apparently a more recent composition of Warren with a samba tinge. Giovanni Russelonello was disappointed in the performance, and references a performance

by Warren with a group that included pianist Freddie Redd (another Blue Note legend) and drummer Nasar Abadey, noting "With a talented three-saxophone line carrying "Barack Obama's" melody, the band sauntered and flowed, swinging deeply and proudly through the brief "B" section." I certainly appreciate Russenello's perspective and one certainly echoes his hope that Warren has a chance to record it again. It was Kenny Dorham who took Warren out of Washington and to New York and after a brief statement of "The Theme," the 5Tet concludes with the classic "Blue Bossa," another classic Warren played on the original. This is a thoroughly enjoyable recording and it is worth seeking out. It certainly is heartening that it is available and perhaps a domestically produced follow-up will be coming shortly.

The Capital Bop review is at <http://www.capitalbop.com/2011/05/12/album-review-the-debut-of-a-legend-butch-warrens-french-5tet/>. Information on ordering is at <http://concertsonthehill.info/bw/index.html> and for US orders, \$18.00. One can send payment through PayPal to the address [concertsonthehill@gmail.com](mailto:concertsonthehill@gmail.com). One can also send email questions to that address.

*Ron Weinstock*



## ROY GAINES & HIS ORCHESTRA

### Tuxedo Blues BLACK GOLD

The "Bluesman For Life," Roy Gaines has his first recording in nearly a decade with "Tuxedo Blues," issued on Gaines own Black Gold label. Gaines last US disc was the excellent 2000 Severn release "New Frontier Lover." Also in 2010, Gaines recorded a CD in Japan on the P-Vine label, "Guitar Clashers from Gainesville, Tokyo," with Japanese guitarist, Mitsuyoshi Azuma.

Gaines, who took up guitar inspired by T-Bone Walker, has toured, played and recorded since the fifties including studio work with the likes of Bobby Bland, Junior Parker, Big Mama Thornton and Jimmy Rushing, as well as played with such legendary musicians as Roy Milton (at the age of 16), Ray Charles, Chuck Willis, Billie Holiday and Harry Belafonte. His recording career started with albums for the RCA Groove subsidiary and then albums for a variety of independent blues labels producing highly acclaimed recordings like "Bluesman For Life," "Lucille Work For Me," and "New Frontier Lover," that displayed his marvelous

guitar playing and virile vocals.

"Tuxedo Blues" is a big band album on which the spotlight focused on Roy Gaines vocal and guitar. In the booklet accompanying this, Gaines talks about what was involved in putting this recording together as well as inspiration. The music harkens back when the relationship between the blues and jazz spheres were much closer such as with the Territory bands, such as the Blue Devils, Bennie Moten, Count Basie and Jay McShann, as well as the bands of Lionel Hampton and Budd Johnson. After all T-Bone Walker fronted big bands and Gatemouth Brown led a big orchestra in his early days. This is the tradition Gaines pays homage to here, which isn't far removed from some of his recordings such as "New Frontier Lover," with their substantial horn players and arrangers, although the big bands here produce an even richer, fuller sound. The music may be dressed up to be at home at the most elegant ballroom yet Gaines' performances never lack grit.

While Gaines acknowledges the great Jimmy Rushing as a major vocal influence, his sound reminds me of the classic B.B. King of the late fifties and early sixties. The opening "Send For Me," which was a hit for Nat King Cole has a nice full horn section before Gaines adds a nice solo. Gaines wrote the civil rights themed "Blues From Hell" with his brother Grady, recalling 400 years and how long must he wait to be free from hate with a hard swinging George Pandis arrangement. Roy's old friend, Joe Sample, is at the keyboard on the lively "Gold Old Days," with Gaines' relaxed vocal phrasing surrounded by Leslie Drayton's rich arrangement, with Sample laying down a lively piano solo followed by some jazzy fretwork from Gaines.

Roy previously recorded "Thang Shaker" on the P-Vine album "Guitar Guitar Clashers from Gainesville, Tokyo," and against John Stevens' arrangement he lays down some scintillating guitar on a lyric where Gaines boasts "I'm your thang shaker, I'm your lover shaker ... so let your belly button roll, let it roll, all night long," with another sophisticated piano solo from Sample. Leslie Drayton's arrangement of an old Louis Jordan classic "Inflation Blues," helps frame a strong rendition of this number that in this writer's opinion bests B.B. King's similar big band recording of several years back. Quincy Jones wrote "Miss Celie's Blues (Sister)" for the movie "The Color Purple," and Grady is playing guitar in the club scene when this is performed. Here Gaines comes across almost as a crooner in delivering this lyric which features a New Orleans inspired instrumental section with Jackie Kelso on clarinet, Mike Daigau adds gutbucket trombone and George Pandis lays down some hot trumpet. Gaines collaborated with New Orleans legend Edward Frank on a lovely blues ballad "Come Home," with a generally restrained vocal and a nice vibraphone solo from Onaje Murray.

