

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
NEW JERSEY JAZZ SOCIETY

JerseyJazz

NOVEMBER 2022
VOLUME 50 ISSUE 10



A CELEBRATION **50** YEARS IN THE MAKING



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CLARIFICATION:

In the Other Views review of Bobby Watson's *Back Home* (page 39, October 2022 *Jersey Jazz*) the vocal on "Our Love Remains" was by Carmen Lundy).

ALL THAT'S JAZZ

BY CYDNEY HALPIN



 A Legacy, Two Legends, and the Great American Songbook—A Celebration 50 Years in the Making”—NJJS’s Anniversary Concert—is in the history books, and it was a milestone event indeed.

A celebration on this caliber is not solely funded by ticket sales or membership revenue and the board and I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of this year’s sponsors for their partnerships and incredible generosity in making this golden anniversary event possible: Anonymous, Arbors Records, Nan Hughes Poole, America’s Mortgage Lenders, Tony Freeman, Janet Jazz, NJPAC, Ryan Roberts, Studio 1200, Jazz Arts Project, James Pansulla, Central Jersey Sax Quartet, Ted & Karen Clark, Davies Associates, Jay & Nancy Dougherty, Falcon Financial Group, Cynthia Feketie, Jane Fuller, Pete Grice, Jazz Forum, San-

dy & Linda Josephson, Metuchen Jazz, Bob Rizzo, SOPAC, Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts, Senator Anthony M. Bucco, Gregory Burrus, Amy & David DeJong, Robert Diken, Flanders Automotive, Michael A. Katz, Esq., Tom Maisano, Ocean County College/Grunin Center, Stew Schiffer & Ellen Rothseid, Congresswoman Mikie Sherill, Sandy Sasso, and James Stark.

Very special thanks to the following people and businesses for their contributions in making this event a celebration: Don Braden, Patty Devlin, Jay Dougherty, Larry Fuller, Patti Graham, Sandy Josephson, Mari Kawatani, Al Kuehn, Patrick LaMarca, Linda Lobdell, Ronald Loneker, Ryan Roberts/1202/Creations, Bob Rizzo, Sandwiches Unlimited, Tom Salvass, Stew Schiffer, Rich Steinberg/Bernardsville Print Center, Julius Tolenti-

no/Newark Academy, Christine Vaindirlis/Ubuntu World Music.

Heartfelt thanks to honorees Bill Crow and Houston Person, and to all the musicians for “bringin’ it” to this legacy concert: Larry Fuller, Matthew Parrish, Jason Tiemann, Don Braden, Warren Vache, Lucy Wijnands, Leonieke Scheuble, Liam Sutcliffe, Sam Aubuchon, Jimmy Waltman, Derick Freitas Campos, Ben Collins-Siegel, Ethan Freed and Ben Schwartz.

Deepest gratitude to Songbook scholar and Master of Ceremonies Chuck Granata for being “icing on the cake!”

This very special event further honored NJJS’s legacy by presenting both musical and visual arts. Pee Wee Russell—NJJS’s patron saint—was a prolific visual artist and celebrating with both genres was inspired. Sincere thanks to the

artists who presented their incredible work: Suzanne Beason, Robert Diken, Mitchell Seidel, June Lee VanDunk, and Lucy Wijnands.

For more information please see page 15 and visit our website njjs.org.

Please join us Sunday, November 20, for Jersey Jazz LIVE! featuring the Martin Pizzarelli Trio. Martin reunites with Bob Albanese on piano—a stellar, swinging pianist whom he played with 30 years ago at NYC’s Rainbow Room, and GRAMMY Award Winner and Musical Director Linus Wyrsch on sax and clarinet.

The trio will entertain with a variety of songs from Duke to Benny to Gershwin ... all infused with Martin’s dad’s—guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli—arrangements.

These cats are gonna swing! Admission to this event is \$10 for members and \$15 for non-mem-

ALL THAT'S JAZZ

bers payable at the door with cash or credit card. Non-member admission fee is applicable towards membership if joining NJJS on same day as event. There will be light refreshments for purchase. Doors open at 2:30pm. Masks optional / proof of vaccination required.

The new home for our Jersey Jazz LIVE! events is the Madison Community Arts Center, 10 Kings Road, Madison, NJ.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, December 11, for NJJS's Annual Meeting featuring David Ostwald's Hot Four. Come cast your vote for the 2023 Board of Directors and enjoy an afternoon of hot, trad jazz!

The New Jersey Jazz Society was founded with the mission of promoting and preserving jazz. To that end, please consider helping

NJJS continue its performance and educational initiatives by donating to our 50 Years and Counting ... on YOU! fundraising campaign either by mail (watch your mail boxes), or anytime online at www.njjs.org via the red "Make a Donation" button.

Tuesday, November 29th is the National Day of Giving, a day to celebrate radical generosity and to give, so perhaps you'd like to join this global movement and participate on this date directly online with a tax-deductible donation.

Many of you work for employers that have a matching gift program—that will double the impact of your gift for free—by completing and submitting a simple form. Check with your Human Resources Department for further information.

On behalf of my fellow board members, we thank you for all you do to support jazz music and education.

Together we're preserving the future of this uniquely American art form.

This is the Season for holiday shopping and you can help support NJJS by shopping via the internet—now and anytime throughout the year!

NJJS is part of the AmazonSmile Gives program where 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases goes directly to NJJS—at NO additional cost to the shopper! It's the same Amazon you know but a separate website. Same products, same service—even if you're a Prime Member.

If you already have an Amazon Account and shop via the app, in order to generate financial donations to NJJS, you must change your existing account Settings to "AmazonSmile" under the main menu(=). Select New Jersey Jazz Society as your charity of choice and follow the on-screen instructions to turn ON AmazonSmile. Once activat-

ed in your account, eligible purchases will generate a donation to NJJS.

If you don't have an existing account, you must shop on the designated website smile.amazon.com. Log on to www.smile.amazon.com and select New Jersey Jazz Society as your beneficiary, then shop as you normally would. All eligible purchases will generate a donation to NJJS.

Eligible purchases are clearly marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile Donation" so you'll know which purchases are supporting NJJS.

Please tell your friends and family members about this amazing opportunity for NJJS and thank you all in advance for your support.



EDITOR'S CHOICE

BY SANFORD JOSEPHSON



Stardust Road to Showcase Hoagy Carmichael's Music

People ask me if I have a favorite song, and I have to honestly tell them no. The reason,” Hoagy Carmichael told me in 1979, “is that I find the melodic phrases in many different songs that please me, and I hate to choose one song as a favorite, eliminating those bits and pieces.”

Unlike many composers from the Golden Age of the American Songbook, Carmichael did not sit down and write a group of songs for a specific Broadway musical. His songs, according to his son, longtime TV producer Hoagy Bix Carmichael, were “individual pieces from my father’s head.” As a result, there has never been a major New York musical play based on his music. That’s about to change.

Performances of Hoagy Carmi-

chael’s *Stardust Road* are scheduled to begin on November 22 at The Theatre of St. Jeans at 150 East 76th St. in New York with opening night slated for December 1. The show will be produced by the York Theatre Company. It was conceived by Susan H. Schulman,

Michael Lichtefeld, and Lawrence Yurman and developed by Hoagy Bix.

The production will include, of course, many of Carmichael’s most well-known songs—standards such as “Stardust”, “Georgia on My Mind”, “The Nearness of You”, and “Skylark”. But there will also be some lesser known tunes such as “A World of No Goodbyes” and “Serenade to Gabriel”.

One thing that will not happen in *Stardust Road*, according to Hoagy

Bix, is “the slapping of a song into a story that has nothing to do with it and makes no sense.” Instead, Carmichael’s music will be divided into four time periods: the 1920s, New York in the ‘30s, the war years of the ‘40s, and Hollywood in the ‘50s. This will happen through the story of seven friends whose shifting relationships will be told against the backdrop of the early years of ragtime, jazz, and blues.

“Stardust”, will be sung twice, according to Larry Yurman, Musical Director and Arranger. “I like to think it’s timeless,” he said. “It’s first presented early on in the ‘30s world. We reintroduce it in a different context later in the show amongst a bunch of ‘50s material.”

