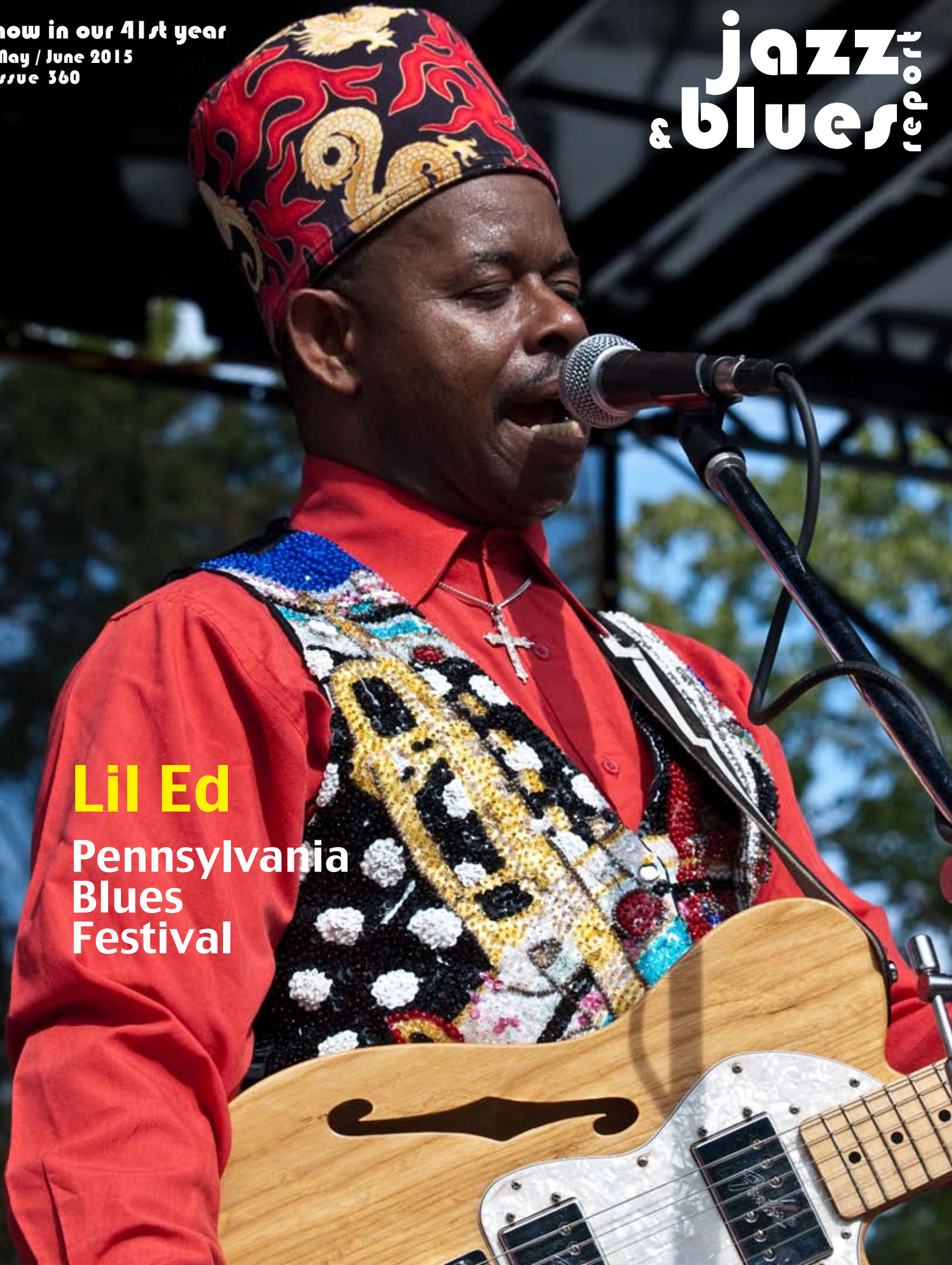


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May / June 2015
Issue 360

jazz
& blues report

Lil Ed

**Pennsylvania
Blues
Festival**



Jazz & Blues report

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

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Lil' Ed and Shemekia Copeland Headline 24th Pennsylvania Blues Festival

By Ron Weinstock



Lil' Ed

Celebrating 24 years of Blues in the Poconos, the Pennsylvania Blues Festival takes place at Split Rock Resort on Friday July 24 through Sunday July 26. It moves to Split Rock in Lake Harmony, Pennsylvania after 4 years at the Blue Mountain Resort. The new location is close to the original Festival location on Big Boulder Mountain. "The Blues Lovers Blues Festival," as it calls itself, will be headlined by Shemekia Copeland on Saturday the 25th and Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials on Sunday the 26th. There will be zydeco from Dwayne Dopsie and the Zydeco Hell-raisers as well as gospel from the Highway QCs, and such notable performers as Walter 'Wolfman' Washington, John Nemeth and Alvin 'Youngblood' Hart.

Friday night, June 24, the Festival opens with an Indoor Showcase with Mikey Junior's Blues Review, featuring the fine harmonica player and vocalist. It takes place inside the Galleria at Split Rock.

Saturday June 25, the Festival Main Stage opens with Dwayne Dopsie and the Zydeco Hell-raisers. One of the sons of zydeco legend Rockin' Dopsie. Dwayne Dopsie's hard-driving and rocking music is also heavily influenced by Clifton Chenier, and similarly he is marvelous blues singer and player as well as traditional zydeco artist who will also do a Hendrix-influenced rendition of "Hey Joe." Besides opening the main stage he will close the Tent Stage that night. Alligator Recording Artist Selwyn Birchwood, winner of the International Blues Challenge a couple years back, brings his

exuberant blues with his tight band, solid vocals and guitar, including lap steel (he was mentored by Sonny Rhodes). Severn Records artist Sugar Ray & The Blue-Tones follows and the group led by Ray Norcia has been laying down Chicago styled blues for nearly 40 years (This writer saw them in 1978 in New York backing J.B. Hutto. Norcia a marvelous singer, reminiscent of Junior Parker, and he had a stint fronting Roomful of Blues) and fine harpist is backed by Monster Mike Welch on guitar, Anthony Geraci on keyboards, Michael 'Mudcat' Ward on bass and Neil Gouvin on drums. New Orleans Icon, Walter 'Wolfman' Washington and the Roadmasters is up next on the Main Stage bringing their mix of blues, soul and funk. Closing the Main stage will be Shemekia Copeland who recently re-signed with Alligator Records bringing her tight band and her powerful vocals on a mix of blues and blues-rooted material that underscores why she has been named Koko Taylor's successor as "Queen of The Blues."

In addition to the Main Stage, others acts will be presented in the Tent Stage. Electro-Fi Recording Artist Harmonica Shah & Carlton Washington will open the tent stage and play a second set later. Also in the tent performing two sets is John Mooney. Mooney mixes Delta Blues with the New Orleans second-line. Growing up in Rochester NY, Mooney was mentored by legendary Son House and his most recent recording is a tribute to the Delta Blues Icon. Dwayne Dopsie closes out the tent Stage after Mooney's second set. Later Saturday evening, Bobby Kyle will lead a Tribute to Johnny Copeland in the Galleria Governor's Ballroom.

Blues on Sunday July 26 starts with a Blues Brunch in the Governor's Ballroom featuring Slam Allen, a dynamic singer and guitarist who spent several years fronting James Cotton's Band. Sunday the Main Stage opens with the legendary gospel group, The Highway QCs. This Gospel Quartet was sort of the junior Soul Stirrers and members years ago included Sam Cooke, Johnny Taylor and Lou Rawls. Up next on the main stage is Vanesse Thomas, who is the terrific blues and rhythm singing daughter of Rufus Thomas. Victor Wainright and the Wild Roots bring this rocking keyboard wizard to the main stage and he is followed by the terrific soul-blues Blues Music Award winning vocalist John Nemeth. Closing the Main stage will be Alligator recording artists, Lil Ed & the Blues Imperials, who will bring their exuberant house rocking slide-guitar blues.

Sunday, the Tent Stage will have performances from Alvin 'Youngblood' Hart, The Peterson Brothers and Mikey Junior. Alvin 'Youngblood' Hart emerged over two decades ago laying down traditional Delta and Texas blues which has expanded to include a wide range of material, making him a 21st Cen-



Shemekia Copeland

tury songster in the manner of a Leadbelly. He has been called a musical love child of Howlin' Wolf and Link Wray. The Peterson Brothers are youthful blues prodigies that show that blues can still inspire youth and have shared stages with Pinetop Perkins, Willie Smith, Michael Burks and Marcia Ball. Their website notes they are recording a debut album. They and Hart will play two sets before Mikey Junior closes the Tent Stage.

Once again, the festival sports a superb line-up of blues. Split Rock offers lodging as well as serves as the Festival site. There are a number of other accommodations available near the Festival site. Information on tickets and lodging can be accessed at the Festival's website, <http://www.pennsylvaniabluesfestival.com/>.

Photos of Lil' Ed and Shemekia Copeland by Ron Weinstock

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11th DC Jazz Festival Brings Jazz Throughout Nation's Capital in June

By Ron Weinstock

The 11th DC Jazz Festival hits stages throughout Washington DC from June 10 through June 16 featuring performances by a wide variety of national and local jazz acts including Jack DeJohnette Trio with Matthew Garrison and Ravi Coltrane; Femi Kuti & Positive Force; Esperanza Spalding presents Emily's D+Evolution; The Cookers, Snarky Puppy; Pepe Gonzalez Afro-Cuban/Latin Jazz Ensemble; Stanton Moore Trio; Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra (Special Guest Oliver Lake); Greg Hatza's Organ Blues Band: The Bad Plus Joshua Redman; Soul Rebels, Sharón Clark; Gretchen Parlato/Lionel Loueke Duo; Paquito D'Rivera with special guest Edmar Castañeda; John Scofield Überjam Band featuring Andy Hess, Avi Bortnick & Tony Mason; and Sweet Lu Olutosin. A spotlight of this year's festival will be the Billy Strayhorn Centennial.