"Reggae Woman," originally "Calypso Blues by Nat King Cole," opens like a jumping blues stomp to which are added some Jamaican ska rhythmic touches with a lively John Stevens arrangement, a nice guitar break with a jazzy tone and a fine mix of single note runs and chords. Joe Sample's fellow Crusader Wilton Felder adds some Texas tenor for the sole instrumental on this, a slowed down,

midnight slow drag reworking of the Michael Jackson hit, "Rock With You." "Route 66" opens with just the rhythm with Sample and Gaines each taking a chorus or two before the horns kick in and Felder and Jackie Kelso get to strut on tenor and alto sax retrospectively. Gaines' off the beat vocal adds to the appeal of the interpretation here.

This is yet another impressive addition to Roy Gaines highly underrated discography. He is in fertile form throughout, and the big band settings are superb. The result is a fine disc that should have wide appeal to fans of blues and jazz.

*Ron Weinstock*



## BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA

Take The High Road  
SAGUARO ROAD RECORDS

Hey, you got Gospel on my Country! Hey, you got Country on my Gospel! And so it goes on this collaboration between the venerable gospel group, Blind Boys of Alabama and some of Country music's big names including the Oakridge Boys, Hank Williams, Jr., Vince Gill, Lee Ann Womack, Jamey Johnson and Willie Nelson.

Tapping into gospel's rich tradition of high-energy music and multi-layered harmonies, the results here generate enough power that even the devil could be excused for checking his options. The title cut and Hank Williams' "I Saw the Light" are prototypical gospel rave-ups while "Jesus, Hold My Hand" has enough funk to make you wonder if James Brown has been resurrected to join the proceedings. The harmonica licks and Vince Gill's bluesy reading of "Can You Give Me a Drink?" serve to propel the proceedings into a tent revival frenzy. Once you are there, you can't help but to be swept away by the sweet testifying of "Stand By Me," "Jesus Built a Bridge to Heaven" and by the Muddy Waters penned "Why Don't You Live So God Can Use You".

"I know a Place," "Have Thine Own Way Lord" (featuring Jamey Johnson), "I Was a Burden" (featuring Lee Ann Womack) and "Family Bible" (featuring Willie Nelson) slow things down considerably and tread closer to the country side of the proceedings. Those with an aversion to hard-core country need not flee these proceedings as the lap steel that appears here and there only adds season to the traditional gospel sounds that are present in abundance here.

Overall, a disc that will find favor on both sides of the thin line between Saturday night and Sunday morning.

*Mark Smith*





## TOMMY CASTRO PRESENTS THE LEGENDARY RHYTHM & BLUES REVUE ALLIGATOR

That the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise has become an iconic event is a foregone. That its attendant Revue, available also on dry land, is a continuously rejuvenated gem is well evidenced here. And this collection of highly charged performances is nothing if not a freshly served feast of tasty guitar. Revue chief Castro's own formidable guitar presence is flanked by potent performances by Michael Burks and Joe Louis Walker. But stealing this show, perhaps, is Debbie Davies' exquisitely built lead chorus on the slow burner "All I Found Is You".

Woman power is further represented by Janiva Magness' stylish take on James Brown's "Think" and the trio Trampled Under Foot, fronted by bassist/vocalist Daniele Schneelen. Grabbing the gold in this event is likely balladeer Sista Monica Parker's focused fire on her own "Never Say Never".

Castro's predicatably pyrotechnical work includes his cover of Bob Dylan's "Gotta Serve Somebody" and one of his best originals, "Painkiller". Head Nightcat Rick Estrin brings "Next Ex-Wife" to the party and soulster Theodis Ealey works scene-stealing magic of his own with "This Time I Know". A thoroughly entertaining set with no let-up.