The opening number in the ‘20s section is a dance performance to Carmichael’s “Riverboat Shuffle”. That segment will also include “Up a Lazy River”. “Once we get into what we call New York in the late



EDITOR'S CHOICE

'30s," Yurman explained, "we introduce some of the swing numbers that Hoagy wrote for movies, and the signature song, which is a big number, is 'Sing Me a Swing Song and Let Me Dance'. That's a big event. Others that we do in that period of time include 'Two Sleepy People', 'Blue Orchids', and 'The Nearness of You.'"

The war period will include "Georgia on My Mind", "Memphis in June", and "Can't Get Indiana Off My Mind". There will also be some lesser known wartime songs such as "No More, Toujours L'Amour" and "Don't Forget to Say No, Baby". Another wartime song, "A World of No Goodbyes", Yurman said, "was issued as a v-disc just for purposes of sending recordings overseas for the troops. It's a beautiful find to have a song like that, a wonderful summing up of the world we're trying to create in the World War II section. That will, maybe, surprise people.

"Our final section is sort of a Hol-



lywood Ciro's kind of a nightspot. We are pulling, admittedly, from various worlds. It's more like there's a stage show going on. One of the songs we tap is 'Charlie Two-Step', which was a Boswell Sisters hit in the early '30s. We also grab back to the '30s for 'Lyin' to Myself', which Louis Armstrong did a recording of. Then, we push forward a bit with 'How Little We Know'. As opposed to the swing tunes we present in the New York section, these are a little more sophisticated—I Get Along Without You Very Well', 'Skylark', and reprising 'Stardust', more like a torch song.

"There's also a song Hoagy wrote

in the early '60s," he continued, "called 'Serenade to Gabriel' The concept is that up in heaven there's a radio station playing, and the people who are playing are all these talented people who he knew. And, he mentions them by name—Bix, of course, Glenn Miller, Eddie Lang, Fats Waller. It's a wistful and melancholy event. In the context of our story, it, hopefully, will have some nice impact for not being a particularly famous song that anybody knows." Another song that appears twice, Yurman added, is "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening", explaining, "How can you ignore the Oscar winner? It is there at the beginning as well as a little bit at the very, very end of the show." ("In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening", with lyrics by Johnny Mercer, won the Oscar in 1951 for Best Original Song from the movie, *Here Comes the Groom* starring Bing Crosby and Jane Wyman).

The actors in *Stardust Road* will

be supported by a sextet of musicians that includes Yurman on piano (He is also the pianist and arranger on *After the Ball*, the Christine Ebersole album reviewed on page 39), guitarist Jack Cavari, bassist Sue Williams, drummer Bill Lanham, multi-reedist Greg Thymius, and trumpeter/flugelhornist Les Rodgers. Williams, early in her career, won a scholarship from the legendary bassist Milt Hinton and performed with him on his "The Judge Meets the Section" with fellow bassists Rufus Reid and Doug Weiss (See interview with Reid, on page 23).

Yurman "feels proud to bring this music back to the forefront. Hoagy is more anonymous than other songwriters. Even in his day, people were not aware. They would say, 'Oh, he wrote that?'"

⋮ To order tickets to *Stardust Road*, log onto **boxoffice@yorktheatre.org** or call (212) 935-5820.

ABOUT NJJS

Founded in 1972, The New Jersey Jazz Society has diligently maintained its mission to promote and preserve America’s great art form—jazz. To accomplish our mission, we produce a monthly magazine, *Jersey Jazz*; sponsor live jazz events; and provide scholarships to New Jersey college students studying jazz. Through our outreach program Generations of Jazz, we provide interactive programs focused on the history of jazz. The Society is run by a board of directors who meet monthly to conduct Society business. NJJS membership is comprised of jazz devotees from all parts of the state, the country and the world.

» Visit **www.njjs.org** or email **info@njjs.org** for more information on our programs and services

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JerseyJazz

Magazine of the New Jersey Jazz Society

VOLUME 50 • ISSUE 10

NJJS.org

Jersey Jazz (ISSN 07405928)

is published monthly for members
of The New Jersey Jazz Society

382 Springfield Ave., Suite 217, Summit, NJ 07901
973-229-0543 • info@njjs.org
Membership fee is \$45/year.

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Full Page: \$135, **Half Page:** \$90, **1/3**

Page: \$60, **1/4 Page:** \$30

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Martin Pizzarelli, Playing His Father's Arrangements of Songs from 'Duke to Benny to Gershwin'

Thirty years ago, bassist Martin Pizzarelli and pianist Bob Albanese played together at The Rainbow Room in New York. On Sunday afternoon, November 20, they will reunite at the Madison (NJ) Community Arts Center, joined by saxophonist/clarinetist Linus Wyrsh. The trio, in Pizzarelli's words, will "entertain the audience with a variety of songs from Duke (Ellington) to Benny (Goodman) to (George) Gershwin – all infused with my dad, Bucky Pizzarelli's arrangements. The event is the next Jersey Jazz LIVE! concert, presented by the New Jersey Jazz Society at 3 p.m.

Pizzarelli grew up in Saddle River, NJ, surrounded by jazz luminaries.

His home received regular visits from Goodman, pianist Teddy Wilson, and tenor saxophonist Zoot Sims, among many others. In 1993, he was part of the opening act for Frank Sinatra's world tour, along with his brother, guitarist/vocalist John Pizzarelli, and pianist Ray Kennedy. He has also performed at such venues as Carnegie Hall and the Blue Note and with several classical orchestras such as the New Jersey Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Dallas Symphony, and the Boston and New York Pops. In 2004, he released his own album as a leader, *Triple Play* on Victoria Records, with his father and Kennedy. He has played as a sideman on more than 30 recordings.

Albanese is equally at home in jazz, Latin, pop, and theatrical musical surroundings. He has worked with a wide variety of artists, including Anita O'Day, Buddy Rich, Rita Moreno, and Leslie Uggams. He is currently accompanist for Ben Vereen, performing with him regularly.

Wyrsh, born in Switzerland and based in New York since 2008, performed on the 2018 Grammy Award-winning children's album, *All The Sounds*, by Lucy Kalantari & the Jazz Cats. Through the years he

has played or recorded with Bucky Pizzarelli, guitarist Gene Bertoncini, and pianists Larry Fuller and David Hazeltine, among many others. He also leads his own groups such as the Linus NYC Quartet with award-winning composer and vocalist Gizem Gokoglu, accordionist Dallas Vietty, and Wyrsh's father Urs on bass.

: *The Madison Community Arts Center is located at 10 Kings Road in Madison, NJ. Admission to this event will be \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members payable at the door with cash or credit card. There will be light refreshments for purchase. Proof of vaccination is required; masks are optional. Funding for the NJJS Socials has been made possible, in part, by funds from Morris Arts through the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/ Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.*



Mariel Bildsten's Quintet: 'Duke Ellington, Horace Silver, Plus Some of My Originals'

Mariel Bildsten moved from Santa Barbara, CA, to New York to study jazz at The New School and remained in NYC after graduating in 2015. She is currently the lead trombonist for Arturo O'Farrill's Afro Latin Jazz Ensemble, which appears every Sunday night at New York's Birdland. And, her debut album, *Backbone* (Outside in Music: 2019) was called "a joy to encounter" by *JazzTimes*' Dan Bilawsky. *DownBeat*'s Stephanie Jones added that it "showcases the quintet's irrepressible spontaneity."

The album was recorded in one night, between 6 p.m. and 2 a.m. at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Dizzy's Club where Bildsten had a week-long gig in January 2019. "We used the week at

Dizzy's as our rehearsals," she told *Jersey Jazz*'s Schaen Fox ("Talking Jazz", September 2021). "That was Tuesday through Saturday. Then, we recorded on Sunday, so everyone was ready to go. It was quick and dirty and really fun."

