

Recorded Jazz in the Early 21st Century:

A Consumer Guide

by Tom Hull

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Introduction

This book exists because Robert Christgau asked me to write a Jazz Consumer Guide column for the *Village Voice*. As Music Editor for the *Voice*, he had come up with the Consumer Guide format back in 1969. His original format was twenty records, each accorded a single-paragraph review ending with a letter grade. His domain was rock and roll, but his taste and interests ranged widely, so his CGs regularly featured country, blues, folk, reggae, jazz, and later world (especially African), hip-hop, and electronica. Aside from two years off working for *Newsday* (when his Consumer Guide was published monthly in *Creem*), the *Voice* published his columns more-or-less monthly up to 2006, when new owners purged most of the Senior Editors. Since then he's continued writing in the format for a series of Webzines -- MSN Music, Medium, Noisey -- accumulating reviews of some 16,000 albums over 47 years.

I wrote some record reviews after I dropped out of college, in 1974. I sent some samples to Christgau, and he asked me to write rock reviews for the *Voice*. I wrote about a dozen freelance pieces up to 1979, mostly "Riffs" but also a couple longer pieces on Pink Floyd and Todd Rundgren. During that time I moved to New York City. I made my living by working in typesetting shops during that time, and got interested in computers, teaching myself to design and code typesetting software. In 1980 I parlayed that into a career change, getting a job as a software engineer with a company in New Jersey that made typesetting machines. A few years later I moved to a similar job in the Boston area, then jumped ship for a computer graphics startup. I returned to New Jersey in 1998 when I was offered a job working on the Unix operating system kernel. That job blew up a couple years later, but by then I had moved back to my original home town, Wichita, Kansas. That turned out to be a bad place to be an unemployed software engineer, much less a former typesetter and freelance writer.

I had through the intervening years remained friends with Christgau. I followed his writing closely, and bought and liked most of the records he liked. When we got together he used me as a sounding board and dragged me out to concerts and shows. He introduced me to the woman I finally married. In 1996 he asked me to write a review of Rhino's *Jazz for Dummies* CDs, and published that in the *Voice*. After my last job fizzled out I talked him into letting me build him a website. I put robertchristgau.com together during a trip to New York in September 2001, one that was protracted due to events. Over the next few months I added a lot of old material I had clipped -- I even had some 1969 *Voice* pieces squirreled away in my parents' attic -- and from books and Christgau's post-1989 word processor files. Several volunteers aided me in that work. One that stands out was Michael Tatum, who at the time was Music Editor for a Chicago Webzine, staticmultimedia.com.

Tatum did a lot of things for me, but most fatefully he wanted me to write a column, and basically gave me carte blanche to design my own. I came up with a Christgau-like -- one paragraph reviews with letter grades -- guide to compilations of historical note, something I called Recycled Goods. I figured that by that point I had spent thirty years scouring through record guides and snatching up pretty much everything (except classical) of genuine note in the history of recorded music, and we were still in a period when a lot of old music was first finding its way to CD (as well as many second efforts to fix crummy early releases). After I started writing for Tatum, Christgau started assigning me reviews to write for the *Voice* -- mostly jazz subjects this time.

Christgau also recommended me to Christian Hoard at *Rolling Stone*. He was editing *The New Rolling Stone Album Guide*, and gave me (or in a couple cases let me pick) a couple dozen subjects, ranging from Hank Williams, George Jones and Willie Nelson to Lou Reed to Donna Summer to the Pet Shop Boys to Ani DiFranco to Blackalicious to Buck 65 to Bunny Wailer and Fela Kuti, and I managed to catch a couple of the book's damn few jazz artists, most notably Matthew Shipp.

Shipp was important because once I realized I had most of his albums, and most of the "Blue Series" he curated for Thirsty Ear, I pitched Tatum on the idea of doing a special career-spanning Consumer Guide to his work. Then once I got into this I found a large intersection between Shipp and bassist William Parker -- Parker appeared on 39 of 54 albums Shipp was on, but also many more, so many I wound up devoting most of the 61-album guide to Parker. After that piece, my next thought was to do a similar guide to Ken Vandermark -- I had written the *Voice's* first review ever of his work, and he sent me a large box with nearly everything he had done to that point -- but I got swamped when the Jazz Consumer Guide invite came. (Vandermark has by far the largest section below, so consider this book my amends.)

Over the years Christgau has invited a number of special niche critics to write Consumer Guides for the *Voice*. Leighton Kerner, who wrote about classical music, and Kyle Gann, whose specialty was the post-classical avant-garde, wrote quite a few Consumer Guide columns. The *Voice's* long-time jazz writer, Gary Giddins, wrote a couple, and when he took leave to finish a book, his temporary fill-in Francis Davis wrote several. I also recall one-shots by Stanley Crouch (mostly jazz reissues) and Ken Tucker (country music). And just to be completist, there was a brief stretch when Christgau was wrapping up his first Christgau's Consumer Guide book when he turned the rock franchise over to Tom Carson and someone else -- I remember at the time wishing that had been me, although much later I realized how ill-prepared I would have been.

But in 2004, with another twenty-five years of experience and writing more about music than ever before, I got my chance. The *Voice* had been contracting, and Gary Giddins, who had written for them since 1970 and despite never being on staff had given the *Voice* the best jazz coverage of any paper in America, quit, leaving Christgau tasked with a giant hole to fill. I recommended Giddins' own previous pick, Francis Davis. Christgau finally agreed, but since Davis was out of town (based in Philadelphia), he recruited Nate Chinen to cover the local clubs, and invited me to write a Jazz Consumer Guide. I can honestly say the idea never occurred to me, but I accepted at once, and in retrospect it seemed like the perfect division of labor. Still, I must have seemed like a fluke choice to the dozens of struggling jazz writers actually living in New York. But between Davis's depth and my breadth we probably covered more jazz more systematically than Giddins was ever allowed to. (Chinen soon dropped out when the *New York Times* hired him.)

I had no exposure to jazz growing up, other than occasionally seeing someone like Louis Armstrong on TV, and I was downright phobic when it came to classical music. I never had, much less played, an instrument, and when I was consigned to a choir the girl behind me used to kick me and demand I lip-sync. In middle school I regularly got C's in Music, passing only because I had exceptional recall of all those composers' names and dates. I enjoyed mid-'60s top-40 as much as anyone my age. I managed to buy a record player around 1963, and by the end of the decade had accumulated maybe 20 LPs and a comparable number of 45s. I dropped out of high school, became a hermit for a few years, took a GED, went to college in Wichita for a year, then transferred to St. Louis for two more. Only then and there did I discover that listening to music was a psychic balm I needed, and also something I could learn to

talk intelligently about to newfound friends. As with everything I took an interest in, I overshot, and after I quit college in favor of my first self-supporting job I overspent as well. Within a couple years I knew every record store in St. Louis city and county and made regular rounds. Still, until I moved to New York in 1977 I had very little exposure to jazz -- mostly *Bitches Brew*, which it seemed everyone owned and liked to play to chill down late at night.

And then at some point I discovered Ornette Coleman. That may have been at Christgau's -- I vividly remember him playing *Dancing in Your Head* and finding it the most exciting thing I ever heard -- although I probably found *The Shape of Jazz to Come* a bit earlier. During my New York years (1977-80) I dabbled in jazz, developing a special fondness for Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, Anthony Braxton, and Roswell Rudd; plenty of respect for Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, and John Coltrane; and feeling nothing for Charlie Parker. After I left New York, I followed the *Voice*, picking up occasional jazz records that Giddins or Davis liked as well as Christgau's Pick Hits. Sort of a long incubation period, until around 1993-94, when I belatedly started switching to compact discs, and found myself increasingly at odds with the latest rock (grunge) and rap (gangsta).

That's when I really started hitting the record guides and trying to fill in gaps in my knowledge base, and it helped that labels were converting old music to CD at a feverish pace, and that you could buy used CDs cheap that sounded perfectly new. My first big breakthrough was with early r&b and jump blues: I had, for instance, heard of Louis Jordan back in St. Louis, but I didn't actually hear him until the mid-'90s. I then found that those r&b groups grew out of the small group swing of the 1930s, and that led me to even earlier jazz. At the same time, I was sopping up early country and blues and even pop stars of the period -- really up through the '60s when my memory starts to take over. I wrote about my process in my *Jazz for Dummies* review, noting there that I had worked my way through some 900 CDs. Later that decade I compiled my first ratings list, probably close to 3,000 albums. That's since grown into a ratings database of 27,000 albums.

The cause of that great inflation was Jazz Consumer Guide. I had gotten occasional promos in the 1970s, and started to get a trickle of new ones after I started writing Recycled Goods. *Rolling Stone* offered very little money for work on their *Album Guide*, but part of their bait was sharing their publicist list -- we were expected to hit them up for the records we needed, the ones they were too cheap to buy. But things really opened up when I started Jazz Consumer Guide: all of a sudden I was getting 500, 600, 700 records per year. We never explicitly scheduled how often my column should appear, but it worked out pretty close to four times a year. I had about space for about 1500 words per column. Following Christgau's convention at the time, I had two Pick Hits, one featured Dud, eight to ten paragraph-sized mostly A- reviews, another dozen or more Honorable Mentions with terse one-line comments, and a couple more duds (graded B or lower, initially uncommented and ungraded, but later I started adding brief notes).

First column I was a bit short of material, so I included an "R&R" (Reissues & Redundancies) section, but I never had that problem again, and before long I was scrambling to squeeze in more records, holding reviews back a cycle or two, combining mentions of related albums, and arbitrarily dropping items for reasons as flimsy as having sat on them too long. Along with the seventh JCG (December 2005), I started publishing supplementary files on my website: one each cycle for "surplus" (albums I had given up on including) and another for "prospecting" (albums I was still considering, some with only tentative grades). Those extra files approximately triple the number of records I wrote about during the Jazz Consumer Guide years. A big part of the work on this book will be to take those files

and clean them up for use here.

In 2006, the *Voice* management fired Christgau and Chuck Eddy, and hired Rob Harvilla as Music Editor. That might have been the end for Jazz Consumer Guide, especially as the music section contracted yet again, but Harvilla kept me working, and Francis Davis too (his annual Jazz Critics Poll was launched under Harvilla). The end came in 2011, when Harvilla left, and was replaced by Maura Johnston, who didn't so much kill the jazz section as fumble it away. (At one point I thought we had a deal to continue as a web-only feature, which might actually have solved my space squeeze, but one or both of us dropped the ball.) Without the *Voice's* sponsorship, I figured I'd soon lose the stream of promo copies that made Jazz Consumer Guide possible, but for the most part they kept coming. In February 2012 I started posting my Jazz Prospecting monthly, and continued through the end of 2013.

To go forward from that point, we have to back up a bit. In 2007 Christgau worked out a deal where the online music streaming service Rhapsody paid him to use his Consumer Guide reviews on their site. I did some software work to make this happen, and along the way I got a subscription to Rhapsody. I figured that whenever I streamed an album, I should write down a little note about what I thought of it. I wound up posting those notes more or less monthly as Rhapsody Streamnotes. Very quickly that became my main source of non-jazz albums, and occasionally I supplemented my Jazz Prospecting with streamed records I hadn't received in the mail. By 2016 Streamnotes -- I dropped the Rhapsody qualifier when they changed the name to Napster -- had contributed over 8,000 albums to my ratings database.

From 2003 to 2008 I double-posted Recycled Goods, initially at Static Multimedia then on my own website. After some fumbling around I continued to post more or less monthly RG columns on my website up to 2013, although by then I was getting virtually no reissues and depending mostly on Rhapsody and my own increasingly meager purchases. In January 2014 I decided to consolidate my losses and fold Jazz Prospecting and Recycled Goods into Streamnotes, which I've continued to date -- typically compiling more than one hundred albums per month, about half jazz. Whereas I had reviewed (sometimes cryptically) slightly over one thousand records during my seven-year Jazz Consumer Guide run, these other files contained several times as many notes of widely varying quality.

Assembled together I think all this listening and writing provides as comprehensive and catholic a survey of recorded jazz in the early 21st century as anyone is likely to produce. The quantity you can judge directly by the sheer number of records listed, although you can also counter by noting the great many jazz albums I missed. At one point I tried to quantify that by building a list of every jazz album I saw mention of. At that point I was sampling about 40% of the list, although my share would have dropped further had I searched harder. Later on my share dropped further, both because I received less and because the number of jazz releases has grown steadily since about 1990.