Duane Verh



## CHRIS BYARS OCTET Lucky Strikes Again: The Chris Byars Octet Plays the Music of Lucky Thompson STEEPLECHASE

Saxophonist Chris Byars' Octet pays tribute to saxophonist/composer/arranger Eli "Lucky" Thompson

son (b. 1924; d. 2005) with this 13-tune set of tunes mostly by Thompson.

Byars plays tenor and soprano saxes and is joined by trumpeter Scott Wendholt, trombonist John Mosca, alto saxophonist Zaid Nasser, baritone saxophonist Mark Lopeman, pianist Sacha Perry, bassist Ari Roland, and drummer Stefan Schatz. Formed in 1999, this polished group has a smart sound without blasting.

Containing an array of swingers, boppers and ballads, the disc features Thompson compositions written in the 1960s such as "Munsoon," "Old Reliable," "Passionately Yours," "Another Whirl," "Two Steps Out," and others, as well as Lopeman's energetic original, "Tiptop," and a tidily swinging Byars composition, "Minik Koosh," which means "little bird" in Turkish.

Byars was born in New York City into a musical family. In his teens, he switched his focus to jazz after performing with Lincoln Center opera companies. No printed copies of Thompson's music existed, but Byars found a 1961 radio broadcast that featured some of the tunes in this set. Byars studied the recording and transcribed each part, later playing the original recordings for his musicians. Weeks of rehearsal followed. Two nights before their recording session, they were to perform in New York City but 16 inches of snow in New York City cancelled the performance. Well-rehearsed anyway, they went into the studio in February 2010.

As the Village Vanguard Orchestra has spread



the sound of Thad Jones and Mingus Dynasty has heralded works by Charles Mingus, Byars is bringing Lucky Thompson to light. This is an enjoyable listen and you'll agree with Byars who accurately sums it up saying, "It's the best thing I've done to date."

*Nancy Ann Lee*



## JOHNNIE TAYLOR

**Taylored in Silk**  
STAX

One of the latest of the Stax Remasters coming out from Concord, who currently owns the Stax Catalog, is a reissue of Johnnie Taylor's "Taylored in Silk." The eight tunes on the original 1973 album have been supplemented by six additional tracks. Taylor already had several hits and albums on Stax before Don Davis joined the label from Detroit where he helped give a different twist than the more strictly Memphis sound of Taylor's earlier recordings that often were anchored by Booker T. and the MGs. Bill Dahl provides the historic overview in the annotation to the booklet.

Davis' use of strings add a definite urbane sheen to selections like the remake of Little Willie John's "Talk To Me," as well as revisiting Mel & Tim's "Starting All Over Again." One of the centerpieces for this album was the Sir Mack Rice gem, "Cheaper to Keep Her," with its infectious bass line and the streetwise cynicism of a lifetime of alimony.

Another gem is Davis' ballad "We're Getting Careless With Our Love," which, along with the beautiful "I Believe In You," displays why Taylor was getting past being known as a blues belter (although a great one) and becoming "The Soul Philosopher." A lush arrangement supports Taylor's wonderful reading of "This Bitter Earth," known from Dinah Washington's recording.

The bonus tracks include "Hijackin' Love," with its insistent groove; "Standing in For Jody," another installment in the "Jody" saga; "Shackin' Up," a funky groove underlying its straightforward, unapologetic lyric and the bluesy two-part "Doing My Own Thing" with Eddie Hinton and the Muscles Shoals Jimmy Johnson sharing the guitar. This is pretty strong stuff in addition to the original recording. Taylor was one of the great soul and blues singers, which this remastered reissue makes that clear.

*Ron Weinstock*



## LEE KONITZ / BRAD MEHLDAU CHARLIE HADEN / PAUL MOTIAN

**Live At Birdland**  
ECM

These tracks, recorded over a one-week gig in December 2009, document what makes jazz the unique experience that it is. With no prior rehearsal, three giants of the form plus a formidable contemporary voice engaged in creative spontaneity of a very high order, fashioning immediate statements from a song list of standards and jazz classics.

While the "set" was assembled from two evenings performances, a sense of rapport appears to build from each track to the next. On the first two tracks "Lover Man" and "Lullaby Of Birdland" alto saxophone icon Konitz seems to focus primarily on setting pianist Mehldau up for his broad, polyharmonic stretches that are the centerpieces of these versions. By the third track, Miles Davis' "Solar", however, their dialog is in full mutual bloom, each offering the other new options with every statement. It is a rapport that thrives through the remainder of the disc. Haden and Motian, longtime rhythm section for Keith Jarrett, share the creative space with matching intuition. Motian's duo with Konitz sets up an expansive groove on the set closer, Sonny Rollins' "Oleo", launching Mehldau and Haden into unexpected regions. But this is what jazz, at its creative best, is all about.