On Sunday, November 20, at 3 p.m., Bildsten will bring a quintet to the Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts in Toms River, NJ, part of the Jazz on a Sunday Afternoon series. "We'll play my arrangements of songs by Kenny Dorham, Horace Silver, Duke Ellington, and others," she said, "plus some of my originals."

Her band will include some of most exciting young stars of the New York jazz scene: tenor saxophonist Stacy Dillard, pianist Miki Yamana-



ka, bassist Russell Hall, and drummer Charles Goold. Dillard, who was on the *Backbone* album, has been called, "A young saxophonist of serious promise," by *The New York Times*' Ben Ratliff. Veteran alto saxophonist Antonio Hart, who has played with Yamanaka, said she "will be recognized as one of the most exceptional artists of her generation, as she is already one of the most talented and dedicated musicians from Japan."

Hall, a native of Kingston, Jamaica, is an Emmy, Grammy and Golden Globe nominated jazz artist. He has

performed with such musicians as Kathleen Battle, Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Barry Harris, Wayne Shorter, and Jon Batiste and is a member of pianist Emmett Cohen's trio. Goold is a graduate of Juilliard and began his career performing with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. He has also played with vocalists Jon Hendricks and Andy Bey and the Cab Calloway Orchestra.

When Bildsten led a septet at the Morris Museum's Bickford Theatre in January 2020, *Jersey Jazz* reported on "the pure joy expressed by everyone on stage, a passion and excitement that permeated the entire audience."

📌 To order tickets, for the Nov. 20 concert, log onto **grunincenter.org** or call (732) 255-0500. *Jazz on a Sunday Afternoon* is made possible, in part, through the support of the Wintrode Family Foundation. The New Jersey Jazz Society is a proud supporter of this series.

Variety of Performers Ensures ‘Something for Everyone’

BY MITCHELL SEIDEL

A few decades ago, a group of people in central Florida created the Suncoast Dixieland Jazz Classic, featuring traditional jazz bands from around the country. Over the years, realizing that not everyone likes one type of jazz, they gradually began booking swing musicians and even some beboppers. The event eventually changed its name to the Suncoast Jazz Festival.

This year’s festival takes place November 18-20 at Clearwater Beach’s Sheraton Sand Key Resort and the Marriott Suites on Sand Key. Weather won’t be a problem because the event takes over bars and ballrooms at the hotels, with one excep-

tion: an opening morning “Parasol Parade” second line around the Sheraton pool. There could be a lot of slogans that apply to the Suncoast Jazz Festival: “Music That Makes You Happy,” “Music That Swings,” “Music We Love.” But one that best describes the event is “Music That Satisfies.” It can safely be said that you’ll never walk away from the Suncoast Jazz Festival without a strong feeling of satisfaction with the groups and individual musicians that comprise them; there’s something for everyone.

There are more than a few repeat performers -- artists whose popularity with Suncoast audiences warranted return engagements.



Nate Najar, left, and John Lamb at a previous Suncoast Festival.

Saxophonist/clarinetist Adrian Cunningham is counted among that group. This year he’s bringing his trad/swing group, Professor Cunningham’s Old School. His repertoire ranges from sax to singing, so you’re guaranteed a bit of everything (Last year, a CD release set for an album the band made from their homes during

Covid literally was a pajama party).

Dave Bennett also ranks among the talented returnees. When he first started appearing at the event several years ago, it was as a Benny Goodman-style clarinetist. Then, during a jam session he revealed his talents as a Jerry Lee Lewis Rockabilly performer. Ever since then,

SUNCOAST JAZZ FESTIVAL

both his swing and rock personalities have been in attendance.

Vibist Jason Marsalis of New Orleans is a newer but recent repeater. His repertoire includes everything from Lionel Hampton to Ray Brown, but always involving swing. Speaking of New Orleans, a festival newcomer from the Crescent City is trumpeter Kermit

Ruffins, who still makes his home in Louisiana but also tours the country.

The dynamic violinist Tom Rigney and his group Flambeau can give you everything from jazz fiddling to blues to country & western to boogie-woogie. It may seem a tad varied, yet their sets have tunes that move seamlessly into

each other; and they're popular at numerous jazz parties.

Pianist/vocalist Judy Carmichael of Long Island is one of those jazz musicians with a long touring schedule. Oddly enough, for all her performances, this will be her first year at Suncoast. An accomplished stride pianist, she is very much in the tradition of the festival's past lineups.

Among the talent are many locals who have built increasing reputations at home and abroad. Guitarist Nate Najar recently released an album, *Jazz Samba Pra Sempre* on the Jazz Samba Forever label, paying tribute to Stan Getz and Charlie Byrd's bossa nova recordings from 50 years ago. It features vocalist Daniela Soldade, who will be performing with him in Clearwater Beach. Heather Thorn, a Canadian expat now living in Orlando, is the xylophonist-leader of the swing group Vivacity. Their selections include everything from

the 1930s through the 1960s. La Lucha, a modern jazz trio often heard in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area will be featured in various configurations around the festival. The festival also takes advantage of having so many swing players in house for the weekend by having a Friday evening swing dance.

Student big bands from the region's award-winning schools will be performing during the morning as part of the festival's jazz education component. Open master classes are available for the students as well.

Every year the festival honors some senior "legends of jazz." This year they will be tenor saxophonist Houston Person, bassist Ed Lamb, a Duke Ellington band alum, and pianist Johnny Varro. Awards will be presented during the course of the festival.

For information about three-day tickets and individual day and night tickets, go to suncoastjazzfestival.com



PHOTO BY MITCHELL SEIDEL

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PHOTOS BY JOHN HESTER AND MITCHELL SEIDEL



The afternoon began in the foyer with Jerome Kern's "The Way You Look Tonight" played by three Newark Academy Rising Stars: pianist Ben Collins-Siegel and drummer Ben Schwartz of Maplewood and bassist Ethan Freed of Montville. It concluded with the Gershwins' "Lady Be Good", a rousing finale featuring all of the performers at the New Jersey Jazz Society's 50th Anniversary Concert, held Sunday, October 9, at Saint Elizabeth University's Dolan Hall in Morristown.

In between was an unforgettable salute to jazz and the American Songbook, recognizing the New Jersey Jazz Society's Golden Anniversary and honoring Living Legends bassist Bill Crow and tenor saxophonist Houston Person. The performers were a blend of seasoned veterans—such as the Co-Musical Directors tenor saxophonist/flutist Don Braden and

PHOTO BY HESTER

NJJS GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

pianist Larry Fuller, trumpeter Warren Vache, bassist Matthew Parrish, and drummers Jason Tiemann and Nick Scheuble—and emerging talents such as vocalist Lucy Wijnands, keyboardist Leonieke Scheuble and the 2022 NJJS Scholarship winners trumpeter Liam Sutcliffe, vocalist Jimmy Waltman, bassist Sam AuBuchon, and guitarist Derick Campos.

NJJS President Cydney Halpin welcomed everyone by saying, “It is my incredible honor and privilege to shepherd this organization into our 50th year.” She reminded the audience that the Jazz Society is funded through membership dues and dona-

tions and thanked everyone for their support. Halpin also called attention to the visual art on display in the foyer from five artists: Suzanne Beason, Robert Diken, Mitchell Seidel, June Lee VanDunk, and Lucy Wijnands.

Author/music producer Chuck Granata, serving as MC, pointed out that, “There is and always has been a strong connection between what we call the American Songbook and jazz.” Songs by such composers as George and Ira Gershwin, Cole Porter, Johnny Mercer, and Rodgers & Hart, he said, shine “within the jazz context, and in the ‘40s and ‘50s, they were embraced by such singers as Bing

“**THERE IS A STRONG CONNECTION BETWEEN THE AMERICAN SONGBOOK AND JAZZ.**”



Houston Person

PHOTO BY HESTER

NJJS GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY



Larry Fuller



Bill Crow

Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, and Billie Holiday.” Then, Granata introduced the house rhythm section—Fuller, Parrish, and Tiemann—playing two of those songs, Burton Lane and Yip Harburg’s “Old Devil Moon” and the Gershwins’ “But Not For Me”.