As for "catholic" I'll note that my recommended grades -- 8 and up, or 7 if it hits one of your sweet spots -- touch on virtually every genre or style of jazz from trad to the many branches of avant-garde, even ones I don't generally care for. It's not that I see merit in everything, or that I'm reluctant to judge. I recognize that I have my own sweet and sour spots -- I favor the saxophone (especially tenor) over piano and/or voice, I love swing but have little problem with free (unless it gets too damn ugly), I tend to dislike strings or anything else that reminds me of classical, I don't care for fusion unless it surprises me, I do like but am not easily impressed by big bands and Latin jazz, I disdain smooth or slick or new agey or overly clever and/or complex, I don't insist on everything being novel, and I'm generally open

to expanding the usual margins of jazz. Perhaps most importantly, I recognize that every rule like the ones I've just noted is bound to have exceptions, and I make a point of finding them.

Work and Release Notes

I started compiling this book in late August, 2016. My initial goal was to collect everything that appeared in the 2005-11 Jazz Consumer Guide, although I wound up also including my notes and fragments for a 28th column. Using standard page and style formats, this came to about 130 pages. I figured I would then release this draft as a PDF file and make it available to friends and regular readers for comment. Call this stage one. I made a couple of editorial and formatting decisions during this stage.

- I decided to separate groups out from individuals. Multiple-artist records were generally filed under the first named individual. In many cases I put group records under individual names -- where groups seemed to clearly belong to an individual leader. If the group name included the leader name that's as far as I went. Otherwise I also listed the group name in the groups section and referenced back to the individual.
- I decided to include release dates after the label with an apostrophe (e.g., '05), and to include recording dates only when significantly earlier than the release.
- I decided to include vault music and reissues, even when recorded before 2000, within the same individual or group entries, sorted by release date, provided that the artist has at least one new record listed.
- I decided to keep reviews of vault music and reissues by artists who are not otherwise included in the book -- i.e., that have no new music from 2000 forward -- in a separate section after the individual and group listings. These were always an intrinsic part of Jazz Consumer Guide, and I didn't want to lose this writing prematurely.
- I changed the grade scale to a numeric value from 1 to 10. Roughly speaking: 10 is A+, 9 A, 8 A-, 7 B+(***), 6 B+(**), 5 B+(*), 4 B, 3 B- or C+, 2 C, 1 C- or lower. However, since I had issued very few A or A+ grades at the time, I promoted some albums from 9 to 10 and from 8 to 9. B+ grades from before I started adding the stars were guessed at, although for all practical purposes anything that appeared in Jazz CG as an Honorable Mention was treated as a 7 (unless I had graded it higher or lower).
- Some records don't have reviews, so for now those have been left blank. I'll probably find more writing on those in my prospecting and surplus notes, and will edit them accordingly. In a couple of cases, I wrote reviews of two records. Here I've split those up, with the review following the second entry.

For later stages, I intend to write short introductions to each artist, starting with a stock line with birth and death years and principal instruments. As of stage one, that only exists (partially) in one case. Much of that information can be picked up by going back through the ratings database files, but it will also require further research. When basic biographical information is pulled out like this, it should be possible to remove redundant mentions of the same in the review bodies.

Jazz Consumer Guide reviews were all tightly formatted either as paragraphs or as one-liners. Other

source files are not so formatted. I suspect that over time all will have to be edited to sort out the kinks, but doing so will take a lot of time and work. I have no idea how long that will take, or even whether I'll be up for doing that much work. Consequently, stage one and its likely successors will most likely be mere works-in-progress.

The easiest way to release this book will be as a PDF file, made available through a form on my website. That is the only plan for stage one, which will come out sometime in September 2016.

Not sure where to go next for stage two. The most useful thing for readers would probably be to pick out the better records from the later files (Jazz Prospecting and Streamnotes). A second approach would be to go to the ratings database and stub in all the rated titles, then add in review content as I find it. A third approach would be to fill out the Jazz CG period with the prospecting and surplus files -- that would be the fastest way to get to a comprehensive guide, but only within the shorter period.

Acknowledgments

Some of this is already written above: Robert Christgau, Chuck Eddy, Rob Harvilla, Michael Tatum. Add a blanket thanks to all of the many publicists and musicians who sent me CDs. End with Laura Tillem, of course.

The Consumer Guide: People

Juhani Aaltonen

Juhani Aaltonen Quartet: *Conclusions* (TUM) Well into his seventies, a legend in his native Finland but scarcely recognized elsewhere, Aaltonen's thoughtful flute would sweep the U.S. polls if anyone heard his three spots here. Still, they're light relative to his smoldering, often colossal, tenor sax. [8]

Anders Aarum

Anders Aarum Trio: *First Communion* (Jazzaway '06) Norwegian pianist tries to put the fun back in fundamentalism. [7]

Rez Abbasi

Rez Abbasi: *Shake Charmer* (Earth Sounds) Coltrane's soprano sax had an Indian-Near Eastern tone that imparted distance to his perpetual searching, but framed by Abbasi's Indian-spiced soul jazz, Dave Liebman's soprano sax sounds like he's found something. His horn is the highlight here, but Abbasi's snaky guitar is the charm. [8]

Rez Abbasi: *Things to Come* (Sunnyside) Four songs with Indian vocals fortify the extended Indo-Pak Coalition, but the world-class band eschews fusion for postbop. [6]

John Abercrombie

John Abercrombie: *The Third Quartet* (ECM) Subtle and self-effacing, hiding behind Mark Feldman's violin. [4]

Rabih Abou-Khalil

Rabih Abou-Khalil: *Morton's Foot* (Enja/Justin Time) The Lebanese oud master's albums shift as jazz collaborators come and go. *Tarab* features Selim Kusur's nay flute and is in the improvisational tradition of Arab music, while Charlie Mariano's alto sax turns *Blue Camel* into his most cosmopolitan showcase. This mostly Italian band showcases a new mix: with accordion, tuba, and clarinet it sounds gypsy (meaning a genre, not the ethnic Roma), while Gavino Murgia's traditional Sardinian vocal style can be taken for doo-wop. [8]

Rabih Abou-Khalil/Joachim Kühn: *Journey to the Centre of an Egg* (Enja/Justin Time) Kühn is best known for his duets with Ornette Coleman, a connection reaffirmed when he switches from piano to alto sax. He's an attentive partner on either instrument, pricking and prodding but never overwhelming Abou-Khalil's muscular oud. And the most valuable playing comes from someone whose name isn't on the spine -- spare, propulsive frame drummer Jarrod Cagwin. [8]

Muhai Richard Abrams

Muhai Richard Abrams: *SoundDance (Pi)* Two discs with the AACM guru-pianist, each a duo: an easy one comping behind Fred Anderson's warmest, gentlest free sax, and a difficult one with George Lewis running interference on laptop and trombone, the distilled essence of forty years of breaking all the rules. [8]

Jason Adasiewicz

Jason Adasiewicz's Rolldown: *Varmint (Cuneiform)* Underground Chicago with a colorful swish of vibes. [7]

Antonio Adolfo

Antonio Adolfo/Carol Saboya: *Lá E Cá/Here and There (AAM '10)* [7]

Noël Akchoté

Noël Akchoté: *Sonny II: The Music of Sonny Sharrock (Winter & Winter)* Eschewing flash, solo guitar puzzles over the melodies. [7]

Ralph Alessi

Ralph Alessi: *Cognitive Dissonance (CAM Jazz)* Everyone's favorite sideman brings his trumpet out front, outshining even pianist Jason Moran. [7]

Ralph Alessi and This Against That: *Wiry Strong (Clean Feed)* Twisty, spiralling trumpet-sax-piano, the tighter it gets, the more fiercely it springs back. [7]

Eric Alexander

Eric Alexander: *Dead Center (High Note)* An appropriate title, especially since he's already used *Solid*. His one original is a feisty piece that lets him show off his huge tone and plentiful chops. Then he works through the covers, a range of postbop swing including one by his redoubtable pianist Harold Mabern and a pair by Lerner and Loewe that he takes to the races. The center of the mainstream, but far from dead. [8]

Eric Alexander: *Temple of Olympic Zeus (High Note)* Archetypal mainstream tenor-saxman aims for the gods, hits hubris. [3]

Monty Alexander

Monty Alexander/Ernest Ranglin: *Rocksteady (Telarc '04)* [1]

Carl Allen

Carl Allen & Rodney Whitaker: *Get Ready (Mack Avenue)* Motown rhythm guys keep the quiet

storm loose and limber. [6]

Gerri Allen

Gerri Allen/Dave Holland/Jack DeJohnette: *The Life of a Song* (Telarc '04) The achievement here is sonic as well as musical. Holland's bass line has rarely been rendered so clearly. It is the center of the universe, the pulse all heavenly bodies orbit around--even the Detroit horn players who crash the trio on the last cut, a serenade for Mal Waldron. [8]

Gerri Allen: *Timeless Portraits and Dreams* (Telarc '06) [3]

Harry Allen

The Harry Allen-Joe Cohn Quartet: *Hey, Look Me Over* (Arbors) Given that Cohn is Al's son, you might figure this for a tribute. Indeed, Dad's songbook looms large on what remains an exceptionally well-rounded Allen showcase, There are nods to Getz and Webster, but both the lift of his jump shot and the ease of his balladry are distinctly his own. The son's guitar sets an unobtrusive groove, and the Charlie Christian feature shows how comfortable he can be in old clothes. Like Allen. [8]

The Harry Allen-Joe Cohn Quartet: *Music From Guys and Dolls* (Arbors) The singers follow the book, the leaders rise above it. [8]

Harry Allen: *Hits by Brits* (Challenge) "A Nightingale in Berkeley Square," "Cherokee," "These Foolish Things" -- enough for a record. [7]

The Harry Allen-Joe Cohn Quartet: *Plays Music From South Pacific* (Arbors) A swinging enchanted evening, with singers Rebecca Kilgore and Eddie Erickson cornier than Kansas in August. [7]

Harry Allen: *New York State of Mind* (Challenge) A graceful swing through town, from "Harlem Nocturne" to "Chinatown My Chinatown." [6]

Harry Allen: *Rhythm on the River* (Challenge '11) [7]

Marshall Allen

Sun Ra Arkestra, Under the Direction of Marshall Allen: *Live at the Paradox* (In+Out) The secret to a ghost band that never gets trapped in its past is a past so far in the future we don't know it's coming. [7]

Marshall Allen/Matthew Shipp/Joe Morris: *Night Logic* (RogueArt) Sun Ra vet + volatile pianist + sly bassist = avant chemistry. [7]

Ben Allison

Ben Allison: *Cowboy Justice* (Palmetto) Like Charles Mingus and Charlie Haden, Allison plays bass and writes complex, catchy, often sublime tunes, sometimes with political titles because the billboard space comes free. His "Tricky Dick" is Cheney, rolling casually on Steve Cardenas's guitar while firing bird-shot bursts of Ron Horton trumpet -- so infectious it stands out on an album where everything

stands up. [8]

Ben Allison & Man Size Safe: *Little Things Run the World (Palmetto)* Like fellow bassist-composer Charles Mingus, Allison uses his titles to advertise public thoughts of no obvious relationship to the music. The title cut refers to the Gaia hypothesis -- that bacteria maintain the Earth as a habitable environment. "Man Size Safe" refers to Dick Cheney, with "Blowback" is the consequence. Unlike Mingus, Allison manifests little anger in his elegant and poignant postbop. [8]

Ben Allison: *Think Free (Palmetto)* A bassist-composer needs someone to step out front, and that's violinist Jenny Scheinman here. She brings out the sweetness in Allison's supple, easy-flowing melodies, with guitar and trumpet playing off the edges. [8]

Mose Allison

Mose Allison: *The Way of the World (Anti-)* A cool little cluster of perpetual inquisitiveness thinks up modest proposals and turns out alright. [7]

Esmée Althuis

Esmée Althuis/Albert Van Veenendaal: *The Mystery of Guests (Evil Rabbit)* Guests like drummer Han Bennink and guitarist Corrie van Binsbergen flesh out a sax-piano duo with plenty of rough edges and unfinished ideas. [6]

Jimmy Amadie

Jimmy Amadie Trio: *Let's Groove! A Tribute to Mel Tormé (TP)* The pianist's Tormé is less the point than guest Phil Woods channeling Benny Carter. [7]