Originally known as the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival and changing its name to DC several years ago, the festival was started by Charles Fishman, who stepped down this year as Festival Artistic Director. Fishman, who previously served as Dizzy Gillespie's manager, is being honored by the Jazz Journalists Association as a "Jazz Hero" based on his various activities promoting jazz including starting the Festival. His replacement as Artistic Director is well-known Jazz writer and promoter Willard Jenkins who has served in many capacities within the arts, media and academic industries as a consultant, arts administrator, artistic director, writer, journalist, broadcaster, educator and oral historian. Jenkins has served as artistic director of the Tri-C JazzFest (Cleveland), the Beantown Jazz Festival (Boston), Tribeca Performing Arts Center (New York), and as artistic consultant to the Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival (Maryland), 651Arts (Brooklyn), Harlem Stage/Aaron Davis Hall (New York) and the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.). He also collaborated with Randy Weston on Weston's



Esperanza Spalding

autobiography, "African Rhythms." Jenkins was also a contributing writer to this publication, *Jazz & Blues Report*, when he lived in Cleveland during the 80s.

As noted the DC Jazz Festival takes place at a number of venues and stages. Prior to the actual Festival opening on June 10th, the Festival will hold two Jazz 'N

Families Fun Days at The Phillips Collection museum near Dupont Circle that presents a number of the DC area's finest acts including bassist Herman Burney Trio featuring Jazzin' at Sitar Students; Antonio Parker Quintet; and Allyn Johnson on June 6. Performers on Sunday June 7 include Halley Shoenberg Jazz Quartet, The Charles Rahmat Woods Quartet, Mark Meadows & Somethin' Good, and the Paul Carr Quintet. There will be a number of performances at the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage including Elijah Jamal Balbed Jo-Go Project on June 8, Sweet Lu Olutosin on June 10 and Siné Qua Non on June 13.

Once again The Hamilton Live in the Penn Quarter area (nor far from the White House) will host nightly jazz performances starting Wednesday June 10 with John Scofield Überjam Band featuring Andy Hess, Avi Bortnick & Tony Mason. Others performing include Paquito D'Rivera with special guest Edmar Castañeda on June 11, The Bad Plus Joshua Redman on June 12, Jack DeJohnette Trio featuring Ravi Coltrane & Matthew Garrison (The great drummer with the sons of John Coltrane and Coltrane' bassist Jimmy Garrison) on June 13, Stanton Moore Trio & Charlie Hunter Trio featuring Bobby Previte & Curtis Fowlkes on June 14, and Snarky Puppy on June 15 and 16.

Other major events include a return to Yards Park on the DC Waterfront. Friday Night, June 12 will be a concert by the Soul Rebels and DC's premiere jazz



Ravi Coltrane



Nicholas Payton

vocalist, Sharón Clark. I believe this evening is a free concert. Saturday June 13 will be a major ticketed concert featuring DC saxophonist Marshall Keys, Grammy Award Winner Esperanza Spalding presents Emily's D+Evolution, Common, and Femi Kuti & The Positive Force. Also on Sunday June 14, the All Star Hard Bop group, The Cookers, will perform at the 6th and I Synagogue near the Verizon Center.

Additionally there will be a number of events as part of the Festival's Jazz in the 'Hoods at such clubs as Bohemian Caverns and Twins Lounge and at Libraries, Galleries and schools throughout DC. Highlights at the Bohemian Caverns include Gretchen Parlato/Lionel Loueke Duo on Friday and Saturday evenings, June 11 and 12; and the Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra with special guest Oliver Lake on Monday June 15. Highlights of Twins Jazz will be Sasha Elliott on June 11, Michael Thomas on June 12 and Michael Thomas on June 13. Also Capital Bop presents three nights of shows at the Hecht's warehouse. Thursday, June 11 they present Trio of Trios: Gary Thomas Trio / Warren Wolf Trio / The Young Lions. Friday June 12 Capital Bop presents Thundercat and Sam Prather's Groove Orchestra and on Saturday June 13 they present AACM AT 50: Ernest

Khabeer Dawkins Orchestra/Nicole Mitchell-Tomeka Reid-Mike Reed/Organix Trio.

Other Jazz in the 'Hoods performances include the James King Duo at Tudor Place Historic House and Garden on June 10, Brad Linde's BIG OL' ENSEMBLE at the Atlas Performing Arts Center on June 11, Janelle Gill Ensemble: Exploring Strayhorn at the Francis A. Gregory Neighborhood Library on June 12, George V. Johnson Jr. at the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Gallery on June 12, Meet the Artist: NEA Jazz Master Jack DeJohnette at the NYU/DC Abramson Family Auditorium on June 13, Christylez Bacon: Strayhorn from a Hip-Hop Perspective at the Francis A. Gregory Neighborhood Library on June 13, Greg Hatza's Organ Blues Band: Blues-Strayhorn-Blues at the Uniontown Bar and Grill on June 13, Herman Burney/Reginald Cyntje: Sunday Morning Strayhorn Duet at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens on June 14, Reginald Cyntje Ensemble: Strayhorn, Caribbean Interpretations at the Honfleur Gallery on June 14, Meet the Artist: Billy Hart of The Cookers at Busboys & Poets, 5th & K on June 14, and Pepe Gonzalez Afro-Cuban/Latin Jazz Ensemble: Strayhorn Inspired Afro-Cuban Jazz at We Act Radio on June 14.

More acts and venues will be named as we get closer to the Festival. For more information, including purchasing tickets visit www.dcjazzfest. The Festival is on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/dcjazzfest?fref=ts>.

All photos by Ron Weinstock.



Paquito D'Rivera

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Blue Note

JAZZ FESTIVAL

JUNE 1 - 30, 2015 • NEW YORK

Blue Note Jazz Festival Celebrates Its 5th Anniversary

By Ron Weinstock

The Blue Note Jazz Festival celebrates its 5th year of bringing jazz and associated music to many clubs and theaters in New York City throughout the month of June. The Festival will feature a wide range of performers including vocal icon Natalie Cole, Blues titan Buddy Guy, special collaborations such as The Bad Plus Joshua Redman (performing music from their forthcoming project) and The Manhattan Transfer Meets Take 6, album release performances by the Robert Glasper Trio and bassist Avishai Cohen's Trio, a double bill featuring Meshell Ndegeocello & Roy Hargrove, acclaimed vocalists Darlene Love and Kathleen Battle (the latter produced by Jill Newman Productions), global-centric artists Buika, Bebel Gilberto, Abdullah Ibrahim, and Pedrito Martínez, and jazz/rock artists Al Di Meola and Ginger Baker, among others.

Established in 2011 to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Greenwich Village's Blue Note Jazz Club, the Blue Note Jazz Festival is presented by Blue Note Entertainment Group - which owns and operates the diverse venue lineup of Blue Note, B.B. King Blues Club & Grill, Highline Ballroom, Subrosa, and Lucille's Grill. The festival has grown into an annual 30-day event, emerging as the city's largest jazz festival, with each venue offering its own unique cultural contribution to the New York City music landscape. Also there will be special theater shows including performances by Natalie Cole, Manhattan Transfer Meets Take 6, and Buika at The Town Hall.

Subrosa is the Group's newest venue, an intimate 120-capacity Latin & World Music listening room located in New York City's Meatpacking District (63 Gansevoort St.). Its festival lineup will feature the Pedrito Martínez Group for five days throughout the month (who has an on-going monthly residency at the venue). Other notable headliners include Cuban pianist Alfredo Rodríguez and his trio, Fulaso, an 11-piece Latin soul group, and the Williamsburg Salsa Orchestra, among others to be



Roy Hargrove

announced.

This year's festival also coincides with the 15th Anniversary of B.B. King Blues Club. To celebrate this landmark anniversary, the Festival will present Buddy Guy on Thursday, June 11 with various special guests to be announced (the third and final night of his festi-



Ethan Iverson of The Bad Plus



Sam Charters 1929-2015

Sam Charters, whose “The Country Blues” was one of the first books devoted to blues as a musical genre, passed away in Sweden on March 19 at the age of 85. Born August 1, 1929 in Pittsburgh,

val engagement). B.B. King Blues Club and Highline Ballroom will present a wide range of performances, including rock artists/groups such as singer Gary U.S. Bonds, Johnny & The Asbury Jukes Group, keyboardist Al Kooper’s annual birthday show, roots/rock group The Subdudes, and psychedelic rock band Ozric Tentacles; guitarist/singer Robert Cray Band rounding out Blues programming.

Other jazz headliners at Blue Note Jazz Club include celebrated dancer Savion Glover; saxophonist David Murray, who will make his festival debut with a trio featuring Terri Lyne Carrington and Geri Allen, drum legend Roy Haynes and saxophonist Gato Barbieri, who continues his on-going monthly residency at the venue. Additional shows include harmonicist Grégoire Maret with special guest vocalist Lizz Wright and a surprise guest at Highline Ballroom.

Additional partner events include the 2015 Jazz Journalists Association Jazz Awards on June 16 at Blue Note Jazz Club, among others. In addition to Blue Note Entertainment Group properties, other festival venues include The Town Hall and Central Park SummerStage, among others. Festival co-presenters include Jill Newman Productions, Jazz Journalists Association, and JazzReach, among others.

Additional information including the most current public line-up and schedule, as well as information on tickets can be found at www.BlueNoteJazzFestival.com

Photos of Roy Hargrove and Ethan Iverson by Ron Weinstock.