Among other highlights were Person, Braden and Vache’s performance of the 1940 standard, “Broadway” (Wilbur H. Bird, Teddy McRade,

Henri Woode), a tune long associated with Count Basie ... Wijnand’s vocals on Vernon Duke’s “Autumn in New York” and the Gershwins’ “They Can’t Take That Away From Me”. . . Crow and Leonieke Scheuble duoing on Sigmund Romberg’s “Softly In a Morning Sunrise” ... the Scholarship students playing the Gershwins’ “Our Love is Here to Stay” ... Crow’s bass solo on Duke Elling-

ton’s “Satin Doll” ... and Crow’s vocal on “Low Down Dirty Dog Blues”.

There were some other special moments—Bill Crow’s story about playing with Dinah Washington in London, Vache’s reminiscences about playing and recording with Rosemary Clooney ... and a trio of three bassists playing together—honoree Crow, veteran Parrish, and Scholarship winner AuBuchon.

As the afternoon came to a close, Granata described the finale as “the very solid jazz tradition—the jam session.” The Gershwins’ “Lady Be Good”, he said, “became very popular among jazz musicians in the late ‘40s and throughout the 1950s. So, here’s the entire ensemble performing it. I can’t think of a better group of people to do one of those Jazz at the Philharmonic jam sessions.”



PHOTOS BY HESTER

Left photo, Lucy Wijnands; right photo, from left: Fuller, Wijnands, Warren Vache, Don Braden, Person, Liam Sutcliffe

NJJS GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY



From left, Derick Campos, Braden, Crow, Jimmy Waltman



LEFT PHOTO BY SEIDEL; RIGHT PHOTO BY HESTER

NJJS GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY



PHOTOS BY HESTER

From left, Ethan Freed, Ben Collins-Siegel, Ben Schwartz

NJJS GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY



From left: Leonieke Scheuble on Hammond Organ with Crow on bass and Jason Tiemann on drums; Chuck Granata and Cydney Halpin.



PHOTOS BY SEIDEL

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Bassist Rufus Reid To Be Honored At Annual SOPAC Concert

*“J.J. (Johnson) Was One of
My Heroes. He Was a
Gentleman and Treated the
Band with the Utmost Respect.”*

BY JAY SWEET

With an incredible resume as a sideman, bandleader, and educator, bassist Rufus Reid represents one of the most significant links to the great jazz tradition. His remarkable accomplishments have not gone unnoticed, and on November 19, Reid will be honored as part of the annual “Giants of Jazz” series at the South Orange Performing Arts Center. This concert, produced for more than 20 years by bassist John Lee, was last held in November 2019, having been

canceled in 2020 and 2021 by the pandemic and damage from Hurricane Ida. Those performing and honoring Reid at this year’s event include some of the most celebrated names in jazz, including pianist Bill Charlap, guitarist Russell Malone, and saxophonists Mark Gross, Don Braden, and Eric Alexander, among many others.

Rufus Reid was born on February 10, 1944, in Atlanta; however, most of his youth was spent in Sacramento where he first began as a trumpet

player. Reid told me he was exposed to music early on, recalling that, “There was always music in the house. My mother played piano well enough to play hymns in the church, and my father was an amateur pianist who I really didn’t get to know till I was about 18 years old because my parents divorced. I had a sister who sang and played piano. I had two older brothers, who are much older than me. One played tenor sax, and one still plays clarinet very well.” Reid remembered



that he first got into jazz when his brother gave him a copy of the Miles Davis album *Walkin'* (Prestige: 1959). "I was playing trumpet at the time but had no idea what they were doing on that record; but I knew I loved it."

Knowing he was likely to get drafted, Reid joined the military after high school, where he played trumpet in the Air Force Band. When serving in the military, he had a lot of down time, and the bass was often not being used, so he began to practice the bass daily. While on a military base in Montgomery, AL, Reid started to play the electric bass in a band and took further notice of the bass players he heard on record, citing Percy Heath and Charles Mingus as early influences. Reid then found further inspiration in the playing of Ray Brown. "When I was stationed in Japan, I got a chance to see some of the greats like Duke Ellington, Modern Jazz Quartet, Horace Parlan, Toshiko Akiyoshi,

Philly Joe Jones, Buddy Rich, Louis Bellson, and Blue Mitchell. I listened to and bought a lot of records. Then I heard Ray Brown live, and I said, 'That's it, that's what I want to do.' He recalled meeting Brown after one of these concerts, a significant event for the then-aspiring bassist. "He and the Oscar Peterson Trio were signing autographs, and Ray Brown saw me. I didn't look Japanese, and I was taller than most of the people there, and he said, 'Here, hold my bass.' After signing autographs, he said, 'Give me my bass. Who are you?' I told him I was in the Air Force band, and he said, 'Come and walk with me to the hotel.' So I got the nerve to ask for a lesson. He said, 'Be at the hotel tomorrow morning at 10. I was there at 9 and ready. I stayed with him for about an hour.'" For many years, Reid and Brown remained acquaintances.

After the military, Reid attended Northwestern University in Evanston,

PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER DRUKKER

GIANTS OF JAZZ

IL, a Chicago suburb where he studied music and played in the orchestra. As a young bassist, the Chicago area provided Reid with the connections and experience he needed to become a professional. While in the Windy City, Reid became the house bassist at the Jazz Showcase. “The Jazz Showcase,” he recalled, “was my school. I got to play with everybody, and most of the guys were much older than me—Dexter Gordon, Gene Ammons, James Moody, Illinois Jacquet, Kenny Dorham, McCoy Tyner, Bobby Hutcherson. Harold Land, Joe Henderson. It was an amazing time

for me.” Reid can heard playing at this critical period of development on the album *Gene Ammons and Dexter Gordon -The Chase!* (Prestige: 1970).

One of the musicians Reid most admired in Chicago was saxophonist Eddie Harris, who was already a well-known recording artist. “I knew some people with Eddie Harris’ phone number, and I just decided to call him. Evidently, he heard me play and knew about me. When we spoke about playing together, he told me to stay in school and get my degree first, and opportunities would come after I graduated. That really messed



me up because I was ready to quit school to play with him.” Reid eventually joined Harris after graduation and recorded four albums with him, including *Instant Death* (Atlantic: 1971) and *Is It In* (Atlantic: 1974). Harris, Reid said was “the most influential person in my entire career.”

During his time with Harris, Reid was hired by jazz educator Jamey Abersold to do a bass workshop where

he sold about 25 copies of *Ray Brown’s Bass Method* (Hal Leonard: 1999). He told Harris about selling the books, and Harris recommended that Reid write his own book. He also advised the young bassist to be sure to own the publishing rights to the book. Sound advice that led to the 1974 publication of *The Evolving Bassist* (Warner Brothers), which still serves as standard repertoire for bass students.

After working for some time with Harris, Reid moved to New York, where he began working with the Thad Jones- Mel Lewis Big Band. On the first gig, he was asked to play “Tiptoe,” a difficult chart for bassists. “It was a test,” he recalled. It was with that band that Reid began to gain a reputation in New York. Around that same time, Thad Jones was serving as an Artist-In-Residence at William Paterson University in Wayne, NJ. Through Jones’ connection with the

“**THE JAZZ SHOWCASE
WAS MY SCHOOL.**”

GIANTS OF JAZZ

school, Reid met Dr. Martin Krivin and began doing some master classes. When Jones started spending more time in Denmark, he failed to show up to the University, and Krivin was concerned about the program he was building. Krivin called Reid and asked if he knew Thad Jones' plans or whereabouts. When Reid told him he was unsure of Jones' plans, Krivin asked Reid if he could help in Jones' absence. At first, Reid was reluctant because he had come to New York to play and not teach. After some reconsideration, Rufus Reid became Professor Reid, helping to build one of the most celebrated jazz programs in the world. He remained at WPU for more than 20 years and remembers how crazy his schedule was at the time. "I played at Bradley's in the city a lot during that time, often with Kenny Barron, who also taught at William Paterson. We would teach



all day, drag our asses, and fight the traffic to get into the city, and the gig wouldn't start till 10, and we would play till 2 in the morning." Despite the challenges of juggling teaching and performing, Reid enjoyed his time at the University, is proud of his work there, and appreciated the "support" the faculty and staff gave him.