Rodrigo Amado

Rodrigo Amado: *Motion Trio (European Echoes)* His usual sax tour de force, running circles around cello and drums. [7]

Rodrigo Amado: *Searching for Adam (Not Two)* An imposing tenor saxophonist for more than a decade in groups like the Lisbon Improvisation Players and the Humanization 4Tet, Amado fronts a group that frames him as smartly as his photography. With John Hébert on bass, Gerald Cleaver on drums, and Taylor Ho Bynum on contrasting brass, cornet, and flugelhorn. The group can freewheel, but the focus sticks to Amado, especially when he slows down and dips into the baritone sax. [8]

Scott Amendola

Scott Amendola Band: *Believe (Cryptogramophone)* This turns the Nels Cline Singers on their head, adding Jeff Parker's sweet guitar to Cline's sour, reinforcing the string sound with Jenny Scheinman's violin. Amendola supplements his drums with electronics, for groove and textures you'd have to be hard of hearing to reduce to ambient. [8]

Scott Amendola Trio: *Lift (Sazi)* Drummer's songs and electronics leave plenty of space for Jeff

Parker's guitar. [7]

Maria Anadon

Maria Anadon: *A Jazzy Way (Arbors)* Anadon turns her back to her native Portugal and takes a bite of "Old Devil Moon" and a dozen more show tunes and vocalese skits. Her Women of the World band, with Japanese Tomoko Ohno on piano and Israeli Anat Cohen on clarinet and tenor sax, are no less at home. More proof that sometimes immigrants discover wonders we take for granted, making them the best Americans. [8]

Arild Andersen

Arild Andersen: *The Triangle (ECM)* Smartly nuanced, delicately balanced trio with pianist Vassilis Tsabropoulos, who got star billing last time. [7]

Arild Andersen: *Live at Belleville (ECM)* One of the young Norwegians George Russell took under his wing in the late 1960s. Bassist Andersen isn't as well known as Jan Garbarek or Terje Rypdal, with a big chunk of discography under Masqualero, a group now better known for Nils Petter Molvaer. Just a trio here. His playing is masterful, but it's hard to concentrate on bass when tenor saxophonist Tommy Smith gets up a full head of steam. [8]

Arild Andersen: *Green in Blue: Early Quartets (1975-78, ECM)* The bassist's first three discs, from Kurt Riisnaes' cutting sax to Juhani Aaltonen's dry flute. [7]

Ernestine Anderson

Ernestine Anderson: *A Song for You (High Note)* One of Johnny Otis's chick singers, still swinging at 80; who wouldn't with Houston Person pitching woo? [6]

Ernestine Anderson: *Nightlife (High Note)* Two sets straddle her 80th birthday -- not a celebration, just working, fortunately with Houston Person. [7]

Fred Anderson

Fred Anderson: *Back at the Velvet Lounge (Delmark '03)* On his home court, with a full band behind him, he feels comfortable enough to toss us a soft one. [8]

Fred Anderson/Hamid Drake: *Back Together Again (Thrill Jockey '04)* Anderson grew up around the AACM in the '70s, recorded a bit, then settled into life as a club owner. Sometimes he would play his tenor sax in the club, and when he hit 65 he resumed recording -- just in time for the Chicago jazz renaissance. This duo album came out on his 75th birthday, and it feels like he's finally found his way. Master drummer Drake, who learned to play alongside Anderson's son when his family moved to Chicago, keeps the rhythms bubbling, getting a robust but subdued sound from his frame drums that keeps Anderson relaxed and generous. [8]

Fred Anderson/Hamid Drake/William Parker: *Blue Winter (Eremite)* The five minutes of solo sax opening the second disc lays bare Anderson's toolkit. He can't get out of second gear until the rhythm section joins in, but when they do, Parker and Drake sound huge, filling the soundscape with shifting

grooves and potent rumble. Anderson has plenty to say then, until Parker picks up his nagaswaram (an Indian oboe) for a snake-charming duet. [8]

Fred Anderson & Hamid Drake: *From the River to the Ocean (Thrill Jockey)* The grizzled AACM saxophonist has never sounded more congenial. Life's been good lately: he got a fresh start when the Social Security checks started arriving and his virtual son developed into one of the world's outstanding percussionists. This makes five straight winners, the novelty this time the addition of guitarist Jeff Parker. [8]

Ray Anderson

BassDrumBone: *The Line Up (Clean Feed)* Short for Mark Helias, Gerry Hemingway, and Ray Anderson, a trio dating back to 1979, hard again. [7]

BassDrumBone: *The Other Parade (Clean Feed '11)* Trombone trio, Ray Anderson over Mark Helias and Gerry Hemingway, telepathic after three decades together. [7]

E.J. Antonio

E.J. Antonio: *Rituals in the Marrow (Blue Zygo)* Scratchy raw poetry laced with Joe Giardullo free sax, with a gospel whoop when her blood gets riled up. [7]

Hugo Antunes

Hugo Antunes: *Roll Call (Clean Feed)* Bassist-composer, double drums, lots of deep rumble and fleeting, flaring reeds. [7]

Peter Apfelbaum

Peter Apfelbaum & the New York Hieroglyphics: *It Is Written (ACT '05)* [3]

Dan Aran

Dan Aran: *Breathing (Smalls)* Soft-touch drummer hosts friends for eclectic postbop exercises. [6]

Antonio Arnedo

Antonio Arnedo: *Colombia (Adventure Music)* Folk instruments, trad tunes, toned down Barbieri-ish sax, beats by Satoshi Takeishi. [7]

Lynne Arriale

Lynne Arriale: *Convergence (Motéma '11)* Finessing the Beatles, the Stones, Blondie; ripping the originals. [7]

Ehud Asherie

Ehud Asherie: *Modern Life (Posi-Tone)* With Harry Allen, a debonair throwback to the 1940s, when modernity meant something. [7]

Clint Ashlock

Clint Ashlock Big Band: *New Jazz Order* (self-released '11) In Kansas City the territory band tradition lives on. [7]

Pablo Aslan

Pablo Aslan: *Buenos Aires Tango Standards* (Zoho) The Argentine bassist's <i>Avantango</i> pushed his national heritage to extremes, dramatizing tango's twists and turns. This second album takes a different tack, eschewing bandoneon and violin in favor of a standard jazz quintet. The standards are more orthodox, but subtler and less jagged, opening up the melodies, as jazz is wont to do. [8]

Pablo Aslan: *Tango Grill* (Zoho) Roughing up the formalism of old tango chestnuts. [7]

Mulatu Astatke

Mulatu Astatke & the Heliocentrics: *Inspiration Information* (Strut '09) A percussionist who has merged his Ethiopian roots and western acculturation into something he calls Ethio-jazz meets up with a band of technofied Sun Ra worshippers, who push him into harder grooves and improvise around the riddims. [8]

Mulatu Astatke: *New York-Addis-London: The Story of Ethio Jazz 1965-1975* (Strut) Got out of Swinging Addis while the getting was good, picking up Latin and jazz notions and spicing them with hints of home. [8]

Andrew Atkinson

Andrew Atkinson Quartet: *Live: Keep Looking Forward* (Vic Firth/Paiste/Sonor '11) [8]

Michaël Attias

Michaël Attias: *Twines of Colesion* (Clean Feed '10) With Tony Malaby, two saxes that slip in and out of gear, probably because the rhythm section is so slippery. [7]

Omer Avital

Omer Avital: *The Ancient Art of Giving* (Smalls) The second installment in Avital's archives, *Room to Grow*, starts to make the case for the Israeli bassist as a catalyst for cutting edge postbop in the late '90s, but this is the album where the payoff comes clear. His quintet is structured for hard bop, but he lets the rhythm slosh around, and once they get warmed up, Mark Turner's tenor sax and Avishai Cohen's trumpet, break loose. [8]

Omer Avital: *Free Forever* (Smalls '11) A soft bop quintet, sophisticated swing and a bit of Latin tinge. [7]

Tommy Babin

Tommy Babin's Benzene: *Your Body Is Your Prison* (Drip Audio) Although the hype sheet suggests "improv/space rock," this is more dense than spacey, and doesn't rock so much as bring the noise. The bassist-leader introduces two Chads, his star MacQuarrie on guitar, and Makela beefing up the bottom on bari sax. Group name and title suggests art/music that's toxic and inflammable, and maybe that we're too far gone not to indulge it. [8]

Donald Bailey

Donald Bailey: *Blueprints of Jazz, Vol. 3* (Talking House) Jimmy Smith's old drummer gets the call, and flares out to Odean Pope who crashes upfield, with Charles Tolliver kicking the extra point. [7]

Iain Ballamy

Food: *Quiet Inlet* (ECM) Thomas Strønen's electronics overcome his percussion, devolving into ambience laced with Iain Ballamy reeds. [6]

Yaala Ballin

Yaala Ballin: *On the Road* (Gallery '11) [8]

Billy Bang

Billy Bang Quintet Featuring Frank Lowe: *Above & Beyond* (Justin Time) The fire-breathing tenor saxophonist was down to one lung here, so out of breath by the end of the gig the promoter wanted to call an ambulance. Lowe died a few months later, leaving this as his last testament. All upbeat, with hard piano and swinging fiddle. Lowe makes up in clarity what he lacks in volume, his pleasure staving off the pain. [8]

Billy Bang: *Prayer for Peace* (TUM) Back from his second tour of Vietnam, wherein he found peace in transcendent musical fusion, the violinist reflects on the dawn of apocalypse, Hiroshima 1945. Even there, the chill gradually gives way to the fire of one of his trademark riffs, then segues into another from Compay Segundo. Joy all around, from Stuff Smith well beyond Sun Ra, with James Zollar's tart trumpet challenging Bang's razor-sharp violin. [10]

Billy Bang's Survival Ensemble: *Black Man's Blues/New York Collage* (1977-78, NoBusiness '11) [8]

Patricia Barber

Patricia Barber: *A Fortnight in Paris* (Blue Note) Crashing the keyboard, challenging the White World, speaking French. [7]

Patricia Barber: *The Cole Porter Mix* (Blue Note) She takes Porter as a fellow modernist and drags him into a world where modernity's future has dimmed. The songs are slower, sadder, hazier, their flippant irony transmuted into ambiguity. The guitar-driven music is, if anything, even more art deco and elegant than her singing. Chris Potter's tenor sax breaks grab you every time, then fade into the smoke. [8]

Scotty Barnhart

Scotty Barnhart: *Say It Plain* (Unity Music) Basie ghost trumpeter runs rings around the post-Marsalis neotrad playpen. [7]

Jorge Lima Barreto

Jorge Lima Barreto: *Zul Zelub* (Clean Feed) Impromptu solo piano constuctions over João Marques Carrilho's ambient electronics -- random radio sweeps on the 45:12 "Zul," four CD players cycling air-earth-water-fire ambience on the 30:10 "Zelub." It's never clear whether it's Barreto or the listener who turns the randomness into meaning and makes conceptual art real. [8]

Ray Barretto

Ray Barretto: *Time Was - Time Is* (O+ Music) Another memoir of bebop's Spanish tinge -- the congaleño's last. [7]

Nik Bärtsch

Nik Bärtsch's Ronin: *Stoa* (ECM) Citing James Brown as well as Kurosawa, Bärtsch's "Zen-funk" is minimalism that doesn't risk inscrutability by sticking too long in one groove. Built from repeating piano figures with clarinet, bass, and a double dose of percussion for springworks, these "modules" improvise not note by note but section by unexpected section. [8]

Nik Bärtsch's Ronin: *Holon* (ECM) The Swiss pianist moves his minimalist rhythmic figures along with the grace of his namesake outcast samurai, his ascetic awareness imagining an ecstatic groove, but arriving at something more sublime. The six modules start sparse but gain weight as Sha's bass clarinet emerges from the shadows, lifting a group that improvises with the beat, not against it. [8]

Nik Bärtsch's Ronin: *Rea* (Ronin Rhythm) Repetitive rhythms are so fundamental to Bärtsch's aesthetic that he even overdubs his *Piano Solo* album, one of six albums of "Ritual Groove Music" that predate his two more luxurious ECM releases. The albums are all of a piece, the first two less consistent, *Live* punchier, *Aer* more refined, but this one, the fifth, is sublime, its simple, shifting rhythmic figures building imperceptibly to gratifying climaxes. [9]