Samuel Charters had already worked on books on Jazz in New Orleans and New York City when “The Country Blues” was published. It, along with Paul Oliver’s “The Meaning of the Blues” were the first books devoted to this working class African-American musical genre. It was the first of a number of books Charters wrote about blues music which included “Bluesmen” devoted to the early blues of Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana and Alabama; and “Sweet As the Showers of Rain,” which was devoted to the blues of the East Coast. The two books would later be published together as “The Blues Makers.” Other books devoted to the Blues that Charters authored include “The Poetry of the Blues,” “The Legacy of the Blues: A Glimpse Into the Art and the Lives of Twelve Great Bluesmen: An Informal Study” and “Walking a Blues Road: A Selection of Blues Writing, 1956-2004.”

Even prior to writing about music, Charters had started recording jazz, blues and other traditional music. In New Orleans he recorded the Eureka Brass Band for Folkways and in 1958 traveled to the Bahamas where he made the first recordings of the celebrated guitarist Joseph Spence. Accompanying the book “The Country Blues” on RBF, a Folkways related label that included reissues of recordings by Robert Johnson, Lonnie Johnson, Bukka White, Memphis Jug Band and others. Also for RBF was a reissue on Blind Willie Johnson that included interviews with Johnson’s widow and others that knew him along with reissues of rare 78s.

He also recorded a number of early Memphis blues singers as well as Lightnin’ Hopkins and Pink Anderson. The latter he recorded for the Prestige Bluesville imprint and in the mid-sixties he worked with Vanguard Records for which he produced the classic “Chicago The Blues Today!” albums along with classic recordings by Junior Wells, Buddy Guy, James Cotton Charlie Musselwhite and psychedelic rockers, Country Joe & the Fish (he produced their first four albums). Charters also produced recordings for the Swedish Sonet label including the series “The Legacy of the Blues.”

He moved to Sweden in the 1970s although maintaining a home in Connecticut as well and continued to write about jazz, blues and other musics for the rest of his of his life. “The Country Blues” was found to be a classic of blues literature for the Blues Hall of Fame in 1991. Sam Charters led a rich life and left a rich legacy.
Ron Weinstock

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25th ANNUAL SIMI VALLEY CAJUN & BLUES MUSIC FESTIVAL MAY 23-24

Los Angeles area's largest Cajun, Zydeco, Blues and Roots music festival

SIMI VALLEY, Calif. — The 26th annual Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival will rock once again at Memorial Day weekend, Saturday and Sunday, May 23 and 24, at Rancho Santa Susanna Community Park, 5005 Los Angeles Ave., in Simi Valley. The event features two full stages for each of its musical genres. Music will proceed non-stop each day from 12 noon until 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults (13 and over) and children 12 and younger are free. Discount single day tickets of \$20 and two-day passes for \$35 are available only online at <http://www.simicajun.org>. Parking is ample and free. Fast-moving California Hwy. 118 (Ronald Reagan Freeway) can be taken to the Stearns Street exit; the festival is four blocks south.

The blues stage features classic blues-rock (Spencer Davis Group, Big Brother & the Holding Company, Canned Heat) with a side trip into swing (Big Bad Voodoo Daddy), plus the first-ever West Coast appearance of 82-year-old Mississippi bluesman Leo "Bud" Welch. West Coast legends Candye Kane and Guitar Shorty return to the blues stage, while "super group" Royal Southern Brotherhood (featuring Cyril Neville, Devon Allman and Mike Zito) make their Southern California festival debut.

Dwayne Dopsie & the Zydeco Hellraisers become the first band to cross over from the Cajun/Zydeco stage to the blues stage. Two-time Grammy winners Terrance Simien & His Zydeco Experience make their Simi Valley debut, as do Grammy-nominated Arhoolie recording artists The Magnolia Sisters. Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic, Ruben Moreno, Curley Taylor and Jeffrey Broussard round out the lineup, making the Cajun/Zydeco Stage the pre-eminent Southern California showcase for Louisiana-inflected music.

The annual Mardi Gras Parade will take place both days at 4 p.m.

About a few of the performers:

- **Candye Kane**, according to B.B. King, "has that big, brassy voice that has authority and sass; the kind of thing men like because it's seductive and women like because it's powerful." Candye cut her musical teeth in the early '80s onstage with Hollywood musicians and friends like Social Distortion, Dwight Yoakam, Dave Alvin, The Blasters, X, Fear and Los Lobos to name just a few. Her fans are a

mixture of true outsiders: bikers, blues fans, punk rockers, drag queens, big girls, burlesque dancers, rockabilly and swing dancers, gray-haired hippies, and everyday folk of all ages. Her live shows are the stuff of legend — she belts, growls, shouts, croons and moans from a lifetime of suffering and overcoming obstacles.

- **Guitar Shorty**, a.k.a. David Kearney, was born in Houston in 1939, raised in Kissimmee, Fla., and now makes his home in Los Angeles. Over the years he's played behind T-Bone Walker, Willie Dixon, Guitar Slim, Big Joe Turner, Little Richard, Sam Cooke and fellow Simi Valley Festival performer Swamp Dogg. His recent albums on Evidence and Alligator albums attest to the high energy level of this survivor of blues' classic era. Texas Music Magazine writer John Morthland summed things up perfectly: "Axebuster extraordinaire Guitar Shorty is an old-school guitar showman. He plays with technique and flash, without ever sacrificing the passion. He's a blues-rock hero."

- **Canned Heat** was founded by blues historians and record collectors Alan "Blind Owl" Wilson and Bob "The Bear" Hite. The band gained international attention and secured its legacy with performances at the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival (along with Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and the Who) and the headlining slot at the original Woodstock Festival. Canned Heat's unique blend of modern electric blues, rock and boogie has earned them a loyal following and influenced many aspiring guitarists and bands during the past 40 years. Their hits "On the Road Again," "Let's Work Together" and "Going up the Country" became rock anthems throughout the world with the last being adopted as the unofficial theme song for the film Woodstock and the "Woodstock Generation." More than 40 years later and with 36 albums to its credit, Canned Heat is still going strong, anchored throughout by the steady hand of drummer/band leader Adolfo "Fito" de la Parra (a member since 1967). Since 2009, the lineup has Fito on drums, Greg Kage on bass and vocals, Barry Levenson on lead guitar, and Dale Spalding on guitar, harmonica and lead vocals.

- **Royal Southern Brotherhood** - Before they even hit a chord, this band has your attention. In the South, where music is religion, two rock 'n' roll bloodlines tower above all

others. In saloon bars from Mississippi to Maryland, mere mention of the Allman and Neville Brothers casts a magic spell. With a lineup that includes both Cyril Neville and Devon Allman, Royal Southern Brotherhood come pre-loaded with expectations. The family tree might be auspicious, but the new band trades on talent, not genealogy. Let's rewind to the summer of 2010 and the stifling heat of New Orleans and a pivotal meeting between Cyril, Devon and Mike Zito. Talk turned to forming a new breed of blues-rock band, and when jams began at a secluded studio in the city's Garden District, the fizzing chemistry was too strong to deny. Their debut album was produced by the legendary Jim Gaines in Louisiana. The rest is history as the band is set to release their third studio album, *Don't Look Back: The Muscle Shoals Sessions*, on May 26.

• **Spencer Davis Group:** Davis, born in Wales, created the famed Spencer Davis Group in 1963, helping to bring British rock 'n' roll to the rest of the world. Among nearly 20 Top 10 hit songs are "Gimme Some Lovin'," "Somebody Help Me," "I'm a Man" and "Keep on Running." The popularity of these tunes lives on as Davis continues to tour internationally. His latest album is titled *So Far* on Fuel Records.

• **Big Brother & the Holding Company** first performed in the Haight Ashbury, San Francisco, in 1965. After their appearance at The Monterey Pop Festival in 1967, lead singer Janis Joplin quickly became a phenomenon, and Big Brother made a real contribution to Janis' rise to international fame. Big Brother's classic 1968 album *Cheap Thrills* charted at #1 for eight weeks. After Joplin left the band in 1968, Big Brother continued to perform with a new female vocalist before disbanding in 1972. Having reformed with the original four members in 1987, they have performed worldwide and throughout the United States. In 2007 Big Brother joined the Summer of Love 40th Anniversary Tour with Jefferson Starship, Quicksilver Messenger Service, David & Linda LaFlamme (*It's a Beautiful Day*) and the Grateful Dead's Tom Constantine. Big Brother carries on today with original members Peter Albin and Dave Getz, with Tom Finch and Tommy Odette playing outstanding guitar. Darby Gould (Jefferson Starship) fronts the band, singing all of the classic material made famous by Janis Joplin and Big Brother & the Holding Company.

• **Dwayne Dopsie & the Zydeco Hellraisers** have been rated one of the "Top 100 Reasons to Visit Louisiana." Dwayne (Dopsie) Rubin hails from one of the most influential Zydeco families in the world. Although inspired by tradition, he has developed his own high-energy style that blazes a new path for 21st century Zydeco music. Dopsie and the Hellraisers have played throughout the world since Dwayne debuted the band at age 19. First appearing at the Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Music Festival in 2014, Dopsie's set was such a big hit that he'll return in 2015 and will on both the Cajun/Zydeco and blues stages.

• **Terrance Simien** has been performing Zydeco music for more than 30 years, and is a two-time Grammy winner and eighth generation Louisiana Creole. Leading his Zydeco Experience band, Simien has become one of the most respected and accomplished artists in American

roots music today. Last year marked their 28th consecutive appearance at the New Orleans Jazz Festival, an event that is the gold standard for showcasing and celebrating all Louisiana music traditions.