*Duane Verh*



## ELVIN BISHOP

**Raisin' Hell Revue**  
DELTA GROOVE PRODUCTIONS

As part of participating on the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise, Elvin Bishop, led the Raisin' Hell Revue. This writer suspects this was modeled on the



Legendary Rhythm and Blues Revue that Tommy Castro fronted and featured several artists in addition to Castro and enabled greater exposure for some of what were perhaps lesser known acts to the Blues Cruisers. Delta Groove has just issued "Elvin Bishop's Raisin' Hell Revue" from performances on the Cruise.

In addition to Bishop, the performances on this showcase vocalist Finis Tasby/ vocalist and harp player, John Nemeth/saxophonist and vocalist, Terry Hanck/ guitarist kid Andersen, and Bishop's fine band that included Ruth Davies (some may remember from Charles Brown's Band) on bass, drummer Bobby Cochran and the varied keyboards of Steve Willis.

Thirteen tunes with almost an hour of music opens with a good-natured Bishop take on Lazy Bill Lucas' "Callin' All Cows," with hot guitar and accordion from Willis followed by the gravelly vocals of Tasby on B.B. King's "Whole Lotta Lovin'" with Bishop and Anderson blazing away.

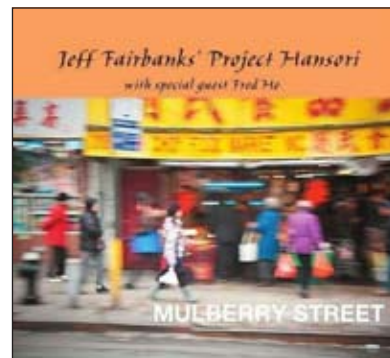
Nemeth takes the vocal mike as Bishop reprises his big pop hit, "Fooled Around And Fell In Love." He sings wonderfully and Bishop blasts away. "What the Hell Is Goin' On" has Bishop spin a topical lyric to a Funky Chicago Blues groove, while Nemeth revives Nappy Brown's "Night Time Is the Right Time," based on Ray Charles recording, with Nemeth playing harp as well as singing. It is followed by Tasby, who reworks Jimmy Reed's "Down in Virginia."

I assume it is Hanck that handles the fine vocal on "Cryin' Fool," a terrific New Orleans -Swamp Pop styled number with some nice guitar that evokes Robert Ward and Lonnie Mack along with some crying slide. There is some choice tenor sax soloing (along with I guess his vocal) from Hanck on the rendition of "River's Invitation" included here. Bishop does a nice rendition of Albert Collins' "Dyin' Flu," while recalling the late Master of Telecaster. Hank Ballard's rocking "Tore Up Over You" is revived with a terrific Nemeth vocal while Tasby takes us home with "It Hurts Me Too."

Bishop leads everybody on the closing "Bye Bye Baby," that concludes a most entertaining revue of blues and rhythm songs.

The material does include some familiar songs but mostly some rarely performed songs, the level of the performances is high, and the recording quality is fine. Recommended.

Ron Weinstock



## JEFF FAIRBANKS PROJECT HANSORI

### Mulberry Street

#### BROOKLYN JAZZ UNDERGROUND RECORDS

Trombonist and composer Jeff Fairbanks was inspired by the convergence of cultures in New York City, especially around Mulberry Street where Little Italy intersects with Chinatown. He notes that in the south end of this street, some "Chinese-run funeral parlors, while conducting Buddhist ceremonies, maintain the Western brass band tradition established by their previous Italian operators. As a player in the brass band, my interest was caught by this unique and unlikely blend of cultures." It is this blending of Asian (Chinese and Korean) and Western musical traditions that is the heart of the Fairbanks' Project Hansori, a big band that explores his efforts at a musical fusion. "Han-



## LIVE BLUES ON THE HIGH SEAS

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sori" is Korean for "one sound," and Fairbanks' ensemble attempts to bring distinct parts together in an original way on an new BJU Records release "Mulberry Street."

With his band is a special guest, Fred Ho on baritone sax, but the players are unfamiliar to these ears.