Nik Bärtsch's Ronin: *Llyria* (ECM) Precision Swiss movement, more dazzling at high speed than when they settle for ambience. [7]

Michael Bates

Michael Bates: *Clockwise* (Greenleaf Music) Bassist-led pianoless quartet, the tight writing neatly

binding a dense, complex thrash of trumpet and sax. [7]

Michael Bates: *Acrobat: Music for, and by, Dmitri Shostakovich (Sunnyside '11)* [7]

Bob Belden

Bob Belden: *Three Days of Rain (Sunnyside)* A soundtrack for Chekhov in Cleveland, with Joe Lovano to keep you snug and warm. [7]

Louie Belogenis

The Louie Belogenis Trio: *Tiresias (Porter '11)* Tenor sax trio in full Ayler mode with a dash of late Coltrane, with Sunny Murray who's been there, done that. [7]

Louie Bellson

Louie Bellson & Clark Terry: *Louie & Clark Expedition 2 (Percussion Power)* A bang-up big band, the octogenarian leaders still swinging like they did for Ellington. [7]

Fernando Benadon

Fernando Benadon: *Intuitivo (Innova)* String music, a quartet with bass instead of cello, some clarinet and percussion. [6]

Bryan Beninghove

Bryan Beninghove: *Organ Trio (CDBaby '08)* Honking sax, greasy organ, loud drums, a throwback to '60s Newark. [7]

Gorka Benitez

Gorka Benitez: *Sólo la Verdad Es Sexy (Fresh Sound New Talent)* Warm sax is sexy -- not that there's anything wrong with truth. [7]

Sathima Bea Benjamin

Sathima Bea Benjamin: *Song Spirit (1963-2002, Ekapa)* A jazz singer 40 years out of Africa -- the roots thin out, but the pianists keep coming. [7]

Daniel Bennett

Daniel Bennett Group: *Peace & Stability Among Bears (Bennett Alliance '11)* [7]

George Benson

George Benson: *Irreplaceable (GRP '04)* [1]

Cheryl Bentley

Cheryl Bentley: *The Book of Love (Telarc)* [1]

Borah Bergman

Borah Bergman Trio: *Luminiscence (Tzadik)* At 75 he's outgrown the Cecil Taylor likeness, placing his stately chords with remarkable precision and logic amidst the flutter of Greg Cohen and the percussive spray of Kenny Wollesen. John Zorn joins in for one cut, his abrasive alto sax something else. [8]

Jerry Bergonzi

Jerry Bergonzi: *Tenorist (Savant '07)* Solid as ever, with John Abercrombie's guitar a classy diversion. [7]

Jerry Bergonzi: *Tenor Talk (Savant '08)* A Boston-bred mainstream tenor saxophonist with a minor in Coltrane and dozen solid-plus albums to his credit turns it up a notch, if only to keep a step ahead of the young, hitherto unknown Italians in his band -- Renato Chicco on piano and Andrea Michelutti on drums. [8]

Jerry Bergonzi: *Simply Put (Savant '09)* Nothing fancy, just another exemplary textbook of mainstream tenor sax. [8]

Jerry Bergonzi: *Three for All (Savant)* More tenor talk, simply put as usual. [7]

Jerry Bergonzi: *Convergence (Savant)* His basic tenor sax tour de force even when he tries something different, like overdubbing his with soprano. [8]

Tim Berne

Big Satan: *Souls Saved Hear (Thirsty Ear)* Tom Rainey's perpetually broken time gives this trio a lurching stutter step that Tim Berne's abstract sax only renders more cartoonish. Marc Ducret's guitar provides the sinew that keeps the works from flying apart, and fills in stretches of relative calm when his cohorts take a breather. Berne's albums always hew close to the edge. It's a pleasure to hear one that doesn't crash. [8]

Paraphrase: *Pre-Emptive Denial (Screwgun)* The group pits saxophonist Tim Berne with longtime collaborators Drew Gress and Tom Rainey for long, freewheeling improvs. They released two records from 1996-98, then nothing until this set from The Stone in May 2005. I doubt that they were planning on releasing this one either, but rarely has spontaneous invention meshed so perfectly. Gress delivers the fat bottom you want in a bass, but the real star is Rainey, whose drums are exceptionally loud and precise, shifting the time so adroitly he constructs a labyrinthine cage for the sax. Berne paces, tests his limits, but ultimately plays within himself. He's never sounded so cogent. [9]

Bloodcount: *Seconds (1997, Screwgun)* Originally filmed in 1994, the DVD component of this three-disc package offers little visually, but rehearsal shots strip the seamless music to basic elements, all of which seem to flow through drummer Jim Black's body. Three years later, those elements merge into the mesmerizing live sets spread over two CDs here; the main trick how the two reeds -- Tim Berne on

alto and baritone sax, Chris Speed on tenor sax and clarinet -- intertwine in a single, complex harmonic thread. [8]

Tim Berne/Jim Black/Nels Cline: *The Veil* (Cryptogramophone '11) [7]

Tim Berne: *Insomnia* (1997, Clean Feed '11) An octet from 1997, with soft threads -- violin, cello, clarinet, 12-string guitar -- that ultimately twist into something tight. [7]

Chuck Bernstein

Chuck Bernstein: *Delta Berimbau Blues* (CMB) Minimalist gutbucket blues played on a Brazilian diddley bow, with Roswell Rudd for a choice cut. [7]

Sarah Bernstein

Sarah Bernstein: *Unearthish* (Phase Frame Music '11) [7]

Steven Bernstein

Steven Bernstein: *Diaspora Hollywood* (Tzadik) What if the Jews who scored '40s Hollywood movies and the Jews who chilled West Coast jazz in the '50s had reached deeper into their ethnic legacy? That's the concept here: traditional pieces played soundtrack-style not as social music but for atmospheric effect. Special treat: X drummer D.J. Bonebrake on vibes. [8]

Steven Bernstein's Millennial Territory Orchestra: *We Are MTO* (Mowo!) Count Basie's ghost band is still working, available for gigs like their recent post-historic match with a batch of old Ray Charles tapes. They're still sharp and snappy, but nowhere near as fresh as Bernstein's MTO. Bernstein boned up on Basie while working on the soundtrack to Robert Altman's *Kansas City*, then transplanted the idea of a KC territory band to the Tonic in NYC, gigging once a week, not recording until they were too legendary to resist. Old pieces from Basie, Don Redman, Fats Waller, and others genuinely obscure; an old-sounding brass band "All You Need Is Love"; some vocals and modern flourishes like lead guitar and Charlie Burnham violin. I doubt anyone dances to them, but that doesn't mean it isn't fun. [9]

Steven Bernstein: *Diaspora Suite* (Tzadik) A little overblown, but hey, what else do you expect of a suite? Using the Nels Cline Singers, plus extra guitar, as the core of his rhythm section, Bernstein sounds Ellingtonian with just two brass and two reeds. [8]

Steven Bernstein/Marcus Rojas/Kresten Osgood: *Tattoos and Mushrooms* (ILK) Solemn trumpet-tuba-drums trio beat down Monk, Mingus, Hank Williams, and some ragged blues. [7]

Ignacio Berroa

Ignacio Berroa: *Codes* (Blue Note) Like Chano Pozo in 1947, trap drummer Berroa moved to New York in 1980 and found a job in Dizzy Gillespie's band. But his Afro-Cuban roots were attenuated -- he blames Castro for suppressing Yoruba religion and restricting his schooling to the Euroclassics. Even here, Gonzalo Rubalcaba's piano and Felipe LaMoglia's saxophones provide the Cuban rhythms, not trad percussion. An effective pan-American synthesis, codified. [8]

Carlos Bica

Carlos Bica: *Carlos Bica + Matéria-Prima* (Clean Feed '10) [7]

Carlos Bica & Azul: *Things About Carlos Bica & Azul* (Clean Feed '11) [7]

Rogério Bicudo

Rogério Bicudo/Sean Bergin: *Mixing It* (Pingo '09) Expats from Brazil and South Africa play show-and-tell duets, like Getz and Bonfa, with half the chops and a bit more charm. [6]

Raoul Björkenheim

Raoul Björkenheim/Lukas Ligeti: *Shadowglow* (TUM) Improvised guitar and drums, sometimes prepared, sometimes something else (tri-sonic steel guitar? electric viola da gamba? Chinese tam-tam?). Each piece is built around a trick, perhaps an exotic rhythm Ligeti picked up on his African travels. But Björkenheim doesn't just tease odd sounds from his axes: He knows his power chords, and forges his lines with a deeply metallic tone. [8]

Raoul Björkenheim/William Parker/Hamid Drake: *DMG @ the Stone: Volume 2* (DMG/ARC '08) Slash and grind guitar supported by *the* rhythm section, with a snake-charming shawm bonus. [8]

Ketil Bjørnstad

Ketil Bjørnstad/Torre Brunborg/Jon Christensen: *Remembrance* (ECM '10) [7]

Jim Black

Jim Black: *Habyor* (Winter & Winter) Rock band plays modern jazz with chameleon reed man Chris Speed -- dense and skewed. [7]

Jim Black/Trevor Dunn/Oscar Noriega/Chris Speed: *Endangered Blood* (Skirl '11) [7]

Michael Blake

Michael Blake/Kresten Osgood: *Control This* (Clean Feed '09) Ex-Lounge Lizard saxophonist walks on the wild side, his drummer shifting every which way. [6]

Ran Blake

Ran Blake/Dominique Eade: *Whirlpool* (Jazz Project '11) [7]

Terence Blanchard

Terence Blanchard: *A Tale of God's Will (A Requiem for Katrina)* (Blue Note) Wading through when the ghost of 1927 revisits Congo Square. [7]

Dan Block

Dan Block: *Plays the Music of Duke Ellington: From His World to Mine* (Miles High '10) [7]

Ryan Blotnick

Ryan Blotnick: *Music Needs You (Songlines)* Cool postbop guitar, suave Pete Robbins alto sax, sneaky and just a tad subversive. [7]

Mike Boone

Mike Boone: *Yeah, I Said It . . .* (Dreambox Media '06) A bassist's aural scrapbook -- the importance of swing, and how he misses mom and Buddy Rich. [6]

Chris Botti

Chris Botti: *When I Fall in Love* (Columbia) If he's the new Chet Baker, then the original could pass for Fats Navarro. But at least this album breaks out of the smooth-jazz formula: no funk, no groove, no beat. On irresistible songs, Botti's plaintive trumpet backed by string orchestra is gorgeous enough. But he can't salvage tripe like "Cinema Paradiso," and three cuts with guest vocalists, including his fairy godfather Sting, further dull the mood. N.B.: the bestselling mostly instrumental jazz album of the past two years. [3]

Ralph Bowen

Ralph Bowen: *Dedicated (Posi-Tone)* Solo tenor sax is the purest voice in jazz, as this one proves with the help of a first-rate mainstream band. [6]

Anthony Branker

Anthony Branker & Word Play: *Dialogic* (Origin '11) [7]

Anthony Braxton

Anthony Braxton: *23 Standards (Quartet) 2003* (Leo) Four CDs is overkill for others but with Braxton it's just a ritual of getting acquainted. His catalog is so huge that keeping up is impossible. One thing you can lose track of is what an extraordinary musician he is, but standards provide a handle to hear him by and proven melodies to exploit. On his recently re-released *Charlie Parker Project 1993* (Hatology) the point seems to be to leave Bird in his dust, but here he takes everything at a nice leisurely pace: The pieces average over 10 minutes, leaving ample time for guitarist Kevin O'Neil and a rhythm section that, well, swings. [8]

Anthony Braxton: *20 Standards (Quartet) 2003* (Leo) Four more CDs from the same tour that yielded last year's 4-CD *23 Standards (Quartet) 2003*. The bounty comes from Braxton picking fresh songs each show -- jazz pieces more often than the usual chestnuts, with old favorites Brubeck and Desmond most prominent. The pieces stretch out leisurely, with Kevin O'Neil's deft guitarwork often

the highlight, and Braxton's saxes favoring the high registers. Smart and cool, the most accessible and simply pleasurable set he's done. [9]

Anthony Braxton: *Solo Willisau (Intakt '07)* *For Alto* redux, 35 years to the wiser, no longer shocking, but still a contrarian puzzle. [6]

Anthony Braxton/Kyle Benders: *Toronto (Duets) 2007 (Barnyard '08)* Tight sax dialogues, mostly soprano/sopranino, depend on little things signifying. [6]