• **Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic:** Thierry's French Creole heritage is deeply rooted in Louisiana although he was born and reared in Northern California. Thierry and Zydeco Magic won the West Coast Blues Hall of Fame award for Best Zydeco Group in 2008. The 33-year-old is a multi-dimensional musician who has a finely honed ability to merge traditional Zydeco music with hip-hop, blues, jazz and rock. Building from his love and respect for traditional Zydeco, his original music is a blend of old and new.

• **The Magnolia Sisters** are a band of women who can play the whole gamut of musical styles from southwest Louisiana: Cajun, Creole, dancehall favorites, and front porch ballads. They each switch from one instrument to another during their shows. They are also an ideal band for seated concerts because, in addition to their vast dancehall repertoire, they tell stories, sing rich harmonies on a cappella ballads, and play string band numbers from the 1930s. Much of the Magnolia Sisters' music has been gleaned from long-buried Cajun music jewels. Their most recent album, *Stripped Down* on Arhoolie Records, was nominated for a Grammy in 2010.

• **Curley Taylor & Zydeco Trouble:** Curley Taylor's bluesy, soulful vocals and the band's hard driving Zydeco beat blend to create high-energy dance music for all audiences. Curley's music is true to its roots in Zydeco and blues, but contemporary enough to appeal to a broad range of music lovers. When at home in Louisiana, Curley can be found in the studio working on his latest album, or playing in one of the local clubs around the Lafayette/Opelousas area to the delight of his hometown fans.

• **Jeffrey Broussard & the Creole Cowboys:** One of the most influential accordionists and vocalists in modern Zydeco music, Jeffrey Broussard continues to be one of the genre's most dynamic performers. He began his career with traditional Creole Zydeco music playing drums in his father's band, Delton Broussard & the Lawtell Playboys, then moved on to develop the nouveau Zydeco sound in Zydeco Force, and now returns to the more traditional Zydeco sound with his own band, Jeffrey Broussard and the Creole Cowboys.

The festival boasts dozens of food booths featuring a variety of fare: authentic Cajun creations and Southern BBQ as well as multi-cultural cuisine. More than 100 craft booths and retailers will be scattered throughout the festival grounds.

Tickets may be obtained online at <http://www.simicajun.org/2015/tickets.html>

Support of the not-for-profit Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Music Festival has benefited dozens of local community, national and international organizations, a list of which may be found at <http://www.simicajun.org/2014/whobenefits.html>.

Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival web site: <http://www.simicajun.org>

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

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

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

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



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

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

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can

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



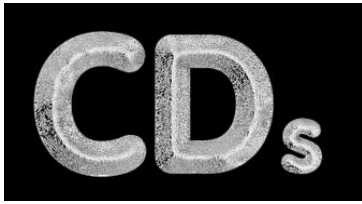
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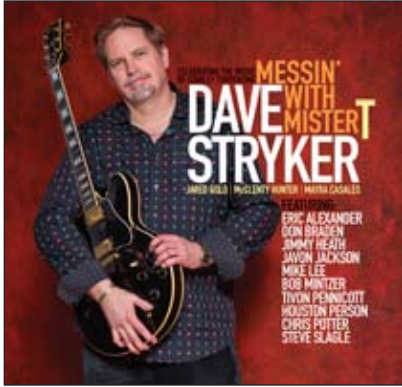


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DAVE STRYKER
Messin' With Mister T
STRIKEZONE

Guitarist Dave Stryker toured over a decade with the late Stanley Turrentine, and he pays tribute to the great tenor saxophonist on a new release “Messin’ With Mister T” (Strikeszone).

Stryker and his organ trio of Jared Gold-Hammond B3 organ and McClenty Hunter-drum are featured along with percussionist Mayra Casales on six of the ten tracks. Each of the songs here features a different saxophonist. These are Houston Person, Mike Lee, Don Braden, Jimmy Heath, Chris Potter, Bob Mintzer, Eric Alexander, Javon Jackson, Steve Slagle and Tivon Pennicott. While featuring these different players, Stryker himself displays his own soulful and swinging style.

Turrentine’s influence on Dave was strong in showing him the importance of establishing his own sound and to “communicate to people. Stanley had an audience, and he never left them behind.” His trio is scintillating on its own, but to listen to Houston Person on the opening Turrentine composition “La Place Street,” followed by some marvelous playing from Mike Lee on Michel Legrand’s “Pieces of Dreams” with its echoes of “Who Can I Turn To.” Gold is marvelous on the B-3 here.

Lovely unaccompanied guitar precedes Jimmy Heath’s take on Duke Ellington’s “In A Sentimental Mood,” which has become associated with Heath’s friend, John Coltrane. His lyrical, and personal interpretation has much warmth to it, with Stryker adding his own voice to complement Heath. Chris Potter is heard on Coltrane’s “Impressions” with Stryker’s rendition perhaps showing a touch of Wes Montgomery’s recordings of this number. Potter’s fervent playing with him is quite striking. The tempo slows towards the end of

this performance with Potter and Stryker trading licks while quoting “Wade in the Water” at the end.

Don Braden is featured on Marvin Gaye’s “Don’t Mess With Mister T,” while Bob Mintzer is heard on Freddie Hubbard’s funky “Gibraltar” and Eric Alexander handles the rhythms of Milton Nascimento’s “Salt Song,” which also benefits from percussionist Casales. One of Turrentine’s best known compositions, “Sugar,” is a feature for Javon Jackson’s fluid and relaxed horn. Steve Slagle’s tenor is present on Stryker’s “Side Steppin’,” which strikes this listener as a bit more animated than the original on 1995’s “T-Time” recording. Tivon Pennicott is featured on Turrentine’s “Let it Go,” which concludes this salute to Turrentine in a greasy fashion.

“Messin’ With Mister T” captures his contemporaries and some inspired by him who show their admiration for him on the wonderful music heard here.

Ron Weinstock



JACKIE PAYNE
I Saw the Blues
BLUE DOT RECORDS

It has been too long since most of us have heard from Jackie Payne, which is remedied by a new CD on Blue Dot Records titled “I Saw The Blues.”

Payne first came into prominence with a recording on Jetstream, which led to his joining the Stax Revue. Moving to the West Coast he was featured with Johnny Otis for 15 years. Then he recorded for JSP before starting a partnership with Steve Edmondson, which led to three more terrific recordings and a Blues Music Award for Soul Blues Album of the year.

Now, nearly a decade later, he returns with this soul blues gem recorded and mixed by Kid Andersen, who also plays as part of backing group that includes guitarist Anthony Paule, keyboardists Lorenzo Farrell and Bob Welsh, harmonica player Aki Kumar, trombonist Ed Early, trumpeter Jeff Lewis, and tenor saxophonists Frankie Ramos, Jack Sanford and Eric Spaulding.

Payne contributed six originals for a terrific urban blues recording with a heavy dose of Texas and Muscle Shoals in its feel. Think about those terrific recordings Payne made with Steve Edmondson, those by Frankie Lee or the stunning Frank Bey-Anthony Paule recordings. Payne was in terrific voice when he made these sides, showing little evidence of having aged since he

first recorded decades ago. The brassy backing and Welsh's piano sets the mood for Payne's delivery on "Back To Normal," a moody number from J Barnett, C. Whitsett and Dan Penn as he displays his power and vocal dynamics and Andersen takes a crisp solo break. The title song by Payne has autobiographical references with Payne singing about being born in Georgia, and in New Orleans saw the blues again. Farrell and Kumar take solo breaks here. Payne's woman acts real strange on "Full Moon Blues, a Payne-Paule original with Paule adding slide guitar along with Kumar's harmonica to provide a down home feel.

"When the Blues Comes Knockin'" is a Texas to West Coast shuffle with Andersen taking the guitar lead as Payne warns listeners that the blues will try to persuade you he is your best friend. Billy Ray Charles' "Wife, Woman, Hootchie" is a terrific Malaco styled blues that sounds like it was recorded in Muscle Shoals, while "Kicking back With the Blues" has a laid back groove with Paule on the guitar lead while Early's trombone is spotlighted on a superb performance. "Six Million Dollar Man" is a tough blues with Payne shouting that he has love, more than one can stand, and "if love was money, I would be a Six Million Dollar Man." I would not be surprised to see this number covered by other singers, but they would have to go far to come close to Payne's original. "Rock Me With a Steady Roll" is a superb slow blues suggestive of the

Pete Johnson-Big Joe Turner classic "Cherry Red," with more fine down-in-the-alley trombone as well as a terrific tenor sax solo from Eric Spaulding.

"I Saw the Blues" closes with a superb extended rendition of Ollie Nightingale's hit "I'll Drink Your Bathwater Baby," concluding an hour's worth of varied blues and soul, superbly sung and terrifically played. This is one of the best recent blues recordings this writer has heard.

Jackie suffered a major stroke in 2014 which held up production and release of this recording, and while recovering is still unable to sing. We wish him well and a benefit will be held for him at Biscuit & Blues in San Francisco on May 31. I am sure there will be ways for those who cannot make it there can support him.

Ron Weinstock



ANAT COHEN

Luminosa
ANZIC RECORDS

While the music of Brazil has always been an inspiration for Anat Cohen, on her new Anzic Records release, "Luminosa" the focus is on the musics of Brazil. Employing clarinet, bass clarinet and tenor saxophone, she is joined by her band of Jason Lindner (one of her co-producers) on keyboards, Joe Martin on bass and Daniel Friedman on drums.

Special guests include percussionist Gilmar Gomes, guitarists Romero Lumbarbo and Gilad Hekselman on two selections, and two selections feature Choro Advencuroso, composed of Vitor Gonçalves on accordion, Cesar Garabini on 7-string guitar and Sergio Krakowski on Pandeino. The selections include compositions by Milton Nascimento, Romero Lumbarbo, K-Ximbinho, Severino Araujo, Edu Lobo & Chico Buarque and Cohen who contributed four originals.