A discussion of all the musicians Rufus Reid has worked with would be a monumental work, but one of those Reid was connected with for some time was the great trombonist/com-

poser J.J. Johnson. "J.J. was one of my heroes. He was a gentleman and treated the band with the utmost respect. His playing was pristine. The band was Renee Rosnes (piano), Billy Drummond (drums), and Ralph Moore (saxophone), and the group was unbelievable. One time we played in Amsterdam, J.J. Johnson slipped a note under my hotel door that said, 'Thanks for last night; you guys played your ass off; love J.J.' Nobody ever did that! He was a gorgeous man to be around."

Another of the many notables Reid worked with was tenor saxophonist Stan Getz, a man who was known to be difficult at times. "Playing with Getz was special for me. He used to tell me, 'You played with Dexter Gordon, and he is a happy drinker, but I am different.' He wasn't really a nice guy, but he was okay with me. When he was with me, he didn't drink. We did a tour with Kenny Barron and

Victor Lewis.. We did two recordings together, which we made in one day at the club Jazzhus Montmartre in Paris in 1987 (*Anniversary!* and *Serenity*, both on EmArcy:1991). At the time of the performance, we had a month of playing under our belts. Stan had a golden sound, and we knew we had to play well with him. To me, his worst enemy was when he took the horn out of his mouth, but, musically, he was great. Many Stan Getz nuts believe that the records we made were some of his best, and I have to admit they are wonderful, and I feel blessed to be part of that. At the time of the gig, Stan was really cool."

In addition to working with legends, Reid has made several albums as a leader and co-leader. "I wanted to be part of a celebrated trio, but it just never clicked. I was not sure I wanted to be a leader, but drummer Akira Tana had a nice musical connection, and

GIANTS OF JAZZ

THE FUTURE OF JAZZ IS IN GOOD HANDS.

we had a band for 10 years (TanaReid) and made six albums.” At 78 years young, Rufus Reid is still incredibly active. At the time of our interview, he was preparing for three nights at Dizzy’s Club. Some upcoming projects and releases he is particularly excited about include some recent commissions to further create a genre of composed music with jazz sensibilities. This style of writing can be heard at times on his newest release, *Celebration Rufus Reid Trio, with the Sirius Quartet* (Sunnyside Records: 2022)

“The future of jazz,” Reid believes, “is in great hands, but there are many more players than opportunities where younger players can hone their

skills. I had the support of playing six nights a week for years. Some students I have can play more and show more technique at 19 and 20 than I can ever imagine, but they don’t know what to do with it and haven’t been given the opportunity. I would like the players to be a little more patient and avoid showing off as much. I believe that when I played with Stan Getz, the rhythm section could make him sound better than he could with any other rhythm section; the players of today have so many distractions, but the really creative players will find a way. Some great players are coming out now who are serious and know their history, so that’s encouraging.”

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Invitation to the Dance: Dee Dee Bridgewater/Savion Glover and Regina Carter/Carolyn Dorfman

“Jazz Is Dance Music. The Closer You Get to the Body Response, the More the Music is Going to Swing, and the Better It’s Going to Feel.”

BY SANFORD JOSEPHSON



Dee Dee Bridgewater



Savion Glover

The comment at left was made more than 20 years ago by Wynton Marsalis (in an interview for the book, *Jazz A History of America’s Music* by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns). It could serve as a prelude for two of the programs at this month’s TD James Moody Jazz Festival at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

Jazz Dance will be featured twice: Dee Dee Bridgewater and Savion Glover, “Interpretations”, November 12; and Regina Carter and Carolyn Dorfman Dance: “Jazz Legends and The Power of NOW!”, November 16.

Dee Dee Bridgewater/Savion Glover

GLOVER, WHO IS NJPAC’S TAP DANCE Advisor, burst onto the Broadway scene 38 years ago as the original lead in *Tap Dance Kid*. In 2016, he received a Tony nomination for his choreography for *Shuffle Along, or, The Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed*, a musical with

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NJPAC

TD JAMES MOODY JAZZ FESTIVAL

score by Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle, based on the original book of the 1921 musical revue, *Shuffle Along*.

At presstime, Glover was reluctant to share any details about his TD James Moody Festival performance except to say, “I’m sort of in preview mode. I know the overall goal is to share the space with the great Dee Dee Bridgewater and explore the music and share my interpretation of the ongoing story and narrative. Being with Dee Dee is like being with another musician,” he continued, “her instrument being her voice. My approach to interpreting at times what she is doing or my approach to accompanying what she’s doing is what I look forward to at those moments, just trying to make a choice.

“It’s different for me performing with a vocal musician versus another dancer,” he added, “because I have many opportunities. I can either accompany or I can take the lead or I

can be what I call ambient, just be a sound. Vocals allow me to do more exploring in the dance. Dee Dee allows for that to happen. Words demand a particular interpretation.

“When you have no lyrics,” he explained, “you can create your own words to that song. One of my inspirations is John Coltrane. There is a way to interpret what one wants to say through sound. I think the words are very important, but you have an opportunity with sound to put your own words to the sound. If you know the music, you can hear what the music is saying. Then, you will find the words.”

As a dancer, Glover was inspired by some of the tap dancing giants of the ‘20s, ‘30s, and ‘40s like Charles ‘Honi’ Coles, Howard ‘Sandman’ Sims, and Henry LeTang. “Those people mean the world to me,” he said. “Those people are the reason I exist in this form—the form of the man that I am, the form of the artist that I am, the form of the in-



Scene from PRIMA!

terpreter and the expressionist that I am. They have impacted and influenced my life. They mean everything to me.”

Glover is also dedicated to expanding the world of dance, primarily through school tours. “I travel about. I spread the word,” he said, also mentioning such other dance giants as Jimmy Slyde, Lon Chaney, George Hillman, and Gregory Hines. “It’s my proud privilege and duty to make sure their names are mentioned wherever I am. I continue to spread the word and share what has been shared with me. That’s what keeps me motivated.”

Regina Carter/Carolyn Dorfman

“JAZZ LEGENDS AND THE POWER OF NOW!”, presented by Carolyn Dorfman Dance, will encompass three works. The opening work will be a reprise of “PRIMA!”, dance interpretations of the music of Louis Prima, which premiered at the Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts in Toms River, NJ, in 2021 and was performed in April 2022 at the South Orange Performing Arts Center. It will be followed by “NOW!”, choreographed by Juel D. Lane to music by rapper/singer/dancer Leo RA Soul. The third segment of the per-

TD JAMES MOODY JAZZ FESTIVAL



Carolyn Dorfman



Regina Carter

formance will feature violinist Regina Carter, playing live and intermixing with recorded music to “Mwana Ta Li Tambula”, an Ugandan Jewish folk song, Bennie Benjamin and George Weiss’ “I’ll Never Be Free”, and Ella Fitzgerald’s “Accentuate the Positive.”

“PRIMA!” was created during the pandemic, and, said, Dorfman, “it was quite an extraordinary feat. It’s the only work I’ve created that has more than one dancer where the dancers don’t touch.” When I first interviewed Dorfman in 2021, prior to the Grun-in performance, she told me the goal of “PRIMA!” was “to create a musical journey for the audience, with a broad range of humor and virtuosity.” Another goal was to feature “the virtuosity and strength of the women that he (Louis Prima) worked with. You’re talking about an age that was very male dominant. So, trying to find that balance was important to me.” Among the musical selections are “Sing Sing

Sing”, probably Prima’s most famous composition; and a medley of Prima’s “Jump Jive an’ Wail”, his “Oh Babe”, and the Sherman Brothers’ “I Wanna Be Like You”, sung by Prima in the 1967 Disney movie, *The Jungle Book*.

The second segment of the performance, “NOW!”, said Dorfman, “is quite a powerful and moving work. There are 11 dancers, and it’s got a very different vibe, very contemporary. It’s a very rhythmic and driving score.” Lane, the choreographer, started his career in Dorfman’s company and now is part of Camille A. Brown & Dancers. He has also been a featured choreographer for Ailey II, the Alvin Ailey Dance Company’s secondary company that focuses on emerging young dancers and innovative choreographers.