Anthony Braxton/Milford Graves/William Parker: *Beyond Quantum (Tzadik)* In five meetings the avant-garde legends turn exquisite craftsmanship into explosive chemistry. [8]

Anthony Braxton/Maral Yakshieva: *Improvisations (Duo) 2008 (SoLyd)* Two disc-long sax-piano improvs, the master taking it easy through the paces. [7]

Anthony Braxton: *19 Standards (Quartet) 2003 (Leo)* The third four-CD helping from the tour, with no signs yet that the barrel even has a bottom. [8]

Michael Brecker

Michael Brecker/Joe Lovano/Dave Liebman: *Saxophone Summit: Gathering of Spirits (Telarc '04)* These three eminent saxophonists should work and play well with others by now, but on this evidence need to repeat kindergarten. They state the heads simultaneously rather than together, then go off and trade lines from different books. They start out thinking blowing session, then lapse into their beloved ballad repertoires, and wind up playing free--in their case the aural equivalent of a food fight. The nadir comes when they switch off to play with their favorite old world flutes. [3]

Michael Brecker: *Pilgrimage (Heads Up '07)* Impending death focuses the mind, thaws the heart, brings out the best in friends. [6]

Randy Brecker

Randy Brecker w/Michael Brecker: *Some Skunk Funk (Telarc)* [1]

Randy Brecker: *Nostalgic Journey: Tykocin Jazz Suite/The Music of Wlodek Pawlik (Summit '09)* Sharp trumpet leads on Wlodek Pawlik's suite, his piano trio backed by a Bialystok orchestra that strikes a nice balance. [7]

Wolfert Brederode

Wolfert Brederode: *Currents (ECM)* Another gray world, the palette thinned down to acoustic piano and clarinet. [7]

Bob Brookmeyer

Bob Brookmeyer, et al.: *One More: Music of Thad Jones (IPO)* A bebopper who never lost his first love for big bands, Jones is remembered mostly for his compositions and arrangements, less so for his quirkily unpolished trumpet. After his death, his famous brothers, Hank and Elvin, recorded a loving tribute called *Upon Reflection* (Verve). With a dream band listed alphabetically from Bob Brookmeyer

to Frank Wess, this one deserves a place on the same shelf. [8]

Peter Brötzmann

Brötzmann/Friis Nielsen/Uuskyla: *Medicina* (Atavistic '04) With a career that started with *Machine Gun*, the big bang of European free jazz, and unfolded through smaller group efforts with titles like *Die Like a Dog*, it's tempting to call this Peter Brötzmann's easy listening album, but it's only easier. His increasing use of clarinet and tarogato does take a little wind out of his sails, but even on tenor sax it's possible to follow his intense yet inventive lines without feeling the need to duck. It helps that his is the only horn. It also helps that drummer Peeter Uuskyla stays on the case no matter what. [8]

Brötzmann Clarinet Project: *Berlin Jungle* (1984, Atavistic '04) Six clarinets instead of the usual sax mob soften the squall, so enjoy the breeze. [7]

The Peter Brötzmann Chicago Tentet: *Be Music, Night* (Okka Disk '05) Mike Pearson's reading of Kenneth Patchen poetry provides a dry counterpoint structuring the avant-noise. [6]

Peter Brötzmann Chicago Tentet: *American Landscapes 1* (Okka Disk '07) Big birds have deep, rumbling hearts . . . [7]

Peter Brötzmann Chicago Tentet: *American Landscapes 2* (Okka Disk '07) . . . which swell over time, pumping longer and louder. [6]

The Peter Brötzmann Octet: *The Complete Machine Gun Sessions* (1968, Atavistic '07) The original fount of saxophonic terror, a certified classic, still farther out than you really want to go. [6]

Peter Brötzmann/Peeter Uuskyla: *Born Broke* (Atavistic '08) Two discs, no bassist, less terror, more soul, vibrant as ever, aging with some grace, some bitterness. [7]

Peter Brötzmann/Toshinori Kondo/Massimo Pupillo/Paal Nilssen-Love: *Hairy Bones* (Okka Disk) The rock-schooled younger generation keep the beat neatly tucked in rather than letting it run free, inducing the elders to twist their unusual horns -- Kondo gets synth effects on electric trumpet, Brötzmann mixes tarogato and clarinet with his saxes -- into tight wads of sound, achieving an intensity that no longer depends, as it did in their younger days, on sheer volume. [9]

Brötzmann/Pliakas/Wertmüller: *Full Blast/Black Hole* (Atavistic) High-energy physicists attacking the building blocks of the universe, mostly with clarinet to minimize the damage. [7]

Peter Brötzmann/Paal Nilssen-Love: *Sweet Sweat* (Smalltown Superjazz) Cranky machine gun sax with tart percussive interference. [6]

Peter Brötzmann Chicago Tentet + 1: *3 Nights in Oslo* (Smalltown Superjazz) Five discs, two with the large band in full fury, three cleaving off subsets deconstructing the mischief. [7]

Anthony Brown

Anthony Brown's Asian American Orchestra: *Monk's Moods* (Water Baby) Brown can be obvious. *Big Bands Behind Barbed Wire* told of young nisei musicians in love with Glenn Miller; *Far East Suite* steered his big band through Ellington's travelogue, adding Asian instruments without undermining the melodies. Here he moves on to Monk, and cheats: cribbing from Hall Overton's Town Hall

arrangements, enlisting Steve Lacy, replacing Monk's piano with Yang Qin Zhao's Chinese dulcimer. It works because Brown deploys his big band for precision rather than power, and because the Asian nuances accentuate the inscrutability of Monk's music. [8]

Anthony Brown's Asian American Orchestra: *India & Africa: A Tribute to John Coltrane (Water Baby)* A Bay Area drummer with African and Asian blood in his veins starts with Coltrane's "India" and "Africa" and expands each to a suite, adding African and Indian percussion, strings and wind instruments in an orgy of worldly cosmopolitanism. [8]

Rob Brown

Rob Brown Ensemble: *Crown Trunk Root Funk (AUM Fidelity)* An unsung hero of many William Parker projects, alto saxophonist Brown finally gets his showcase, leading a superb quartet that started as a Vision Festival gig and worked their way into the studio. Parker is the bassist, of course. Gerald Cleaver drums, and Craig Taborn will turn some ears with his piano. Brown's slower pieces take a while to settle in. His fast ones are breathtaking. [9]

Rob Brown Trio: *Sounds (Clean Feed)* Another Vision Festival piece, a free sax trio with cello and taiko drums. [6]

Dave Brubeck

The Dave Brubeck Quartet: *London Flat London Sharp (Telarc '05)* Bobby Militello doesn't make you forget Desmond, but he helps Brubeck remember. [7]

The Dave Brubeck Quartet: *Last Time Out: December 26, 1967 (1967, Columbia/Legacy '11)* [7]

Bill Bruford

Bill Bruford's Earthworks: *Random Acts of Happiness (Summerfold)* Latin-tinged rhythms, lush piano, Tim Garland's bright sax -- the good life. [7]

PianoCircus Featuring Bill Bruford: *Skin and Wire (Summerfold)* Four pianists, the drummer, and bass guitarist Julian Crampton play the music of Colin Riley, a "composer of no fixed indoctrination" who gets them started with some programming. Riley moves beyond minimalism, breaking his patterns into sharp edges, never letting his ambient stretches get too predictable. [8]

Greg Burk

Greg Burk: *Many Worlds (482 Music)* Bouncing blinking leptons, dancing clusters of taus, discordance that surely can't be mere chaos. [7]

Burnt Sugar

Burnt Sugar/The Arkestra Chamber: *Making Love to the Dark Ages (Live Wired)* Embracing the real dark side: furtive, resilient, so clever it could pass harmlessly as mood music. [7]

Dave Burrell

Dave Burrell Full-Blown Trio: *Expansion (High Two)* Avant-ragtime, skeletal Berlin, Andrew Cyrille marches on, William Parker delights on kora. [7]

Dave Burrell/Billy Martin: *Consequences (Amulet)* Old pianist shows young drummer what real percussion is all about. [7]

Kenny Burrell

Kenny Burrell: *75th Birthday Bash Live! (Blue Note '07)* History repeats, tragedy and farce in no particular order. [3]

Kenny Burrell: *Be Yourself (High Note)* Good advice when you're 78, as is "Let the band help you out." [7]

Mark Buselli

Buselli-Wallarab Jazz Orchestra: *Where or When (Owl Studios)* From Indianapolis, a genuine territory band working venerable standards, framed in finely oiled antique wood with brass for sparkle, not bombast, and distinctive boy and girl singers. Everett Greene glides over the lyrics, his deep voice honed to *saave* elegance. Cynthia Layne cuts deep into her songs, a feisty contrast. [8]

Chris Byars

Chris Byars: *Photos in Black, White and Gray (Smalls)* Referencing Gigi Gryce's alto sax and Lucky Thompson's tenor, Byars finds new niches in bebop, picking up threads from the 1950s that got pummeled by hard bop, discarded altogether by the avant-garde, then buried under whatever passes for postbop these days. Much as bebop developed underground in places like Minton's where musicians gathered to play for each other, the same dynamic developed at Smalls in the '90s, connecting a new generation to unreconstructed veterans like Frank Hewitt and through them to the foundations of modern jazz. Tapping into the process, Byars sounds fresh even working in such a well-worn form. [9]

The Chris Byars Octet: *Lucky Strikes Again (SteepleChase '11)* Lucky Thompson started in swing orchestras, joined Charlie Parker's septet, and escaped to obscurity in Europe. Byars discovered some of his 1961 NDR Jazz Workshop arrangements and worked them out for a sprightly octet that splits the difference between big band and bebop combo -- a difference that matters less and less as memory and skills synthesize. [8]

Taylor Ho Bynum

Taylor Ho Bynum Sextet: *Apparent Distance (Firehouse 12 '11)* [7]

Uri Caine

Uri Caine/Bedrock: *Shelf-Life (Winter & Winter)* One problem with '70s fusion is that when pianists like Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea went electric they gave off an air of slumming. That's

not an issue with younger players weaned on funk, disco, and hip-hop -- electronics for them are an invitation to have fun. Matthew Shipp and George Colligan are good examples, but Uri Caine -- surprisingly for a guy with whole albums of Schumann and Mahler in his closet -- tops them all. He got it right on the first *Bedrock* album: Zach Danziger's beats come first, then Tim Lefebvre's grooves, and anything he does on synth just elaborates. This one goes further, adding a guest horn here and there, even a couple of vocals, but never losing track of first principles -- which for him closes with a straight Philly soul classic. [8]

Uri Caine Ensemble: *Plays Mozart (Winter & Winter)* Or plays *with* Mozart, like cat with rat. [7]

Will Calhoun

Will Calhoun: *Native Lands (Half Note)* Worldly beats, guests who could've stayed longer -- especially Pharoah Sanders. [7]

Roy Campbell

The Roy Campbell Ensemble: *Akhenaten Suite (AUM Fidelity)* The two multi-part suites are hard to gauge as Egyptology, but their depth of feeling are palpable. Billy Bang's violin carries most of the load, the backdrop for Bryan Carrott's eccentric vibes and Campbell's avant-twisted trumpet -- shades of Gillespie moving ever deeper into African myth. The closing "Sunset on the Nile" is lighter and gentler, the river of life. [8]

Other Dimensions in Music Featuring Fay Victor: *Kaiso Stories (Silkheart '11)* [7]

Ila Cantor

Ila Cantor: *Mother Nebula (Fresh Sound New Talent)* Guitar-sax quartet: Cantor's guitar rocks harder, Frederik Carlquist's sax honks softer. [7]

Marco Cappelli

Marco Cappelli Acoustic Trio: *Les Nuages en France (Mode/Avant '11)* Inspired by Fred Vargas thrillers but wordless, abstract guitar snakes furtively around Ken Filiano's bass. [7]

Frank Carlberg

Frank Carlberg: *State of the Union (Fresh Sound New Talent)* Framing a voiceover critique of (political) stupidity with somber free jazz, forcing musicians (and us) to think. [7]

Paul Carlon

Grupo Los Santos: *Lo Que Somos Lo Que Sea (Deep Tone '07)* Rumba in the Bronx, Brazilian twists to Paul Carlon's sax and Pete Smith's guitar. [8]