Cohen is one of the foremost clarinetists in contemporary jazz and her singing, lyrical playing contrasts with the dark chords of Lindner on the opening "Lilia" followed by a more playful attack on "Putty Boy Strut," with an intriguing rhythmic underpinning. "Ima" is a lovely ballad with some delicate playing from Cohen and Lindner. Romero Lubambo's acoustic guitar serves to help pace the lively "Bachiao."

More of Cohen's playful side can be heard with her lilting playing on "Happy Song," while a more reflective

MARCIA BALL

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tone characterizes “Ternura,” one of the two choro selections with the accordion of Gonçalves providing a contrast as does Garabina’s 7-string guitar. The other choro performance “Espinha De Bacalhau,” is a terrific, spirited performance evocative of some classic choro recordings along with some recordings of New Orleans based pianist Tom McDermott, who has also delved into choro, a Brazilian music that has parallels to ragtime and early New Orleans jazz.

Cohen takes up tenor saxophone for her composition, “The Wein Machine,” dedicated to the legendary jazz impresario. Her robust playing here completes another recording marked by the mix of Latin accents, lyricism and charm, and marvelous ensemble playing that is sure to delight many. *Ron Weinstock*



ERIN HARPE & THE DELTA SWINGERS

Love Whip Blues
VIZZTONE/ JUICY JUJU

Listening to Erin Harpe, one is reminded of Maria Muldaur from her days with the Jim Kweskin Jug Band. Unlike Muldaur, Harpe is also a fine guitarist and, like Muldaur, is clearly influenced by the great Memphis Minnie. Her facility as a guitarist in part may reflect being the daughter of Neil Harpe, himself a marvelous acoustic blues guitarist and with whom Harpe recorded a wonderful album of duets.

With her Boston-based band, the Delta Blues Swingers, Ms. Harpe has a long-awaited album “Love Whip Blues” (Vizztone/ Juicy JuJu) which is a marvelous program of band blues rooted in some classic blues of the pre-World War 11 era.

The Delta Swingers are harmonica wizard Richard Rosenblatt (also one of the main forces behind VizzTone), Jim Countryman on bass and Bob Nisi on drums. Dave Gross assisted in producing this as well as guested on various instruments while Bob Margolin plays slide guitar on one track and Sonny Jim Clifford adds slide on two tracks.

The selections are rooted in older blues recordings, whether ensemble adaptations or original lyrics using the melodies of classic blues recordings. “Love Whip Blues” is the best example of the latter as the Rosenblatt/Harpe lyrics are set against the groove of Memphis Minnie’s “Me and My Chauffeur.” It is a buoyant

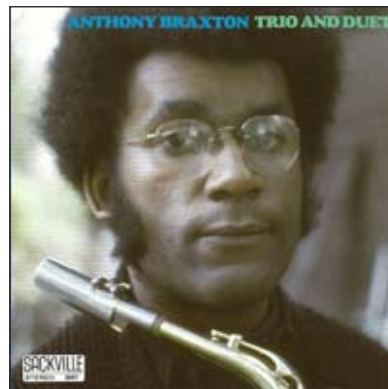
performance as Ms. Harpe sings that when she cracks her love whip, one never felt so good.

“The Delta Swing” is a nice original as Harpe calls us out to swinging from Cambridge to Memphis with a relaxed groove and some strong harmonica. The solid rendition of Willie Brown’s “Future Blues” displays the tight ensemble playing behind Harpe’s fine singing, although some might find the tempo a bit fast. Bob Margolin’s slide guitar enhances “The M&O Blues,” a nice reworking of a Lucille Bogan recording. “Good Luck Baby” is an original with a bit of reggae flavor.

There is jaunty adaptation of an old William Moore recording, “One Way Man,” followed by a similarly buoyant rendition of “Pick Poor Robin Clean,” originally waxed by Virginia songster Luke Jordan with Gross adding a mandolin solo. After the call to the dance floor of “Virtual Booty Blues,” they perform “Charles River Delta Blues,” a lovely rendition of William Brown’s “Mississippi Blues.” This William Brown (solely recorded by Alan Lomax) is a different individual than the Willie Brown of “Future Blues” who is best known for an association with Son House.

A solid rendition of John Prine’s “Angel of Montgomery” closes out a most enjoyable recording. Listening to “Love Whip Blues,” one can appreciate why this group has been developing such a strong following around Boston. In fact they won the Boston Blues Society’s Blues Battle and competed in Memphis at the 2015 International Blues Challenge and one can expect more to be heard from them soon.

Ron Weinstock



ANTHONY BRAXTON

Trio and Duet
SACKVILLE/ DELMARK

Delmark has reissued a mid-1970s Sackville LP by Anthony Braxton titled “Trio and Duet” on CD. I actually have the original LP and the CD is an expanded version with a couple additional duets by Braxton with bassist Holland. The first side of the album is a performance entitled “HM-421” with trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith and synthesizer player Richard Teitelbaum.

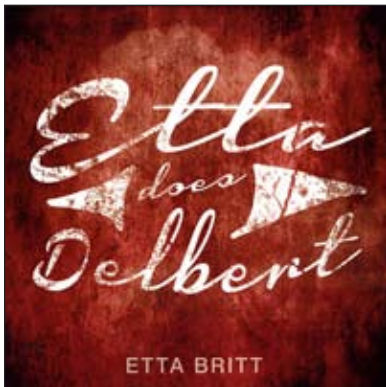
The actual title for “HM-421” is a series of geographic symbols and the performance strikes me as more accessible for a general audience than some of Braxton’s more recent playing. Teitelbaum provides

some aural textures against which Braxton and Smith lay down their playing and the feel of the performance is relaxed, not frantic or ferocious.

The duets with Holland are interpretations of five standards and are superior examples of Braxton's straight playing of that time. The recording is contemporaneous with Braxton's Steeplechase album "In the Tradition," but Braxton's tone and the fluidity of his playing is much more in evidence here with strong lyrical interpretations of "Embraceable You" and "On Green Dolphin Street," anchored by Holland's bass.

The interaction between Braxton and Holland is exemplary and "Trio and Duet" is a gem that even those not fond of Anthony Braxton's body of work will enjoy.

Ron Weinstock



ETTA BRITT

Etta Does Delbert
BRITTUNES MUSIC

Nashville singer Etta Britt may be familiar to some through her association with Delbert McClinton, but her musical career goes back quite a bit as she toured as part of the CMA nominated vocal trio Dave & Sugar.

Although she put her musical career on the back burner while raising a family, her dreams of a solo career were reignited when signing a record deal when she was in her early fifties, resulting in an album "Out of the Shadows" and touring with Delbert and Paul Thorn. She has a follow-up recording produced by her husband Bob Britt, "Etta Does Delbert" (Brittunes Music) that is a mix of honky tonk, southern soul and rock and roll with a dash of blues. In other words, it is some honky tonking rock and roll in the vein of Delbert and others.

She is backed by a band consisting of her husband on guitar, Kevin McKendree on keyboards, Steve MacKay bass, Lynn Williams drums and Dana Robbins on sax with background vocals from her husband, the McCrary Sisters, and others. The songs mostly come from Delbert's songbook, and the performances are first rate. She is a terrific singer whether delivering the rock and roll of "Somebody To Love Me" or the southern soul of "You Were Never Mine." This latter number evokes the classic Memphis soul of James Carr and Goldwax records. Another superb vocal is her interpretation of Bobby Charles' classic "The Jealous Kind." There are also two duets with McClinton, "Boy You Better Move

On" and the rollicking "Best of Me."

Britt's short guitar breaks and McKendree's piano are additional musical ingredients on these terrific performances, while the rhythm lays down a relaxed solid groove throughout.

The album closes with an original she wrote with McKendree, the strutting "When I Was With You," which again displays the gritty, textured and nuanced singing that makes "Etta Does Delbert" such a marvelous recording that should appeal to a wide spectrum of listeners.

Ron Weinstock



BONEY JAMES

Futuresoul
CONCORD

As summer approaches, the time is right for tracks with a groove, melody and laid-back attitude. Master of the soul/jazz/r&b fusion that was in full bloom as he was "coming up," saxophonist Mr. James' timing is spot-on with a set that crosses classic crossover sounds with present-day production.

A prime element in "smooth" school horn salesmanship is tone and James' slightly smoky sound is a classic deal-closer. The tracks here are uniformly crafted to please and are all playlist-worthy. Likely for quick notice are "Drumline", "Vinyl" and "A Little Attitude".

Duane Verh



GREG NAGY

Stranded
BIG O RECORDS

This writer first became aware of singer-guitarist-songwriter Greg Nagy as part of the soul-blues group Root Doctor, when they appeared at the Pocono Blues Festival. Shortly after that appearance, Nagy focused

on a solo career. About his last recording “Fell Toward None,” I observed that it was “an intelligently produced and performed recording that is full of soulful vocals, superior fretwork and focused accompaniments.”

Nagy’s latest recording, “Stranded” (Big O Records), reunites him with his frequent collaborator Jim Alfredson, who handles the keyboards and produced this with Nagy. Alfredson may be best known as a keyboard player with the terrific vocalist Janiva Magness, but he is an outstanding keyboard player and has produced several strong organ jazz recordings. Zach Zunis guests and solos on one of the tracks, which are mostly Nagy originals (with several choice covers).

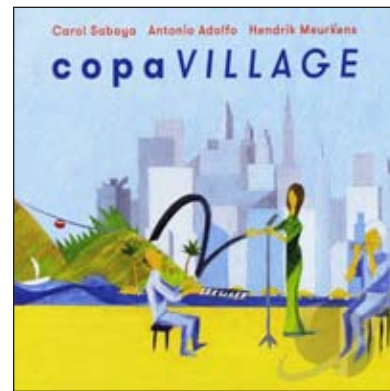
At the time of recording “Stranded”, Nagy’s was in the process of his 24 year old marriage was in dissolution and the pain from that colors the performances. This tone for the album is set with the title track (by Rick Whitfield and Jeff Paris) where he sings about being “stranded in the sea of tears in an island of broken hearts.”