The third work is the premiere of a piece called “The Attitude of Doing”. That, Dorfman said, “comes from a line in an Ella Fitzgerald

DORFMAN PHOTO COURTESY OF CAROLYN DORFMAN DANCE; CARTER PHOTO COURTESY OF NJPAC

👁️👁️ (AS A DANCER) YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE WORDS. 🗨️🗨️

song, 'Accentuate the Positive' (written by Harold Arlen/Johnny Mercer), which is the closing piece."

"The Attitude of Doing" will feature live violin performances by Regina Carter, who released an album on Okeh Records in 2017 called *Ella: Accentuate the Positive*. Carter's violin will weave in and out of the dance performances. When not playing, she will sometimes simply move with the company. "Accentuate the Positive" will be danced to Ella Fitzgerald's recording, but Carter will finish the piece live at the very end.

When Carter was interviewed in the January 2021 issue of *Jersey Jazz* ("Regina Carter & John Schreiber Pay

Tribute to Ella Fitzgerald"), she related a story from early in her career when the saxophonist Big Nick Nicholas told her how important it was to know the lyrics of a song in order to properly interpret it instrumentally.

Dorfman resonated with that story. As a dancer, she said, "You have to know the words. You have to understand what you're saying. For dancers," she added, "it's about intention. Whether it's words, whether it's tension, whether it's imagery, the clearer the creator, choreographer, composer, it's what gives nuance.

"It's a dual thing in jazz because you're learning an existing tune, you're taking that in, processing it as

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Other TD James Moody Festival Events

- NOV 8:** A Beautiful Bond, free virtual program featuring bassist Reggie Workman, drummer Nasheet Waits, pianist Sullivan Fortner
- NOV 10** Terence Blanchard and The E-Collective & Turtle Island Quartet; Fantasia and Jazzmeia Horn
- NOV 12** Bethany Baptist Church Jazz Vespers: Jon Faddis
- NOV 13** “Trouble No More”, a Tribute to the Allman Brothers album, Eat A Peach; Yellowjackets
- NOV 17** Jazz Jams at Clements Place
- NOV 18** NJ Music Educators Assn. All-State Jazz Band and Choir with Special Guest, Christian McBride; Issac Delgado and Alain Perez
- NOV 19** Bethany Baptist Church Jazz Vespers on Film: Oscar Peterson: Black + White; Represent! A Night of Jazz, Hip Hop, and Spoken Word with Rakim and Chuck D; Maria Schneider Orchestra
- NOV 20** Dorthaan’s Place: Vanessa Rubin Trio; 11th Annual Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition

a musician, recreating your version, with liberty. Dancers,” Dorfman explained, “have a similar thing. You listen to the music, and then you make your mark on it. I want you to hear it also how I hear it. Or, what it makes me feel or what it makes me embody. You want it to be musically connected, but you also want to offer another facet if you can, to make people see the music in a different way.”

“Jazz Legends and the Power of NOW!” has been co-commissioned by NJPAC. “It’s exciting that they’re presenting this work,” Dorfman said. “It’s wonderful to do this work in a place that Regina and I consider a home theater, where we have roots and strong connections. There is a post-performance reception, with limited capacity, where we’re hoping to have some NJPAC jazz students playing and, hopefully, some of Regina’s students from the Geri Allen Jazz Camp (Carter is Artistic Direc-

tor). Regina and I,” she continued, “are very strong arts educators. That’s something we feel deeply about doing, about training future artists and sharing the art with audiences, talking to audiences, letting them in, in a way.”

This year marks Carolyn Dorfman Dance’s 40th anniversary. “It’s kind of hard to believe,” Dorfman said, “but you look back and see all the incredible people and shoulders you stand on. Great musical artists I’ve worked with—composers and dancers, visual artists and set designers.”

: *Dee Bridgewater and Savion Glover: “Interpretations” will be presented at 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 12 in the Victoria Theater; Regina Carter and Carolyn Dorfman Dance: “Jazz Legends and The Power of NOW!” will be at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, November 16, also in the Victoria Theater. Tickets to both events can be ordered by logging onto njpac.org*



Bassist Adi Meyerson: Inspired by Sonny Rollins Recordings to Switch from Electric to Upright

“I Would Go to Smalls, the Fat Cat, and All the Downtown Sessions and Play and Make Friends and Connections”

BY SANFORD JOSEPHSON

As a teenager in Israel, Adi Meyerson played the electric bass and was “into fusion and rock, listening to Jaco (Pastorius) and stuff. I was about 17, and I think it was a family friend who gave me a bunch of Sonny Rollins albums. I kinda listened to them and was like, ‘What’s that? How do I get the bass to sound like that?’”

The albums were two 1956 Prestige recordings: *Saxophone Colossus* with Doug Watkins on bass, along with pianist Tommy Flanagan

and drummer Max Roach; and *Tenor Madness* featuring Paul Chambers on bass in a quintet that also included John Coltrane on saxophone, Red Garland on piano, and Philly Joe Jones on drums.

Based on those recordings, Meyerson made a decision. “I wanted to start playing upright. I knew I couldn’t get the bass to sound on electric like what I heard the bass sound like on those recordings. So, then I started playing upright bass

PHOTO BY RONALD STEWART

RISING STAR

after my junior year in high school.”

After high school, Meyerson was accepted into a new partnership program between the Tel Aviv-based Center for Jazz Studies at the Israel Conservatory of Music and the School of Jazz and Contemporary Music at New York’s The New School. The program was founded by New School alumnus, Israeli jazz pianist Amit Golan, who was one of Meyerson’s teachers. “You could do two years in Tel Aviv and two years in New York,” Meyerson said. “I was only playing bass for about three months at that point,” she added, “but I guess he saw something in me and decided to give me a chance and accept me into the program. I had to do an extra year in Israel so I could be ready to go to New York.”

Meyerson had visited New York a few times before she moved there for school, “and I did know some Israelis who were already here. One of the first

people I met when I moved was fellow bassist Luques Curtis. She helped me out a lot and connected me to a lot of people. I’ve always been kind of independent, and that kind of translated to the move to New York. I was really excited and hungry to be around the music all the time. And, so, I would go out a lot. I would go to Smalls, the Fat Cat, and all the downtown sessions and play and make friends and connections. Then, I would just reach out to people I wanted to play with. I was kind of bold. I reached out to (drummer) Johnathan Blake. He was so sweet and nice to me.”

She also had a chance to learn from some of jazz’s top bassists. At The New School, she studied under Bob Cranshaw (who played with Rollins) and Reggie Workman. And, she took private lessons from Ron Carter. “They’re all very different as teachers and players,” she said. “Bob would ask



me to get a band together to play for him. That’s kind of how our lessons were. We would just talk about the music. I think the greatest lesson I learned from him was about the bass itself—about feel, a feeling, the joy in the music. No matter what the gig was, he just came into it with love and with joy. I thought that was beautiful.”

With Workman, “It was about the role of the bass player in the band because we were in a band setting—How to create intensity through the instrument; just be as intense when you’re walking a bass line as when you’re soloing; the soloing shouldn’t be more important than the bass line.”

After graduating from The New School, Meyerson received her Master of Music Degree from the Manhattan School of Music. She started studying privately with Carter while still at The New School and “throughout my masters degree.

PHOTO BY JACK GRASSA

RIISING STAR

That's actually the longest I've studied with a private teacher. I think the biggest thing I learned from Mr. Carter was discipline because I've always been very self-taught."

The 31-year-old Meyerson has released two albums: *Where We Stand* (CD Baby: 2018) and *I Want to Sing My Heart Out in Praise of Life* (self-released: 2021). The latter album was funded by a grant from the New York Foundation of the Arts. Both albums featured Meyerson's original compositions.