James Carney

James Carney Group: *Ways & Means (Songlines)* Pianist surrounded with distinctive horns: Tony Malaby, Ralph Alessi, Peter Epstein, Josh Roseman. [7]

Ralph Carney

Ralph Carney: *Carneyball Johnson (Akron Cracker '06)* Rubber city lounge lizards, hold the tango. [8]

Ralph Carney: *Serious Jass Project (Akron Cracker '09)* Sax/clarinet player, started in Akron rock band Tin Huey, toured with Tom Waits, wound up in various San Francisco projects, like this old time, good time band. Mostly Ellington, with a Dave Bartholomew boogie and a honking shot of Big Jay McNeely - not exactly trad jazz, but these days the '30s and the '50s get to help each other out. [8]

Ralph Carney's Serious Jass Project: *Seriously (Smog Veil '11)* Another Ohio saxophonist dedicates his sweet and sour, not-quite-trad jazz album to Harvey Pekar. [7]

François Carrier

François Carrier: *Happening (Leo)* Carrier is an alto saxophonist from Quebec who plays sharp-witted freebop, usually in his tight, long-running trio, expanded here to meet the microtonal challenges of Uwe Neumann's sitar and Mat Maneri's viola. The event was meant to provide an improvised backdrop for dancers, an unseen, unheard presence that may explain how the potential chaos coheres into something physically possible. [8]

François Carrier/Dewey Redman: *Open Spaces (Spool/Line '06)* Happy music days with Carrier's trio plus recently departed guest. [7]

François Carrier/Michel Lambert/Jean-Jacques Avenel: *Within (Leo)* Canadian alto saxophonist Carrier started out chasing that old Trane, but with long-time drummer chum Lambert he finally caught the spirit and found his own sound. Steve Lacy bassist Avenel pushes them even further inside their telepathic free jazz vein. [8]

François Carrier: *The Digital Box (Ayer)* A scrapbook of the saxophonist's trek spread out on seven downloadable CDRs: one from 1999 with Dewey Redman, plus various 2004-06 sets -- two duos with drummer Michel Lambert, the rest adding bass and sometimes guitar. De trop, you might think, but the introspection keeps drawing me in as he fleshes out his world. [8]

François Carrier/Michel Lambert: *Nada (Creative Sources)* Twenty rough sketches, a catalog of sax ideas with a thin veil of drums. [7]

François Carrier/Alexey Lapin/Michel Lambert: *Inner Spire (Leo)* The pianist prefers dense, dark clusters; the saxophonist searches for the light. [7]

François Carrier/Michel Lambert/Alexey Lapin: *All Out (FMR '11)* [7]

Terri Lyne Carrington

Terri Lyne Carrington: *More to Say . . . (Koch)* Project Mersh confusion: even in jazz there's more to

selling out than just playing crap. [1]

Bill Carrothers

Bill Carrothers: *Shine Ball (Fresh Sound New Talent)* The analogy to the banned baseball pitch is that Carrothers also applied foreign substance to his piano. The idea is to surprise the batter, or listener, with an unpredictable break, but in both cases the real trick is control. As with many spitballers, the prepared piano may itself be a feint--mostly it comes through clear and sharp, while the improvs sneak past. [8]

James Carter

James Carter: *Live at Baker's Keyboard Lounge (Warner Bros.)* Overstuffed with four generations of Detroit saxophonists -- Johnny Griffin goes virtually unnoticed for the first time ever, Franz Jackson sings to be heard, and David Murray has to play like David Murray -- this isn't a great album, but it's voluble and exciting the way Carter can be. If he recorded for boutique labels, they'd be on his case for three or four records like this per year, and he'd deliver. But with the majors this sits on the shelf until he moves on and they decide to flush it. [8]

James Carter: *Gardenias for Lady Day (Columbia)* Carter looks good in his retro suits, and deploys his many saxophones with the same aplomb as he shows in selecting his ties. He put together a dream quartet for what could have been *The Real Quietstorm II* -- John Hicks, Peter Washington, Victor Lewis. But with him newly signed to Columbia, you can imagine the helpful hints from company bigwigs: loved that Django tribute, wouldn't Billie Holiday be a nice follow-up (especially given our catalog)? And strings, didn't Billie do an album with strings? And you could freak out a bit on "Strange Fruit," so everyone understands the horrors of lynching. And hey, we just saw this new singer who does Bessie Smith. How else do you get a mess like this? Eight songs, only half even vaguely associated with Holiday; strings that would gag Charlie Parker; excited vocals by an Ella wannabe. Only when the quartet plays unencumbered do you get an idea of how much talent is wasted here. [3]

James Carter/Cyrus Chestnut/Ali Jackson/Reginald Veal: *Gold Sounds (Brown Brothers)* [3]

James Carter: *Present Tense (Emarcy)* Showcases his remarkable talents, but not his former ability to conceptualize a whole album. [7]

James Carter: *Heaven on Earth (Half Note)* No new ground here: starts with Django Reinhardt, recaps Don Byas and Lucky Thompson, blows up a blues from Leo Parker and Ike Quebec, winds up with Larry Young's title cut. Organ and guitar try to fix Carter's retro in a soul jazz matrix, but he plays much too large for that. [8]

James Carter Organ Trio: *At the Crossroads (Emarcy '11)* [8]

Regina Carter

Regina Carter: *I'll Be Seeing You: A Sentimental Journey (Verve)* One last swing through the '40s, in remembrance of Mom. [7]

Eugene Chadbourne

Eugene Chadbourne: *The Hills Have Jazz* (Boxholder) Skewed guitar swings on Basie, hops on Coltrane, doodles on Sun Ra. [7]

The Jack & Jim Show Presents: *Hearing Is Believing* (Boxholder) Samba with the girl from al-Qaeda, shooting ducks with Cheney. [7]

Matt Chamberlain

Matt Chamberlain/Bill Frisell/Tucker Martine/Lee Townsend: *Floratone* (Blue Note) Disembodied grooves veiled with guitar tones; future music intended as folk. [7]

Bill Charlap

Bill Charlap/Sandy Stewart: *Love Is Here to Stay* (Blue Note '05) [3]

Brian Charette

Brian Charette: *Learning to Count* (SteepleChase '11) [8]

Bruno Chevillon

Bruno Chevillon/Tim Berne: *Old and Unwise* (Clean Feed '11) [7]

Tom Christensen

Tom Christensen: *New York School* (Playscape) Christensen says his compositions draw inspiration from the circle of poets and painters around Frank O'Hara, but that tells you nothing about the music. He writes for pairs of reed instruments, mostly matching timbres rather than looking for contrasts. He's joined here by Walt Weiskopf and a bass/drums combo that keeps things moving as he and Weiskopf work their way up and down the equipment rack. The tenor sax duel is the liveliest, but the interplay fascinates even when they draw flutes. [8]

Gerald Cleaver

Farmers by Nature: *Out of This World's Distortions* (AUM Fidelity '11) [7]

Nels Cline

The Nels Cline Singers: *The Giant Pin* (Cryptogramophone '04) No vocals, but the power trio plays heavy metal jazz, replete with free drumming. [8]

The Nels Cline Singers: *Initiate* (Cryptogramophone) No vocals, just a guitar trio that's been around a while, took a back seat while Cline pursued other projects including a day job with Wilco, then decided they had something to prove. Two discs, a brainy one cut in the studio with lots of ideas and a few guests, and a brawny one recorded live that sounds like Cline learned something playing arenas,

and that he's delighted not to be backing a vocalist. [8]

Nels Cline: *Dirty Baby (Cryptogramophone)* An art box of Ed Ruscha paintings, bracketed by a guitar tour de force on one disc, meaty scraps on another. [7]

Anat Cohen

Anat Cohen: *Place & Time (Anzic '05)* An Israeli in New York who works most often in Latin bands, Cohen has a light touch with her saxophones and a dollop of klezmer in her clarinet. Her first record syncretizes a world of influences, with none dominating, except perhaps the bebop that never met a music it couldn't incorporate. More surprising is how well behaved her syntheses are, leaving us with an album that is impossible to pigeonhole beyond noting its surpassing gracefulness. [8]

Anat Cohen & the Anzic Orchestra: *Noir (Anzic '07)* Israeli-Brazilian big band struts with some barbeque. [7]

Anat Cohen: *Notes From the Village (Anzic '08)* Focusing on her clarinet by popular demand, but still wielding a boss tenor. [8]

Anat Cohen: *Clarinetwork: Live at the Village Vanguard (Anzic)* A couple of songs beg comparison to Barney Bigard and don't flinch, and her "Body and Soul" is worthy of Gary Giddins's mixtape. It helps that the Peter Washington-Lewis Nash rhythm section is the best mainstream has to offer, and that pianist Benny Green keeps pace. Helps even more that she answers any reservations I had about her poll-winning clarinet work. [8]

Avishai Cohen

B. 1970, Israel; bass, piano.

Avishai Cohen Trio & Ensemble: *At Home (RazDaz/Sunnyside)* Cohen writes that "the main engine driving this record is a trio," but he's being too modest. It's the bassist, and engine is the operative word because Cohen's pieces build around the pulse of his bass. Half are trios with pianist Sam Barsh and drummer Mark Giuliana; the other half add horns for color, most notably Yosvany Terry's saxophones. [8]

Avishai Cohen: *Continuo (RazDaz/Sunnyside)* Bassist-led piano trio, dense and powerful, with extra oud to heighten the Middle Eastern influence. [7]

Avishai Cohen: *As Is . . . Live at the Blue Note (Razdaz/Half Note)* Fluid quintet showcases the bassist's songbook plus funky "Caravan." [7]

Bill Cole

Bill Cole's Untempered Ensemble: *Proverbs for Sam (2001, Boxholder)* A belated tribute to alto saxophonist Sam Furnace, who died two years later, but who in this Vision Festival set holds the musical center ground with super-bassist William Parker while the leader's squeaky Asian double-reeds (soona, shenai, nagaswarm, digeridoo), Cooper-Moore's diddly bow, and multiple percussionists swarm in pursuit of their otherworldly avant-exotica. [8]

Freddy Cole

Freddy Cole: *The Dreamer in Me (High Note)* With the genes, the speakeasy pipes, even a bit of the piano, he always begged and denied likeness to his big brother, but now he's thirty years older than Nat ever got to be. Cut live uptown, loose, gracious, he finally finds his role, as the living legend that never was. [8]

Freddy Cole: *Freddy Cole Sings Mr. B (High Note)* Mr. B is '40s cronner Billy Eckstine, whose rich baritone and studly swagger have left him irretrievably passé. No such problem for Cole, whose soft touch pries these gems loose as surely as Houston Person's tenor sax shines them up. [8]

Steve Cole

Steve Cole: *Spin (Narada Jazz '05)* [3]

Ornette Coleman

Ornette Coleman: *Sound Grammar (Sound Grammar)* Nothing for 10 years, then he repeats a scam he pulled 20 years ago with *Opening the Caravan of Dreams*: launching a new label with a live album named for the label, or vice versa. Seems cheap, but when sounding like no one else has been your shtick for 50 years, absence makes your reappearances sound even fresher, and working onstage heightens the suspense of his inventions. Actually, Coleman's changed little over the years, still pouring out the same prickly, piercing notes. What's new here is his use of two bassists, which keeps the contrast between Greg Cohen plucking and Tony Falanga bowing in the same register. It also doubles the chaos, which is what he thrives on. [10]

George Colligan

George Colligan's *Mad Science: Realization (Sirocco Music)* More organ than synth, more drums than beats, so the advance starts from further back, trading Grant Green for Tom Guarna. [7]

Denis Colon

Denis Colin Trio: *Something in Common (Sunnyside)* An update, not a throwback to the black power jazz of the early '70s. The trio is French; the instruments are bass clarinet, cello, and zarb; the lead song is Wyclef Jean's "Diallo." But black power is the spirit. Most songs have vocals: rappers, soul sisters, gospel group. They play Hendrix ugly, Stevie Wonder sweet and sour; they channel Coltrane, Rollins, Shepp, John Gilmore; they go pan-African to Beaver Harris. If the years haven't blunted anger at injustice, that's because they haven't blunted injustice. [8]

Todd Coolman

Todd Coolman: *Perfect Strangers (ArtistShare)* A quintet of hard bop all-stars play seven compositions mailed in by strangers. [7]