The passion of his vocal is matched by his short guitar lines and that is characteristic of the performances here, where the focus is on the singing, not on his guitar chops. On Alfredson’s “Walk Out That Door,” Nagy tells his lady that he can tell she’s lying and things won’t be the same anymore. There is a strong solo break by Alfredson here.

Noteworthy is the rearrangement of a Bobby Bland classic “Ain’t No Love In The Heart of the City,” which is given a reggae groove as Nagy sings strongly. Perhaps no song covers the heartache Nagy was going through as much as “I Won’t Give Up,” with a compelling lyric of a scared heart and not giving up or give in, and with the lean, tight backing it is a commanding performance.

Another striking performance is “Long Way To Memphis” with its stark, insistent groove, while “Been Such a Long Time,” with Nagy singing “its been such a long since you gave her love away” and holding her heart apart, has a funky groove that certainly will get folks up and dancing.

If the tone of many songs here are of broken hearts and relationships, Nagy sings that all he wants to hear his woman say is “welcome home, welcome home” on the closing “Welcome Home,” a ballad by Kevin McKendree that closes out this album. “Stranded” is another excellent recording by Greg Nagy that brings together solid playing, strong, soulful material and vocals that are full of heart and conviction. **Ron Weinstock**



CAROL SABOYA - ANTONIO ADOLFO - HENDRIK MEURKENS

Copa Village
AAM MUSIC

A new album “Copa Village” (AAM Music) represents a collaboration between Brazilian singer Carol Saboya, her father, pianist and composer-arranger Antonio Adolfo, and the German born vibraphonist-harmonica player, Hendrik Meurkens. “Copa” in the disc title refers to Rio de Janeiro’s Copacabana section, while the Village refers to Greenwich Village, both being musical meccas in the 1950s and 1960s, when Brazilian and jazz musicians began collaborating in earnest with the emergence of bossa nova in the United States.

In 1969, Antonio Adolfo was the pianist with the legendary Brazilian singer Elis Regina who had just met Toots Thielemans in Stockholm and they recorded a classic recording “Elis & Toots - Aquarela do Brasil.” Several years later he met Meurkens who he refers to as “another incredible harmonica player.” They have played together several times, including in Summer 2014 in New York City with his daughter Carol, leading to the recording of this album.

For this recording, they are joined by guitarist Claudio Spiewak, bassist Itaguara Brandão, drummer Adriano Santos and percussionist André Siqueira for some fresh takes of Brazilian music, including renditions of five songs penned by Antonio Carlos Jobim, a collaboration between Adolfo and Meurkens, three from Meurkens and two from Adolfo. Included are several celebrated Brazilian music classics starting with the lovely “The Girl From Ipanema (Garota de Ipanema),” and “Aqua De Beber (Water to Drink),” both by Jobim, and Adolfo’s “Pretty World” (with English lyrics by Alan Bergman and Marilyn Bergman).

Listening to her lovely singing on “The Girl From Ipanema,” one cannot avoid noting her rendition holds up well to the famous Astrid Gilberto rendition with Meurkens’ harmonica adding to the charm. “Copa Village,” a collaboration between Adolfo and Meurkens, is a breezy, captivating performance with Saboya’s charming wordless singing serving as an additional horn-like voice to the harmonica with some lovely piano as the rhythm section provided solid, restrained support. Meurkens Show De Bola (lyrics by Paulo Sergio Valle)

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is a lively number with the wonderful singing spiced by Meurkens on vibraphone. The rendition of “Aqua De Beber” is terrific with marvelous harmonica solo and Adolfo’s likewise marvelous piano. Saboya delights on her father’s “Pretty World,” that some may know from recordings by Sergio Mendes and Stevie Wonder.

Adolfo’s “Visão,” with a lovely Saboyo wordless invocation of the melody, is the final track. This song was originally recorded by Elis Regina and Toots Thielemans on “Aquarela do Brasil” and provides a fitting conclusion for this recording. “Copa Village” is an excellent, enchanting recording that fans of Brazilian music will savor.

Ron Weinstock



SMOKIN' JOE KUBEK & BNOIS KING

Fat Man's Shine Parlor
BLIND PIG

The twin-guitar attack of Smokin' Joe Kubek and BNois King has remained relatively unchanged over their 25 year long partnership: Kubek plays down and dirty electric guitar leads while King most often plays jazzy rhythm riffs on a hollow-body Gibson that add texture to the mix.

Locked together in song, the two refuse to simply repeat the boogies and shuffles that make up so much of the blues. Instead, they play blues that is infused with both rock and jazz not unlike the recent pairing between Gov't Mule and John Scofield, Sco-Mule.

This set, which reunites them with the Blind Pig label, finds them laying down 12 original tunes that rattle with regret about a one-night stand gone one night too long, “Got My Heart Broken”, explore the despair of being unable to proclaim love yet not wanting to be alone, “Don't Want To Be Alone,” and lament an encounter with a woman who looks like a million dollars when you don't have a dime, “Crash and Burn.”

Elsewhere, the focus turns to airline luggage fee rip offs and TSA induced indignities, “How Much,” and the need for just the right side dish to make things right on the double entendre laden “Cornbread.” King's earnest, almost pleading, vocal style adds a sense of conviction whether he's pleading for forgiveness, “Done Got Caught Blues,” or for her to give in to his advances, “One Girl By My Side.” While great guitar riffs abound throughout, “Brown Bomba Mojo” and “Headed for Ruin” feature two of the disc's more extended jams and

“Lone Star Lap Dance” is an instrumental that allows each of their different styles and tones to shine. This disc joins a long line of great releases by these two bluesmen.

Mark Smith



ANDY BROWN
Soloist
DELMARK RECORDS

Guitarist Andy Brown has a gem of a solo guitar recording titled “Soloist” on Delmark.

Brown was at one-time a teenage blues guitarist, but under the mentorship of Kenny Poole, a Cincinnati guitarist, has developed into a jazz player of considerable skill and imagination. Brown, in the liner notes to



“Soloist,” writes about his influences and inspirations that include George Van Eps, Joe Pass, Ted Greene, Cal Collins, Ed Bickert, Lenny Breau and Howard Arlen.

The 15 performances on “Soloist” allow Brown to shine on a program of standards, bossa novas and jazz tunes, which he notes were loosely arranged with the exception of Van Eps’ “Tango El Bongo.” Brown played finger-style except for George Wallington’s “Godchild,” on which he employed a pick.

He plays with a bright tone and a lively, nuanced approach on such numbers as the opening “Dancing in the Dark” (the Howard Dietz & Arthur Schwartz classic credited for some reason to Irving Berlin) and the Meniscal & Boscoli bossa nova “O Barquino,” while a more lyrical flavor marks the rendition of “Nina Never Knew” and the Eubie Blake-Andy Razaf classic “Memories of You.”

The rendition of “Anything Goes” opens in a somewhat slow tempo to explore the theme before Brown picks the tempo up for his fresh interpretation of this Cole Porter classic.

The deftness of Brown’s playing, his ability to avoid sounding precious and his imaginative improvisations result in Brown’s performances having considerable Appeal. “Soloist” is a gem whose appeal should be broader than simply fans of jazz guitar.

Ron Weinstock



STEVE SMITH AND VITAL INFORMATION NYC EDITION

Viewpoint
BFM JAZZ

Longtime Journey drummer Steve Smith’s band blends fusion energy with a whole lot of mainstream swing into this set. particularly through the solo work of Buddy Rich alums, saxophonists Andy Fusco (alto) and Walt Weiskopf (tenor).

The leader provides himself ample space for expression in the form of a three solo interludes interspersed through the set, a spirited drum break during the Paul Desmond classic “Take Five”, and a too-brief trade-off fest built from Sonny Rollins’ “Oleo”.

Other tracks of note include an amplified update of Monk’s “Bemsha Swing” and the Herbie Hancock/Stevie Wonder ballad “Chan’s Song (Never Said).”

Duane Verh



THE NIGHTHAWKS

Back Porch Party
ELLER SOUL RECORDS

As R. Keith Owens observes in his brief notes for The Nighthawks new album “Back Porch Party” (Eller Soul Records), it is sort of a follow-up to their “Last Train To Bluesville,” being an acoustic, unplugged session recorded before a studio audience.

This edition of the The Nighthawks has been pretty stable personnel wise since Mark Stutso replaced Pete Raguso on drums, joining original member Mark Wenner (harmonica), guitarist Paul bell (guitar) and Johnny Castle (bass). There is choice selection of material including songs from Jimmy Rogers, Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Lightnin’ Slim and Ike Turner mixed in with originals from band members.

There really isn’t much new to say about the music here. The Nighthawks are a terrific working band which can be heard in these unplugged performances with Wenner’s lead off on a brisk-paced take on Jimmy Roger’s “Rock This House,” followed by some back porch twang on the old Patsy Cline classic “Walkin’ After Midnight.” Bell’s chording and single note fills are marvelous embellishments as Castle and Stutso keep a relaxed groove.

It is fascinating to listen to Bell play acoustically on the Ike Turner and Rhythm Kings’ “Matchbox,” which features some nice singing from Stutso who also delivers a nice original with a swamp pop tinge, “Down To My Last Million Tears.”

Bell’s guitar supplies a rockabilly touch to the rendition of a Willie Dixon song recorded by Muddy Waters’ “Tiger In Your Tank,” while a similar feel is heard on Castle’s “Jana Lee,” whose melody evokes the Cajun-rock hit “Sugar Bee.” Muddy Waters’ classic take on the “Catfish Blues” theme “Rollin’ Stone” receives a straight interpretation while Wenner also plays homage to Lightnin’ Slim on an easy rocking cover of “Rooster Blues.”