"For my senior recital at The New School," she said, "I played two of my original compositions, one of which, 'A Touch of Grey', made the first album. I found I really enjoyed composing. It's just another part of my identity as an artist and how I express myself through art. It's kind of 50-50 with me—playing the instrument and creating and composing. I



Meyerson with Bria Skonberg at this year's Morristown Jazz & Blues Festival

chose the grad program at the Manhattan School of Music because it is very composition heavy. And, I did get a lot of opportunities to write."

AllAboutJazz's Jerome Wilson, reviewing *Where We Stand*, said Meyerson is "a young bassist and composer" who "shows a healthy respect for jazz tradition but also shows the ability to play around with more open-ended musical forms." In reaction to that, Meyerson said, "I came from the more traditional jazz. I try to make sure you hear where it came from but

also where it's going. I was so rooted in Duke Ellington, Oscar Pettiford, Coleman Hawkins. All of these people have influenced me as a player. So, you're always going to hear a little bit of that. I'm still growing and evolving."

Trumpeter Freddie Hendrix, who performed with Meyerson on *Where We Stand*, described her as "a kind soul, standing on her own two feet, with no fear of her contemporaries. With a good pen for composition as well as covering all of the bases as far as bass playing is con-

cerned, Adi is a wonderful addition and contributor to great women in jazz in this music that we play."

I Want to Sing My Heart Out in Praise of Life is a suite of music inspired by the life of contemporary Japanese visual artist, Yayoi Kusama. The music was composed with a technique called synesthesia, "where I see colors and notes together," Meyerson said. She first saw an exhibit of Kusama's art in 2017. In the album's liner notes, she wrote, "Kusama's color palette used on her paintings were almost identical to some of the colors I see when I hear pitches." Jon D'Auria, reviewing the album in *Bass Magazine*, wrote that "Meyerson's compositions are ambitious and fearless, which suits her bold bass playing in the best possible way."

Since moving to New York, Meyerson has also been active as an educator. She teaches in Jazz House Kids'

PHOTO BY JACK GRASSA

“ADI IS A JOY TO PLAY WITH.”

CHiCA Power Residency and Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Jazz for Young People program. CHiCA Power is an instrumental residency for young female musicians, ages 12 to 18, with at least one year of playing experience and the ability to read music. “CHiCA Power,” said Meyerson, “is a great program. It was free for the kids, which speaks for itself. With CHiCA Power, I realized how much weight it has for young girls to see other people who look like them and are doing what they want to do. It carries a lot of weight for them to see an all-female band play. And, it gives them a space to feel comfortable making mistakes.”

JALC’s Jazz for Young People Program features traveling professional

jazz ensembles presenting interactive performances for New York City students. “It’s a beautiful program,” Meyerson said. “A lot of the schools I’ve done have been on the outskirts of the city or in areas that don’t have as many clubs, performances, and places where you can just go and hear music. So, I think that’s cool.”

At the Morristown Jazz and Blues Festival on September 17, Meyerson performed as part of trumpeter/vocalist Bria Skonberg’s quintet. “Adi,” said Skonberg, “is a joy to play with, a true professional with immense depth and a well of creativity that is just being discovered. I hope she will become a prominently featured voice in the New York scene for years to come.”



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OTHER VIEWS

BY JOE LANG

When any discussion arises about the living jazz giants, the name of bassist **Ron Carter** is sure to come up. Carter has been regarded as a premier bassist since his days with Miles Davis, starting in 1963. About six years ago, noted producer and documentarian Peter Schnall was so taken by a performance of Carter at the Blue Note in New York City that he conceived the idea of making a documentary film about Carter. The film finally was premiered on PBS on October 21. *Ron Carter: Finding the Right Notes* (IN+OUT Records—77151) is the soundtrack from the film. It contains 10 tracks that find Carter in a variety of musical settings from duos with Christian McBride, Bill Frisell and Jon Batiste to three tracks with the WDR Big Band. Throughout the album, Carter's strong and imaginative bass



playing is evident, illustrative of the musical magic that he has been providing to listeners for almost 60 years. InAndOut-Records.com

Flying Home (Challenge—73351) finds German drummer **Reinhardt Winkler** in the company of three American jazz musicians, tenor saxophonist Harry Allen, pianist John di Martino, and bassist Dezron

Douglas, plus Austrian vocalist Simone Kopmajer for a dozen swinging tracks. Winkler is a musical drummer who keeps perfect time while adding just the right accents. Allen is front and center for eight selections, “Swinging at the Haven,” “Bossa Nova U.S.A.,” “Poor Butterfly,” “Flying Home,” “Didn’t You Say,” “Samba de Orfeu,” “Have You Met Miss Jones”, and “Struttin’ with Some Barbecue.” Kopmajer adds tasty vocals on “Moonlight Serenade,” “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes,” “I’ve Got You Under My Skin”, and “Almost Like Being in Love.” In addition to some sparkling solo turns and great comping, di Martino has provided the swinging arrangements. This album is a follow up to last year’s Challenge recording by Winkler, *Let’s Face the Music*, with the same cast other than having Boris Kozlov on bass. ChallengeRecords.com

Garth Alper, Coordinator of Jazz Studies at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette, has just released his fifth album of original material, *Spider’s Web* (self-produced). Alper on piano is supported by Lucas Munce on sax, Bob Nash on bass, and Chris Munson on drums with Jeff George adding his guitar on four of the seven tracks. Alper has created an eclectic program that touches a lot of bases, but, for the most part, has a blues underpinning to his music. For an album consisting of all original material, it quickly makes for comfortable listening. Munce and George are given ample solo time and both take full advantage of the opportunities. Alper is a fine example of the exceptional talent deserving wider recognition. Hopefully, recordings like this will call more attention to him. Garth@louisiana.edu

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The Warehouse Sessions (Linus—270729) finds pianist **Michael Kaeshammer** jamming with bassist David Pitch and drummer Johnny Vidacoivich in a spontaneous session at the Warehouse Studio in Vancouver. The nine selections include some older jazz classics, “How Long Blues,” “Caravan” and “Bourbon Street Parade”; some newer jazz tunes, “You Got It in Your Soulness,” “Ramblin’,” and “The Preacher”; plus three oldies, but goodies, “Down By the Riverside,” “Quizas, Quizas, Quizas,” and “Ain’t She Sweet.” Kaeshammer has been a much-acclaimed player in Canada for three decades, and this recording demonstrates what the excitement is all about. He has a robust approach that incorporates a range of styles with elements of classical and pop mixed into his eclectic jazz stylings. The album catches three musicians with an established

relationship having a blast recording the disparate material that they chose to perform. Kaeshammer.com

Drummer **Mike Clark** and bassist **Leon Lee Dorsey** have recorded a series of trio albums with a different pianist filling out each session. *Blues on Top* (Jazz Avenue 1) finds **Mike LeDonne** wonderfully filling the pi-



ano chair for this nine-song collection. The album opened with the title tune, LeDonne’s interpretation of Wynton Kelly’s “Blues on Purpose”. The trio mixes jazz tunes—Oliver Nelson’s “Stolen Moments,” LeDonne’s “Lock It in the Pocket,” Duke Ellington’s “C Jam Blues,” Cedar Walton’s “Jacob’s Ladder”, and Dizzy Gillespie’s “Birk’s Works;”—with standards such as “Willow Weep for Me” and “Angel Eyes;” and Lennon and McCartney’s “Can’t Buy Me Love.” The trio is tight and swinging. LeDonne never worked with Clark and Dorsey previously, but it is obvious that chemistry developed quickly among them to produce a terrific set of music. DrummerMikeClark.info

The new release by vocalist/pianist **Eliane Elias** is aptly named *Quietude* (Candid—30512. She has selected an 11-song program of songs by Bra-

zilian composers that she sings with gentle understatement accompanied by a variety of guitarists and percussionists, with bassist Mark Johnson added on five tracks. The music moves with a subtle underlying swing that keeps your head easily swaying with the evolving sounds. The main emphasis is on the duo relationship between the Elias vocals and the acoustic guitars of Marcus Tiexira, Lula Galvão, or Oscar Castro-Neves. Most of her piano work is also understated, but on a few selections, she is a bit more emphatic. If you are looking for music to relax by, this album is a perfect choice. ElianeElias.com