Cooper-Moore

Cooper-Moore/Assif Tsahar: *America (Hopscotch)* Eschewing piano, Cooper-Moore plays banjo and diddley-bo, and sings the title song like it's been a long time coming. [7]

Triptych Myth: *The Beautiful (AUM Fidelity '03)* Another case where an album title has become the group name for a second album, giving reclusive pianist Cooper-Moore a bit of cover. He reminds me of Horace Tapscott -- not as fast, but as dense and exacting, if anything more sensitive to the other two panels of his group, bassist Tom Abbs and drummer Chad Taylor. They play the way freedom is supposed to work -- untethered but aware and complementary. [8]

Marc Copland

Marc Copland/John Abercrombie/Kenny Wheeler: *Brand New (Challenge)* No bass, no drums, nothing to hurry three masters from their luxury. [7]

Chick Corea

Chick Corea Elektric Band: *To the Stars (Stretch)* The problem with fusion wasn't that good jazz was cheapened by crass rock and roll. The problem was that so many fusioners were suckers for bad rock. Here Corea reconvenes his 1986-93 Elektric Band to power through a suite of pieces based on the L. Ron Hubbard sci-fi novel, and you can guess the rest: vintage space opera that Pink Floyd or Hawkwind wouldn't have played on acid, soundtrack melodramatics without visual cues, and a fresh coat of Jelly Roll's Famous Latin Tinge. [2]

Mirio Cosottini

Mirio Cosottini/Andrea Melani/Tonino Miano/Alessio Pisani: *Cardinal (Grimedia Impresus '09)* Bassoon-trumpet-piano-drums chamber jazz with indeterminate characteristics for a vast and baffling cosmos. [7]

Neil Cowley

The Neil Cowley Trio: *Displaced (Hide Inside)* A rock-ribbed acoustic piano trio, full of thumping chords, pogoing beats, assured elaboration, and calculated tension and release, showing they know English folk music -- from Pink Floyd to Coldplay, anyway -- and hope to please as much as to dazzle. Ends with a whiff of electronics, remixing a fast one. [8]

Marilyn Crispell

Marilyn Crispell Trio: *Storyteller (ECM)* After two decades of comparisons to Cecil Taylor, her third ECM record is deliberate, cautious, almost pretty. Paul Motian could take credit for taming the shrew, but more likely it was her own growing interest in Bill Evans that led her to Motian. He wrote most of the pieces, but exerts little control. Indeed, his subtle drumming is almost untethered to Crispell's piano. But at this slow pace, the logic of her playing, her knack for surprising sequences that make perfect sense once you've heard them, is as dazzling as her speed ever was. [8]

Marilyn Crispell/David Rothenberg: *One Night I Left My Silent House* (ECM) Joint credits, but Rothenberg's clarinet or bass clarinet frames each song, most with titles reflecting his interest in nature sounds. Crispell's piano wends cagily around the edges, but often she just taps the soundboard or clicks percussive things, eliciting the sort of odd, unexpected sounds that flesh out the dark night theme. [8]

David Crowell

David Crowell Ensemble: *Spectrum* (Innova) Philip Glass saxophonist, builds on minimalist rhythmic vamps, tightly boxed but tougher than chamber jazz. [7]

Stephan Crump

Stephan Crump: *Reclamation* (Sunnyside) With Rosetta Trio -- Liberty Ellman and Jamie Fox, who tone their guitars down so as not to overwhelm the bassist leader. The balance lets every string count, forming an intimate framework that seduces you into ever-closer listening. [8]

Stephan Crump/James Carney: *Echo Run Pry* (Clean Feed) Bass and piano, the former in the lead, the latter dark and percussive. [7]

Alex Cuadrado

Alexis Cuadrado: *Noneto Ibérico* (Bju'ecords) Another bassist in the middle of things, spicing his stellar Brooklyn nonet with flashes of Flamenco. [8]

Jamie Cullum

Jamie Cullum: *Catching Tales* (Verve Forecast '05) [2]

Jamie Cullum: *The Pursuit* (Verve) Fewer tics, lamer songs. [2]

Andrew Cyrille

Andrew Cyrille & Haitian Fascination: *Route de Frères* (TUM '11) [8]

Chris Dahlgren

Chris Dahlgren & Lexicon: *Mystic Maze* (Jazzwerkstatt) Walkin', talkin' Béla Bartok blues. [7]

Claire Daly

laire Daly Quintet: *Mary Joyce Project: Nothing to Lose* (Daly Bread '11) [7]

Lars Danielsson

Lars Danielsson: *Tarantella* (ACT) The Swedish bassist composes delectable but spare melodies, sweetening them with his cello and bass violin, Leszek Mozdzer's piano, and John Paricelli's guitar. Mathias Eick's trumpet adds the polish and sheen of brass, and Eric Harland can go exotic on the

percussion. In short, everything you might want in a piece of ECM environmentalism, minus the bleak cover photo. [8]

Kenny Davern

Kenny Davern/Ken Peplowski: *Dialogues (Arbors)* A Clarinet Summit, the double-your-pleasure theme extended by pairing Howard Alden and James Chirillo on banjo and guitar. [7]

Roger Davidson

Roger Davidson & Raúl Jaurena: *Pasión por la Vida (Soundbrush)* Pianist Davidson writes a batch of tangos; Jaurena's bandoneón renders his fascination classic. [7]

Roger Davidson Quintet: *Brazilian Love Song (Soundbrush '10)* [8]

Jamie Davis

Jamie Davis: *It's a Good Thing (Unity Music)* Count Basie's ghost band, Joe Williams's ghost singer. [7]

Jamie Davis: *Vibe Over Perfection (Unity Music)* Forty years ago he would have been a terrific soul singer, but the moment passed, so he looks back to Basie. [7]

Kris Davis

Kris Davis: *Lifespan (Fresh Sound)* Piano trio plus three horns do her bidding without clutter or show. [7]

Kris Davis: *The Slightest Shift (Fresh Sound New Talent)* Dense piano cut with Tony Malaby tenor sax, the left bank of the postbop mainstream. [7]

Kris Davis: *Rye Eclipse (Fresh Sound New Talent)* A contest of daredevils. From the beginning tenor saxophonist Tony Malaby gave her group a rough edge, but three albums in they've all caught the bug. Bassist Eivind Opsvik and drummer Jeff Davis pull the rhythm apart at the seams, and the pianist-leader plunges in with rough block chords, but the tradeoffs can be intricate, like in "Wayne Oskar" where the piano leads into intriguing abstractions, then backs off as Malaby finishes the thought. [8]

On Ka'a Davis

On Ka'a Davis: *Seed of Djuke (Live Wired Music)* Searching for deepest, darkest Africa on the Lower East Side. [7]

Ernest Dawkins

Ernest Dawkins' Chicago 12: *Misconceptions of a Delusion Shades of a Charade (Dawk)* As the mayor says, "We're not here to create disorder; we're here to preserve disorder." [7]

Ernest Dawkins' New Horizons Ensemble: *The Messenger (Delmark)* Tailgate party, Chicago style,

down and dirty but further out. [7]

Ernest Dawkins' New Horizons Ensemble: *The Prairie Prophet* (Delmark '11) Nominally a tribute to the late *pater familias* of the Chicago avant-garde -- Fred Anderson not only inspired the musicians, he owned the club they played -- Dawkins taps into roots as far away as South Africa and as close as Lester Bowie. The brass polish up his rough sax, and Jeff Parker's guitar ties it all together. [8]

Joey DeFrancesco

Joey DeFrancesco: *Snap Shot* (High Note) Regroups the original trio he made his rep with, grinding with grooveful guitarist Paul Bollenback. [7]

Peter Delano

Peter Delano: *For Dewey* (1996, Sunnyside) More importantly, featuring Dewey -- the late Mr. Redman's tenor on three of eight cuts, vibrant as ever. [7]

Benoit Delbecq

Benoit Delbecq Unit: *Phonetics* (Songlines '05) Congo drums and piano dance polyrhythms with sax and viola textures. [8]

Todd DelGiudice

Todd DelGiudice: *Pencil Sketches* (OA2) Highly improbable sax hero, bright, lush, and never sketchy. [7]

Les DeMerle

Les DeMerle: *Cookin' at the Corner, Vol. 1* (Origin) Small-time Louis Prima type -- Bonnie Eisele is his Keely Smith, but he gets the best laugh with "Bennie's From Heaven." [7]

The Dynamic Les DeMerle Band: *Gypsy Rendezvous, Vol. One* (Origin) Drummer-singer and better half Bonnie Eisele trade surreal standards in a hot club in Hawaii. [7]

Carlos De Rosa

Carlos De Rosa's Cross-Fade: *Brain Dance* (Cuneiform '11) Quartet, with Mark Shim's tenor sax on the edge, and pianist Vijay Iyer improvising around the corners, but the record always returns to the bassist-leader, who keeps it loose and open. [8]

Ted Des Plantes

Ted Des Plantes' Washboard Wizards: *Thumpin' and Bumpin'* (Stomp Off) Trad jazz still yoked to banjo and tuba, but a little more modern, with sax replacing the second cornet, and the 1924 to 1937 Harlem repertoire carrying them well into the swing era. Des Plantes is a stride pianist who sings a bit,

a scholar from Ohio who makes the old sound bright and shiny new, without even a whiff of irony. [8]

Ramón Díaz

Ramón Díaz: *Diàleg (Fresh Sound New Talent)* Neither a throwback nor a dissertation in postmodern harmonic theory from a conventional hard bop quintet--trumpet and sax, piano, bass and drums. Rather, they sound like a straight step forward, a bit fancier, a cleaner sound, but with all hard bop principles intact -- led by the Art Blakey of the Canary Islands. [8]

Stacey Dillard

Stacey Dillard: *One (Smalls)* Tenor saxophonist, fierce at high speeds, soulful when he slows down. [7]

Bill Dixon

Bill Dixon: *17 Musicians in Search of a Sound: Darfur (AUM Fidelity)* Poor Darfur: you don't know whether to cry, vent, or slump into a stupor. [4]

Armen Donelian

Armen Donelian: *Leapfrog (Sunnyside '11)* [7]

Pierre Dørge

Pierre Dørge & New Jungle Orchestra: *Dancing Cheek to Cheek (Stunt)* Two nods to tin pan alley: "Cheek to Cheek" done Louis/Ella style, except that this Louis is Ray Anderson; and "Body and Soul" slowed to a savory crawl by Josephine Cronholm. The rest of the album is Afro-Danish big band, griots and pennywhistles, references to Mingus and Sun Ra, and a Dukish impression of Jakarta. Dørge, like his Jungle Music idol, plays orchestra, but when the occasion calls for it he also fills in smartly on guitar. [8]

Dave Douglas

Dave Douglas/Louis Sclavis/Peggy Lee/Dylan Van Der Schyff: *Bow River Falls (Premonition)* One unusual thing about Douglas is how much he's rooted in European folk traditions -- mostly Slavic (Tiny Bell Trio) and Jewish (Masada). This evenly balanced collaboration with French clarinetist Louis Sclavis and the young Canadian cello-drums team continues in this vein. Sclavis is central, the backbone for pieces that spring Douglas loose. This compares favorably to the follow-up, *Mountain Passages*, where Sclavis is replaced by the extra horn power of Michael Moore and Marcus Rojas while the all-Douglas program gets way too complex. [8]

Dave Douglas & Keystone: *Moonshine (Greenleaf Music)* Several years of electronic dabbling finally pay off: DJ Olive's scratching and Adam Benjamin's Fender Rhodes are woven seamlessly into the rhythm, but the garbled Bush sample seems to be there just to make you wonder. New saxophonist Marcus Strickland more than lives up to his illustrious predecessors. And then there's the trumpeter:

Douglas wins those polls not for his compositions -- he's too far over everyone's head for that -- but for his chops. [8]

Dave Douglas: *Spirit Moves (Greenleaf Music)* The spirit of Lester Bowie returns, trademarked by wit and funk, with a brass band "Mr. Pitiful" that is anything but. [7]

Dave Douglas/So Percussion: *Bad Mango [Greenleaf Portable Series Volume 3] (Greenleaf Music '11)* [7]

Dave Douglas: *Rare Metals [Greenleaf Portable Series Volume 1] (Greenleaf Music '11)* [7]

Hamid Drake

Hamid Drake & Assif Tsahar: *Live at Glenn Miller Café (Ayler)* Two-thirds of *Lost Brother* takes its avant-honk on the road. [7]