The opening selection is one of two he did not compose, "San Ma Da" by Jae-Hoon Park, is a Korean church hymn about the fall harvest, and Fairbanks makes an impressive solo statement followed by Remy Le Bouef's slippery soprano and Linda Oh's impressive bass. Fairbanks' sophisticated arrangements add atmosphere and texture for the lively performance. "Woodside Story" opens with Chinese flavor in the reeds (flute and clarinet) along with Chinese percussion before becoming a spirited performance incorporating the Chinese musical figures within the swinging big band performance with John Yao buzzing on trombone and Michael Webster on tenor sax constructing a marvelous solo.

"Hoping For Hope" is based on a certain rhythmic pattern in Korean Samulnori ("four objects sound") music with Fairbanks stating the theme first against Francesca Han's piano effectively making use of repetition, with the scoring of mostly clarinets against the brass very appealing here and guitarist Sebastian Noelle effectively working off the percussive center of this number with the horns building into a rhythmic frenzy.

"Han Oh Baek Nyeon/ 500 Years" is a quartet rendition of an old Korean folk song with Fairbanks trombone along with RaMi Selo on gayageum, Heun Choi Fairbanks on cello and Yosun Yoo on percussion with the cello expressing a somber tone reinforced by Jeff Fairbanks trombone. "Bi Bim Bop" is built on the spoken rhythm of the title and a 12-tone row that is constantly twisted and recycled to considerable effect.

The core of this disc is the marvelous "Mulberry Street Suite," which, as noted, was inspired by the brass bands at Chinese-run funeral parlors. At certain funerals, both Western and traditional Chinese bands perform "often playing songs against each other in a tradition of using music to scare away evil spirits." The suite is Fairbanks attempt to create "an abstract impressionism of these experiences." "Part 1: Entrance and Funeral March" is solemnly played as Han's piano rings the tempo of a brass band entering the home and playing a dirge with a brief soprano sax interlude with Jason Wiseman trumpet solo exploiting the middle range. "Part 11: Scaring Away Evil Spirits with Joyful Sounds" has a contrasting mood after the initial incorporation of Chinese folkloric sounds and percussion as well as scoring soprano saxophones to suggest the oboe-like suona. Fred Ho takes a short baritone sax solo at the beginning while Erica Van Kleist takes a lengthier solo interlude on alto sax that is rooted in the lower register of the instrument followed by mesmerizing interplay between the various band sections.

"Part III: Releasing Grief" is a portrayal of moments in a Chinese funeral of releasing all their grief. Fred Ho enters unaccompanied before the full band comes in playing both Buddhist and Christian hymns with Ho tak-

ing a lengthy solo reaching deep down as well as adding squeaks and squalls set against Fairbanks somewhat dramatic scoring. "Part IV: The Send-off," with a trombone solo by Mark Miller at the beginning, evokes the part of a funeral where the casket is brought outside as several bands play simultaneously. To achieve this effect the band is split into five separate ensembles near the end playing separate melodies. It serves as a dazzling coda, not simply to the suite, but the album.

The composition, "Mulberry Street" was commissioned by the BMI Foundation Charlie Parker Composition Prize with other grant support for the project. With "Mulberry Street", the Jeff Fairbanks Hansori Project has produced a fresh and stellar big band recording that has brought together various musical traditions for a fresh and dazzling musical experience that is likely to be among this listener's best of 2011. Highly recommended.

**Ron Weinstock**



## JEFF GOLUB

### The Three Kings ENTERTAINMENT ONE MUSIC

What better expression of confidence in your blues band than to drop a disc loaded with well-traveled tunes, associated with blues royalty, virtually daring someone out there to find a fault?

Former Rod Stewart guitarist Golub, New Orleans pianist/vocalist Butler and company did just that and the act is justified by the freshness and energy they bring to this bash.

*The Three Kings*, a tribute to genre icons B.B., Albert and Freddie, is a set seemingly unconcerned with re-creation. Golub's approach to leads and solos on tracks such as "Born Under A Bad Sign" and "Every Day I Have The Blues" is conspicuously devoid of imitation, allowing his own quite respectable, contemporary blues voice to be heard.

The show-stealer here is Butler, a solid vocal stylist, who, like Golub takes his own distinctive stab at these classics. Strong tracks for him include "Have You Ever Loved A Woman" and "Let The Good Times Roll". His fiery, inventive piano chorus is a high point of the set closer, "The Thrill Is Gone".

In a genre where sets of pedestrian originals are all too common these days, the vitality of *The Three Kings* is refreshing.

**Duane Verh**