Blossom Dearie has been an inspiration for many vocalists. Her voice was unique, but it was the way that she conveyed the lyrics she sang and her choice of material, especially her propensity for unearthing gems that

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had been too often overlooked, that put her in a special place. Bay-area vocalist **Roberta Donnay** has recorded many vintage pop songs with her group, The Prohibition Mob. On *Blossoming* (Village Jazz Café—2502), Donnay celebrates songs associated with Dearie. As was typical of a Dearie performance, there is a mixture of familiar standards such as “Just One of Those Things,” “Someone to Watch Over Me,” “The Party’s Over,” and “Put on a Happy Face”; good songs that too often fly under the radar such as “Moonlight Savings Time,” “If I Were a Bell,” “You Fascinate Me So,” “I Wish You Love” and “It Amazes Me”; rarely sung jewels, “Peel Me a Grape,” “Spring in Manhattan” and “Unless It’s You”; and songs which Dearie had a hand in writing, “Inside a Silent Tear” and “A Paris.” Donnay has a voice that suggests, but does not channel, Dearie. She has certainly learned a lot about how to evoke

the spirit of each lyric that she sings from Dearie’s interpretations. Those who have enjoyed Blossom Dearie should find this tribute a fitting one indeed, and, hopefully, become inclined to search out Donnay’s other recordings. **RobertAdonnay.com**

For close to 30 years, Canadian vocalist/pianist **Carol Welsman** has stood out as a universally acclaimed jazz singer. *Fourteen* (Justin Time—278) is, as the title suggests, her 14th album. The dozen selections demonstrate several aspects of her artistry. She sings three songs in French, one of them a French language version of “It Might as Well Be Spring,” “Que reste-t-il de nos amours” and “C’est le printemps,” and one song in Spanish, “Somos Novios.” She accompanies herself on piano with support from guitarist Pierre Côté, bassist Rémi-Jean LeBlanc, and, on six tracks, drummer Jim Doxas. Welsman offers

up an occasional scat interlude. Of course, her main concentration is on singing each song with her individualistic approach to both lyrics and melody. Among the tunes are “Pick Yourself Up,” “I Concentrate on You,” “The Night Has 1,000 Eyes,” “Sometimes I’m Happy,” “If You Could See Me Now,” “Come Fly with Me” and “Black Coffee,” plus her original, “Be My Valentine,” co-written with Jo Perry. Welsman, as usual, delivers



a collection of hip vocalizing that is replete with songs that have not been overdone. **Justin-Time.com**

The Great American Songbook has been a major source of songs for jazz musicians. As a result, most jazz enthusiasts have grown to love these songs and enjoy them even when they are not set into a jazz context. When a superb Broadway-style singer like **Christine Ebersole** releases an album of Songbook material, it is an exciting occasion for all who dig great songs well sung. On *After the Ball* (Club 44—4129), accompanied by Lawrence Yurman on piano, Mari Dorman-Phaneuf on cello and John Benthall on guitar and banjo, Ebersole gives us 10 wonderfully performed tracks arranged by Yurman (See interview with Yurman in Editor’s Choice, page 05). Four of the tracks are nicely conceived medleys—“After the Ball/The Way

YEAGER'S ARRANGEMENTS ARE CLEVER AND ADD ELEMENTS OF JAZZ.

You Look Tonight,” “Yesterdays/Lazy Afternoon,” “Little Green/Wait Till You See Her/The Inch Worm” and “(Have I Stayed) Too Long at the Fair/Ready to Begin Again.” The other songs include “I’m Old Fashioned,” “S Wonderful,” “My Baby Just Cares for Me,” “Autumn Leaves,” “A Sleepin’ Bee” and “When In Grow Too Old to Dream.” Ebersole has a lovely soprano voice that she applies to each selection, making each lyric come alive in ways that would please the lyricists. [Amazon.com](#)

The husband-and-wife team of **Jason Yeager** and **Julie Benko** have created an ear-catching collection on *Hand in Hand* (Club 44—4127). Benko handles the vocals and adds a touch of flute and clarinet on a few tracks, while Yeager handles the various keyboards and per-

cussion. They have included an interesting mix of tunes in their 13-song program. There are several standards such as “It Might As Well Be Spring,” “People,” “Louisiana Fairy Tale,” “Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans,” “Me, Myself and I,” “If I Were a Bell”, and “The Nearness of You.” A couple of contemporary Broadway songs, “All I’ve Ever Known” from *Hadestown* and “Another Life” from *The Bridges of Madison County*; a pair of pop tunes, “Gainsville”, and “Mercedes Benz”. Two originals by Yeager, “Sweet Pea” and “Just Begun,” complete the lineup of selections. Yeager’s arrangements are clever and add elements of jazz to the recording. Benko has a welcoming voice and is comfortable singing the eclectic selections they have chosen to perform. [Amazon.com](#)

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Ronnie Cuber: Musical ‘Triple Threat’

*“Remarkable Session Player ...
A Master of the Baritone Saxophone.”*

TRUMPETER RANDY BRECKER, WRITING on wbgo.org on October 10, 2022, called baritone saxophonist Ronnie Cuber “a triple threat as a musician. First, as a first-call studio player who appeared on hundreds of pop, rock, and soul recordings. Second, as a member of numerous notable groups, including Maynard Ferguson, The Brecker Brothers, Eddie Palmieri, and the Mingus Big Band. Third, as the leader of his own groups with whom he released more than a dozen albums.”

Cuber died on October 7, 2022,

at the age of 80. Palmieri, on Facebook, recalled Cuber’s “tasteful phrases on my album, *Harlem River Drive* and his solo on *Coast to Coast*.” Those performances, Palmieri wrote, epitomize “the type of range Ronnie always carried as a remarkable session player. He is one of those people who will forever live in my heart, and the memories we share on the bandstand and in the studios will always be cherished.”

Cuber was born on December 25, 1941, in New York. As an 18-year-old, he performed with Marshall Brown’s

BIG BAND IN THE SKY

Newport Youth Band at the Newport Jazz Festival, moving on to play with trombonist Slide Hampton, trumpeter Maynard Ferguson, and guitarist George Benson, among many others. *DownBeat* (October 11, 2022) described him as “a master of the baritone saxophone, performing as a sideman with an expansive, wide-ranging number of artists and groups.”

In 2021, Cuber recorded an album called *Tough Baritones* on the Steeplechase label with fellow baritone saxophonist Gary Smulyan. In a review for *JazzTimes*, Britt Robson described it as, “straight-ahead bebop and hard bop with fat dollops of blues, funk, Latin, and gospel baked in.” *AllAboutJazz’s* Chris Mosey, reviewing Cuber’s 2020 Storyville Records album, *Live at Montmartre*, wrote that he “uses the baritone sax as a forceful, hard bop instrument, creating a very distinctive sound all his own.”

Former *DownBeat* Editor Arnold Jay Smith: A Mentor to Many

ARNOLD JAY SMITH, A FORMER *DownBeat* Editor, died October 4, 2022, in Brooklyn at the age of 83. He was praised on Facebook as a mentor to a generation of younger jazz journalists.

Jazz historian Chip Deffaa pointed out that Smith, “wrote for assorted publications over the years, lectured



on jazz at universities in New York and New Jersey, worked as a publicist, and helped produce a number of jazz albums. He was always happy to help those of us who were younger than him ... He was warm and kind, but you could still sense the street smarts of a sassy young Brooklyn kid in him. And, he had endless stories.” The writer Eugene Holley, Jr., described Smith as “my beloved ‘New York Uncle’. He was a publicist, educator, record collector, and jazz savant who knew a lot about the music and the people who made it.”

Another tribute came from Smith’s brother, Noel, who wrote: “To say he was a jazz fan does not say anything about what AJ did and meant to the many musicians, writers, publicists, and students AJ spent time with. His depth of information about recordings, sessions, gigs was encyclopedic. And, he loved to share it all through the courses and guest lectures he gave in colleges and venues.”



Sandy Sasso

SandySasso.com

for more Sandy info

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