There is more fine guitar and harmonica throughout along with the clean, crisp rhythm. Another welcome addition to The Nighthawks body of recordings and a worthy successor to their previous unplugged recording.

Ron Weinstock

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DON ALIQUO - CLAY JENKINS QUINTET

New Ties & Binds

SELF-PRODUCED

What a quintet Nashville based saxophonist Don Aliquo and Rochester NY based trumpeter Clay Jenkins have put together. The Don Aliquo - Clay Jenkins Quintet has Harold Danko on piano, Rufus Reid on bass and Jim White on drums for the self-produced recording "New Ties and Binds." Recorded in early 2015 in Hoboken, Aliquo contributed four of the eight compositions with each other member providing one.

Listening to the music here, one gets hints of classic Blue Note dates from the late sixties; Miles Davis last great acoustic quintet and the V.S.O.P groups that brought members of that quintet back along with Freddie Hubbard. The playing is exceptional with superb ensemble playing throughout from the opening moments of Aquino's "New Ties" to the lively closing "Glory," which evokes some of Wayne Shorter's contributions to Miles' repertoire.

While obviously Aliquo and Jenkins are most prominent perhaps, everyone gets showcased – like White who helps kick off "Glory." Aliquo has a robust tone arising from influences that include John Coltrane, Joe Lovano, Stanley Turrentine and Lester Young while Jenkins, who had played in the Stan Kenton and Count Basie Bands, suggests Miles Davis in his phrasing but with a more extroverted sound. To the two leaders add Danko's strong, imaginative piano and a superb rhythm tandem, and the result, "New Ties & Binds," is modern music of the highest order. *Ron Weinstock*

JOHN MAYALL'S BLUESBREAKERS

Live in 1967

FORTY BELOW RECORDS

"Live in 1967" by John Mayall's Bluesbreakers (Forty Below Records) brings together some club recordings made by Tom Huisson, a Dutch fan of Mayall, that captured the edition of the Bluesbreakers that were together for three months. Peter Green was on guitar, John McVie on bass and Mick Fleetwood were on drums and these three would leave Mayall to form Fleetwood Mac. Eric Corne engineered and remastered these recordings that Huisson recorded on a single-track tape recorder, which resulted in a listenable if not hi-fidelity

release. Mick Fleetwood suffers the most in the audio as it almost sounds like he is playing wood blocks.

Material on this includes four songs each that are associated with Otis Rush and Freddie King, a couple of Mayall originals and songs from Johnny Guitar Watson, Tommy Tucker and T-Bone Walker. Mayall handles all the vocals and plays organ and harmonica.

If Mayall is not one of this writer's favorite blues singers, he is quite credible here and his organ and occasional harp blowing is OK. Much interest will be on Peter Green's string-bending and he is featured throughout with some explosive playing on "Double Trouble," "San-Ho-Zay" (which comes across more as King's "Driving Sideways") and the closing "Stormy Monday." Sound issues aside, he certainly sounds hot.

For fans of Mayall, this will obviously be indispensable and for fans of Green and early Fleetwood Mac, this will likewise be a must purchase. If the sound was better (and bear in mind only so much could be done with the source tapes), then this would be recommendable to more casual listeners. *Ron Weinstock*



MELISSA STYLIANOI

No Regrets

ANZIC RECORDS

Canadian born and New York based vocalist Melissa Stylianou has a new recording (her 5th album) on Anzic Records titled "No Regrets." Produced by Oded Lev-Ari, Stylianou is backed by a trio of Bruce Barth on piano, Linda Oh on bass and Matt Wilson on drums with appearances by Billy Drewes on alto saxophone on three songs and Anat Cohen on clarinet for two songs. The

album was recorded live to two-track with a program that mostly sticks to jazz standards.

There is plenty to delight in Melissa Stylianou's singing and here and she is backed by a superb trio augmented by sax or clarinet at times. Her rendition of the Gershwins' "Nice Work If You Can Get It" features an introduction that this writer was not familiar with. After her delivery of the lyric, each member of the trio takes a brief break and there are a couple of brief exchanges between her and Wilson.

Not all of these selections are as well known, such as "Remind Me" by Jerome Kern and Dorothy Fields with her perky delivery of the amusing word play here ("Remind me not to mention that I love you, Remind me to be sorry that we met) with Barth supplying the arrangement.

Drewes' alto opens a marvelous rendition of the Ellington-Webster lament "'I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good)," and Melissa is playful on "Humming to Myself." Linda Oh's bass opens "I Wish I Knew" and duets with Melissa until mid-way through the first verse. A Billie Holiday song, "Somebody's On My Mind," is one of the selections with Cohen with just Oh's bass providing apt support for Stylianou's languid vocal. Known for her adaptations of songs by Bjork, Johnny Cash and Tom Waits among others, her one unusual selection is a folksy adaptation of William Butler Yeats' poem "Down by the Salley Gardens" accompanied just by Wilson.

Her lovely voice, phrasing and dynamics are factors that stalemate the listener. Gutbucket alto sax against the emphatic backing of the rhythm section spices up "A Nightingale Can Sing the Blues."

Cohen returns with more lovely playing on "'I'll Never Be the Same." There is a lilting quality to the rendition of "Polka Dots And Moonbeams" (with a choice Barth solo), before the album concludes with a bright, delightful rendition, backed just by piano, of Jon Hendricks' lyrics to Monk's "I Mean You," with her scatting and trading fours with Barth.

Melissa Stylianou touches the heart and brightens our spirits throughout "No Regrets." It is a recording with plenty to charm listeners. **Ron Weinstock**

VARIOUS ARTISTS

John Henry

MUSIC MAKER RELIEF FOUNDATION

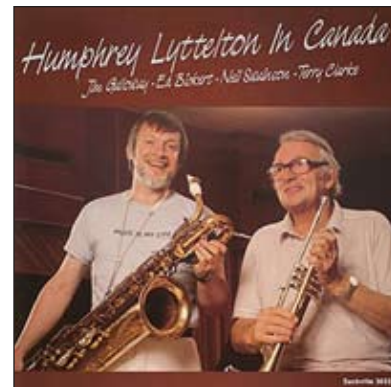
It was a neat idea collecting ten renditions of the ballad "John Henry" (Music Heritage Relief Foundation) with the renditions representing different genre and stylistic approaches from Delta blues, to Piedmont blues to ol-time string band making for fascinating listening.

Big Boy Henry, with Lightnin' Wells on guitar, opens this CD with a rendition that comes off like a Bukka White recording. Cootie Stark and Neal Pattman lend a more East Coast style rendition, slide guitar and all. It is Dom Flemons playing quills on a rendition that musically evokes Henry's "Ragtime Texas" Thomas while

Carl Rutherford's finger-style guitar instrumental rendition is akin to the legendary Doc Watson, and Benton Flippen leads an old time string band version.

Guitar Gabriel's (aka Nyles Jones) rendition is more in a Piedmont vein with Tim Duffy adding guitar and Michael Parrish on piano to support Gabriel's marvelous Blind Boy Fuller influenced picking, while John Lee Ziegler's high pitched singing and spare slide guitar (using a knife?) is an affecting performance, the longest one here. With Tim Duffy on rhythm guitar, the legendary Etta Baker does a marvelous instrumental version with finger-picked slide playing while a small group backs John Dee Holeman's juke joint and drink house rendition.

Samuel Turner Stevens closes this CD with a version performed on a banjo with slide. It concludes a very interesting and captivating compilation that can be obtained from Music Maker Relief Foundation on their website, www.musicmaker.org. **Ron Weinstock**



HUMPHREY LYTTELTON

In Canada

SACKVILLE/DELMARK

Delmark has another re-release on CD from the Sackville label, Humphrey Lyttelton's "In Canada." This was recorded in 1983 during the English jazz pioneer's second visit to Canada with the trumpeter and clarinetist backed by Jim Galloway on saxophones and clarinet, the highly underrated Ed Bickert on guitar, Neil Swainson on bass and Terry Clarke on drums.

While initially heavily influenced by Louis Armstrong, Lyttelton matured and his repertoire had extended to into what was in a style the late Stanley Dance referred to as mainstream, reflecting the influences of Basie, Ellington, and Buck Clayton in addition to Armstrong.

Swing, not trad jazz, is the center of these eight Lyttelton compositions. The set opens with "It's a Thing," with the leader playing muted trumpet after Bickert's sprite guitar helps set the lively mood with Galloway's soprano suggestive of Johnny Hodge's alto, and the three trade fours towards the end.

Nothing fancy about the Ellington evoking "Spraucy," with the leader perhaps taking a nod towards Cootie Williams with his mute while playing in unison with Galloway's baritone sax as Swainson took

a crisp bass solo. The peppy and playful “Squiggly” contrasts with a lazy blues groove on “Looking For Turner.” One can hear some evidence of Armstrong’s influence on Lyttelton’s open trumpet on “Lady Jekyll and Mistree Hyde,” a nicely paced performance and more marvelous soprano from Galloway, while “Leisure World” is a fine blues with Galloway on baritone, with Bickert’s chords and single note runs and the rhythm duo of Swainson and Clarke delivering their steady, swinging support.

No claim of musical innovation is made about the swinging heard on “In Canada.” It is a simple, straight-ahead, wonderfully played recording that provides plenty of swinging sounds to sit back, listen and enjoy.

Ron Weinstock



BIG DAVE MCLEAN
Faded But Not Gone
BLACK HEN MUSIC

Surrounded by first call players such as Kevin McKeendree on keyboards, Colin Linden and Steve Dawson on guitars, Colin James on mandolin and the McCrary Sisters on vocals, guitarist and singer Big Dave McLean, has crafted a disc of straight shooting blues that are aimed more at getting through another day than lighting up the next party.

Things kick off with the desperate “Tough Times” where he details his penniless circumstances and wonders where he’s getting the next meal. From there he looks at the blues as salvation, “I Best Choose to Pick the Blues,” notes that even the big and tall can fall, “The Fallen,” looks at the paralysis that sometime comes with more than one option in dealing with a situation, “Sittin’ On A Fence,” gives some advice on how to deal with life’s curveballs and the pitcher who threw them, “Don’t Get Mad, Get Even,” and finds the devil in his music of choice, “Devil’s in the Jukebox.”

Speaking of the Devil, he finds his woman walking in lockstep with evil, “Devil Got My Woman” and discovers him again on the Tom Waits cover, “Mr. Siegal” where he wonders how the angels get some sleep when the Devil leaves the porch light on. Not all is lost though: on “Shades of Grace” he looks back to the church for some amazing grace to get him away from the bad news on this tail and on “Oh- Mr. Charlie- Oh,” he proclaims he’s not going back to the dark side again.

McLean has a gruff, no nonsense vocal style that serves the tunes well and adds a great counterpoint to the National Steel guitar, banjo, mandolin and pedal steel laid down by McLean and his guests. If you want someone to share your pain, McLean is a good traveling companion.

Mark Smith



ELIANE ELIAS
Made In Brazil
CONCORD

It has been almost 35 years since pianist/singer/songwriter Eliane Elias moved from her homeland in Brazil to New York City. She quickly began making waves as the pianist in the jazz fusion powerhouse band Steps Ahead, which included the late, great tenor saxophonist Michael Brecker. After a joint album with Randy Brecker, she began recording solo albums in the mid 80s and has been a prolific recording artist ever since. Most of her albums are on the Blue Note label, but she recently moved over to Concord.

As the title suggests, she went back to her roots and recorded this album in her hometown of Sao Paulo, Brazil. While she took along her husband, bassist Marc Johnson (who has been on most of her albums), she hired some top Brazilian musicians for the session. Johnson plays bass on half of the songs, while Marcelo Mariano plays electric bass on the others. Also on the album is the multi-Grammy winning Christian vocal group Take 6, appearing for only one track, and their lead vocalist Mark Kibble sings on two others. Brazilian R&B star Ed Motta is on another. Elias and her singer/pianist/daughter Amanda team up for a duet on “Some Enchanted Night,” and she pairs up with Marc Johnson for a duet on “A Sorte do Amor.”

Seven of the 12 cuts include orchestral arrangements which were later overdubbed at Abbey Road Studios, performed by members of the London Symphonic Orchestra. But they are perfectly done and never detract from the music - note how things cook along just nicely over the strings on “Voce.”

From the opening moments of “Brasil,” a famous Brazilian ‘anthem’ from 1939, to the closing moments of “No Tabuleiro da Baiana,” we are all treated to a top shelf program of infectious music from Brazil, much of it permeated with a definite sexiness the likes of which I have not heard in an album in quite some time. Eliane Elias shines brightly throughout with her multifaceted piano work, and

her always-wonderful vocals, on which she alternates between English & Portuguese. Not only is she at the top of her game here, the musicians she chose for the homecoming recording are right up there with her.

An absolutely outstanding set of music from Eliane Elias and friends. I want to go to Brazil. **Bill Wahl**



VARIOUS
Guitar Heroes
STONY PLAIN

Stony Plain has a release that will certainly enliven the listening of guitar geeks titled "Guitar Heroes." The album brings forth a performance from the Vancouver Island MusicFest by guitar legends James Burton, Albert Lee, Amos Garrett and Dave Wilcox backed by the keyboards of Jon Greathouse, the bass of Will MacGregor and the drums of James Harrison Smith. Doug Cox, Artistic Director of the Festival discusses in the liner notes how this performance came together which I will leave for your eyes.

James Burton first came to notice on Dale Hawkins' early recordings, including "Susie Q," before hooking up with Rick Nelson and then Elvis Presley. Albert Lee is best known to me as a country picker (an extension of Burton's chicken scratching style) who spent time with Emmy Lou Harris, Eric Clapton and Rodney Crowell. Amos Garrett was with Ian & Sylvia, Maria Muldaur, Paul Butterfield's Better Days and Bonnie Raitt, while Dave Wilcox was also with Ian and Sylvia, Maria Muldaur, Nashville North, and The Ian Tyson (TV) show. This gives a sense of their roots but the music extends here to blues, rockabilly and jazz.

Lee and Wilcox handle most of the vocals in a most credible fashion. Certainly no issue about Lee's rendition of Arthur Crudup's "That's All Right (Mama)" that was Elvis' first single and the contrast between the switching leads and other guitarists providing support is delightful. Greathouse handles the vocal on "Susie Q" with Wilcox taking the first lead followed by Burton, Garrett and Lee, with Greathouse also soling. It should be noted that both of these performances are little more than 5 minutes and allow each to display their licks and tricks, but no one takes long self-indulgent solos. "Sleepwalk" is a showcase for Garrett's multiple string bending and tonal command followed by a lively rockabilly of Ray Charles "Leave My Woman

Alive," with Lee's affable vocal and some instrumental sparks, particularly the trading of licks between Lee and Greathouse for the first break and between Lee and Burton to ride out this 7 minute plus romp that seems shorter.

The opening of Jimmy Rogers "You're the One" sounds like they are about to hit "Honky Tonk" before Wilcox leads the performance into a straight blues vein as he delivers a vocal a bit more forcibly than Rogers, then calling on Burton to take the first solo and after singing another verse introduces Lee. It is refreshing to hear these gentlemen handle this blues from the standpoint of country musicians, and listening to their use of tone as well as their picking is a delight. Herbie Mann's recording "Comin' Home Baby" was a standard warmup track of blues bands in the sixties and the quartet of guitarists provides a lively rendering here. Wilcox's guitar introduces "Flip, Flop and Fly," which he sings and on which Lee is exceptional. Instrumental renditions of the atmospheric "Only the Young," and a swampy rockabilly take on "Pork Salad Annie," are followed by a Wilcox original, "Bad Apple," the only forgettable performance from him.

I know of the closing "Country Boy" from the Ricky Skaggs recording and the terrific video, which was filmed in part in the New York Subway system, but was not aware that Lee was one of the song's writers. It is a terrific number to close this performance. Lee may not have the range of Skaggs as a singer, but ably sings as well as takes listeners for a ride with some

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

stunning playing here, with Greathouse and Wilcox also getting to take crisp breaks. This closes a generally terrific recording in an invigorating manner. "Guitar Heroes" captures four terrific guitarists on a festival performance where their mutual admiration meshes with their often astonishing playing. Country roots and rock fans will find much listening joy here.

Ron Weinstock



CAMERON SIEGAL & FRIENDS

World Junk
MOLA MOLA MUSIC

For jazz fans that enjoy a bashing good time, Portland-based drummer Cameron Siegal and crew here serve up a set big on high-spirited romps and engaging side trips into world music territory. Layers of earthy percussion are a constant as is the consistently exuberant character of the solo work.

Standout players include guitarist Carlos Odria—particularly on his acoustic, violinist Mark Russell, pianist Brendan Polk, and the leader. Nice stuff.

Duane Verh



JEFF JENSEN
Morose Elephant
SWINGSUIT RECORDS

Jeff Jensen's first three discs escaped my attention and this one almost met a similar fate. Just as this disc was about to slip to the bottom of my ever growing review pile I noticed that in addition to the normal guitar/bass/drums line-up, it features not only a horn section but a couple of harmonica players along with Victor Wainwright on keys and Reba Russell on vocals. Knowing the quality of Wainwright's and Russell's own work and their busy

schedules I guessed they wouldn't waste their time on a subpar outing. I'm glad to report my guess was right.

The 11 cuts collected here feature a number of Jensen originals along with covers by the likes of Memphis Minnie, "What's the Matter with the Mill," and Amos Milburn, "Bad Bad Whiskey." As revealed over the course of the disc, Jensen is not only a fine guitarist but a decent singer and songwriter as well. As a guitarist, he evokes not only the Doobie Brothers on "Make It" but Steely Dan on the gospel tinged "Going Home" which starts with a jazz funk groove before Jensen unleashes an unholy flurry of notes. Jensen and crew rescue the oft-covered "What's the Matter with the Mill" from the museum with an upbeat keyboard driven boogie treatment that takes no prisoners while "Bad Bad Whiskey" gets a traditional blues treatment compliments of some tasty harmonica work. "Fall Apart" and "Ash and Bone" have a different feel altogether with hushed dynamics and reflective lyrics. The instrumental "Elephant Blue" is a wild journey with everything from gypsy swing to smoking jazz. "I'll Always Be in Love with You" finds Jensen trading leads with the horns much like B.B. King when he's fronting his blues orchestra.

Great stuff! You can be sure the next release will be at the top of the review pile from the day it arrives.

Mark Smith



This Year's Monterey Winner

For 2015, Monterey Jazz Festival decided to crowd-source our annual poster design for the first time in the Festival's history. Using Creative Allies, a popular website devoted to the creation of artwork for musicians and events, we hosted a six-week contest that was promoted to over 50,000 designers. We received nearly 400 entries from designers all around the world, with a wide range of creative solutions.

We loved many of them, but our favorite, and this year's Official Monterey Jazz Festival Poster, was designed by Chris Gutendorf of Portland, Oregon, a 34-year-old designer and 2002 graduate of the Art Institute of Seattle. He works full-time as a graphic designer and is a musician in two Portland bands.

Our Official Poster will be on sale soon! You can also look forward to some beautiful applications of our 2015 image to clothing, merchandise and the stages of the 58th Monterey Jazz Festival in September.



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