Mark Dresser

Mauger: *The Beautiful Enabler (Clean Feed '08)* Mark Dresser and Gerry Hemingway, grads of Anthony Braxton's 1980s quartet, audition a new saxophonist: Rudresh Mahanthappa. [7]

Paquito D'Rivera

Paquito D'Rivera: *Tango Jazz: Live at Jazz at Lincoln Center (Sunnyside)* The Cuban clarinetist has dabbled in tango before, poorly, and I had yet to hear anything from the uptown culture palace that I could recommend, so why this breakthrough? That's easy: bassist-arranger Pablo Aslan, whose own records have stealthily insinuated tango into the New York jazz ghetto. Yet this is an advance for Aslan as well: his moves are so assured and graceful, the extra glitz actually helps. [8]

Scott Dubois

Scott DuBois: *Banshees (Sunnyside)* Guitarist-driven vehicle, steady enough to keep avant-saxman Gebhard Ullman on track, wild enough to get him excited. [8]

Scott DuBois: *Black Hawk Dance (Sunnyside)* Supple guitarist leads an edgy quartet where Gebhard Ullman makes most of the noise. [7]

Lajos Dudas

Lajos Dudas: *Jazz on Stage (Jazz Stick)* Bop-easy clarinet, sort of a Hungarian Buddy DeFranco, with guitarist sidekick Philipp van Endert sometimes more. [7]

Ismael Dueñas

Ismael Dueñas Trio: *Jazz Ateu (Quadrant '10)* Piano trio, enough rhythmic flow I'm tempted to call it postmodern stride, except when it isn't. [8]

Hilario Durán

Hilario Durán Trio: *Motion* (Alma '10) [7]

Dominic Duval

Dominic Duval/Mark Whitecage: *Rules of Engagement, Vol. 1* (Drimala '03) No agitprop, just bass and reeds, a starter kit without the racket. [8]

Bill Easley

Bill Easley: *Business Man's Bounce* (18th & Vine) Old-fashioned tenor sax honks, bops, pitches woo, and wisecracks over Nat Cole. [7]

Marty Ehrlich

Marty Ehrlich: *Line on Love* (Palmetto '03) Stanley Dance invented the category "mainstream jazz" to account for older musicians who had assimilated bebop without losing their swing, but mainstreaming never ended: the avant-garde of the '60s is older now than bebop was then, so old that youngsters channel Ornette and Braxton and Hemphill as naturally as Bird and Prez and Hawk. The mainstream du jour is the old new thing shorn of its desire to shock and dismay. These days albums that venture well beyond neocon blues/swing dogma while remaining merely smart and polite are the norm. Yet though this one rarely gets out of ballad gear, it remains fresh and unpredictable, retaining the spirit of innovation, not just the form. [8]

Marty Ehrlich & Myra Melford: *Spark* (Palmetto '07) Deceptively calm sax-piano duets, not enough tinder to catch fire. [6]

Marty Ehrlich's Rites Quartet: *Frog Leg Logic* (Clean Feed '11) [7]

Mathias Eick

Mathias Eick: *Skala* (ECM '11) Like so many Norwegian jazz players, has a rock background which he still indulges in Jaga Jazzist and Motorpsycho, but ECM focuses him more narrowly: the rhythms shift free, the piano rumbles, sax and harp slip in and out, while the trumpet is warm and bright enough to dispell any thoughts of Nordic chill. [8]

Taylor Eigsti

Taylor Eigsti: *Lucky to Be Me* (Concord) Concord's latest youth pitch at the Adult Contemporary market looks like the Mod Squad scrubbed up for the neocon millennium: blonde ingenue Erin Boheme, black trumpeter Christian Scott, and this slightly scruffy white pianist. All three have talent, of course -- Eigsti is a 21-year-old prodigy on his third album, clearly a hot property. But they wouldn't have gotten all that hair and skin budget, not to mention all that advertising, if they looked as geeky as Steve Lehman. The music is groomed, too: Eigsti gets two top bass-drums tandems and plenty of cover -- Coltrane, Björk, Porter, Mussorgsky, the *Sopranos* theme song -- for his scrawny originals. [3]

Harris Eisenstadt

Harris Eisenstadt/Ellery Eskelin/Angelica Sanchez: *September Trio (Clean Feed '11)* [7]

Nathan Eklund

Nathan Eklund: *Trip to the Casbah (Jazz Excursion)* Another Donny McCaslin sideman tour de force, jump starting a postbop trumpeter in a hurry. [7]

Eliane Elias

Eliane Elias: *Light My Fire (Concord '11)* [7]

Kurt Elling

Kurt Elling: *Nightmoves (Concord)* Awkwardly forcing his voice through vocalese mazes, finally destroying "Body and Soul." [3]

John Ellis

John Ellis: *One Foot in the Swamp (Hyena)* Gumbo, corn fritters, home-grown pennywhistle jive. [7]

Mike Ellis

Mike Ellis: *Bahia Band (Alpha Pocket)* The sweet spot between Ellis's sparsely avant *Chicago Spontaneous Combustion Suite* and his luxuriantly Mali-meets-Brazil Speak in Tones project *Subaro*: a group from the nordeste Brazilian melting pot, with a groove that can't stop, chants that don't get in the way, and the leader's soprano sax, which bites a little when he gets excited. [8]

Maurice El Médioni

Maurice El Médioni Meets Roberto Rodriguez: *Descarga Oriental: The New York Sessions (Piranha)* An Algerian-Sephardic twist on Rodriguez's Cuban-Ashkenazi synthesis. [8]

Amir ElSaffar

Amir ElSaffar: *Two Rivers (Pi)* One Iraqi, the other American, played out in mutual respect, as jazz not war. [7]

Amir ElSaffar Two Rivers Ensemble: *Inana (Pi '11)* [7]

Kahil El'Zabar

Kahil El'Zabar's Infinity Orchestra: *Transmigration (Delmark)* His 25 years worth of trips to the Bordeaux Jazz Festival pay off, with the locals -- including turntablists, rappers, and 12 percussionists -- expanding El'Zabar's trio, a/k/a Ethnic Heritage Ensemble, to 39 pieces. The big band doesn't blow

hot and brassy. Rather, they fill in details so subtly that it takes a while to realize how far they've expanded El'Zabar's world-brotherhood shtick. [8]

Ethnic Heritage Ensemble: *Hot 'N' Heavy (Delmark)* Four now, with Fareed Haque's guitar adding pan-ethnic groove to hot trumpet, heavy sax, and El'Zabar's pan-ethnic beats. [7]

Craig Enright

Craig Enright: *La Belleza (CDBaby)* Straightforward Omaha saxophonist leads Afro-Cuban group, transposing "Iowa Folk Song" and "Bata Boogie." [7]

Peter Epstein

Peter Epstein/Brad Shepik/Matt Kilmer: *Lingua Franca (Songlines)* All three have interests in the world's many musics -- there are subtle Indian, Balkan, and West African spices here -- but all three are homegrown and play conventional instruments. Shepik's guitars intertwine with Kilmer's percussion. Epstein's alto or soprano sax floats above, as if charming snakes. [8]

EEA: *The Dark (Origin '10)* Sax-trumpet-piano trio, faint figures unmoved by rhythm. [3]

Peter Epstein & Idée Fixe: *Abstract Realism (Origin '10)* Alto sax laboring mightily against dark, industrial tableaux. [7]

Wayne Escoffery

Wayne Escoffery: *Intuition (Nagel Heyer '04)* [3]

Ellery Eskelin

Ellery Eskelin: *Quiet Music (Prime Source)* The avant saxophonist's title isn't irony, but his sprawling trio-plus-voice doesn't make quiet any easier. [7]

Ellery Eskelin/Gerry Hemingway: *Inbetween Spaces (Auricle)* Sax-drums duo, the drummer all finesse, patiently drawing his partner out. Eskelin's tenor sax is fractal, each excursion revealing more detail as Hemingway picks it apart. [8]

Ellery Eskelin: *Trio New York (Prime Source '11)* Technically a sax-organ-drums trio, but Gary Versace has wrung all the grease out of the Hammond, freeing the tenor saxophonist to plot his own cool-toned, fiercely intelligent path. [8]

John Ettinger

John Ettinger/Pete Forbes: *Inquatica (Ettinger Music)* Violinist and drummer, switching on keyboards and setting up loops -- compelling fast, intriguing slow, lovely when they tune in "Stardust." [7]

Orrin Evans

Tarbaby: *The End of Fear (Posi-Tone)* Looks like a piano trio juggling guest horns on 8 of 12 tracks but Orrin Evans, Eric Revis, and Nasheet Waits pick up energy on their own, just not as much as Nicholas Payton, J.D. Allen, and especially Oliver Lake. Covers from Fats Waller to Bad Brains, originals by all three including a Monkish one by Revis. Everything holds together. [8]

Peter Evans

Peter Evans Quartet: *Live in Lisbon (Clean Feed)* With pianist Ricardo Gallo tossing bombs every which way, a tough venue for a hard-playing trumpeter. [7]

Jon Faddis

Jon Faddis: *Teranga (Koch)* Take Wynton Marsalis, strip away the shameless propaganda ministry and his Pulitzer-seeking compositional conceits, endow him with a sense of humor and sharpen his chops a bit, and you'll be narrowing in on a description of Jon Faddis. Faddis spent most of his early career working as Dizzy Gillespie's stunt double, because he was damn near the only one up to the job. Later he moved into the institutional milieu at Carnegie Hall, a modest parallel to Marsalis's Lincoln Center coup. Releasing a mere nine albums, mostly throwaways, over 30 years, Faddis has remained out of sight and out of mind, which makes this album a revelation. The core quartet is perfectly balanced, lithe and propulsive, but the surprise is that the guest shots fit in seamlessly -- African drums, Russell Malone guitar, Frank Wess flute, and best of all, Clark Terry mumbling. As for Faddis, he shows us everything worthwhile a trumpet can do. [9]

Kali Z. Fasteau

Kali Z. Fasteau/Kidd Jordan: *People of the Ninth: New Orleans and the Hurricane 2005 (Flying Note)* She fêtes the hero of New Orleans, and he centers her eclecticism. [6]

John Fedchock

John Fedchock NY Sextet: *Live at the Red Sea Jazz Festival (Capri '10)* The swing and sweep of his big band in a nifty compact box. [7]

Avram Fefer

Avram Fefer: *Ritual (Clean Feed)* Freebop sax trio imagines "Shepp in Wolves' Clothing" and other fractious fairy tales. [7]

Avram Fefer/Eric Revis/Chad Taylor: *Eliyahu (Not Two)* Sax-bass-drums trio, more soulful than you expect from free jazz, tightly focused with a humane tone. Named for Fefer's late father, a thoughtful reckoning. [8]

Simon Fell

SFE: *Positions & Descriptions: Simon H. Fell Composition No. 75 (Clean Feed '11)* [7]

Agustí Fernández

Agustí Fernández: *El Laberint de la Memória* (Mbari Musica '11) [7]

Joe Fiedler

Joe Fielder Trio: *Plays the Music of Albert Mangelsdorff* (Clean Feed '05) And, finally, simplifies the avant-trombone master for much needed clarity. [7]

Joe Fiedler Trio: *Sacred Chrome Orb* (Yellow Sound Label '11) [8]

Alvin Fielder

Alvin Fielder Trio: *A Measure of Vision* (Clean Feed) With the González clan helping out, the 70-year-old master of "The Cecil Taylor-Sunny Murray Dancing Lesson." [7]

Scott Fields

Scott Fields Freetet: *Bitter Love Songs* (Clean Feed) Exorcising the "slime trail of bile that love leaves behind," Fields's guitar doesn't ramble for once: he is focused, calm, cool, concise. Bass and drums forego the avant free-for-all, keeping him on track without demanding attention. His misery is our gain. [8]

Ken Filiano

Ken Filiano & Quantum Entanglements: *Dreams From a Clown Car* (Clean Feed) Michaël Attias and Tony Malaby as quirky saxophonists, indeterminacy a fundamental law of their universe. [7]

James Finn

James Finn Trio: *Plaza de Toros* (Clean Feed) Living by his wits, with momentary flashes of Spanish bravado. [7]

Béla Fleck

Béla Fleck: *Throw Down Your Heart* (Rounder) Returns the banjo to its native Africa where it best suits rural backwaters. [8]

Joe Fonda

FAB Trio: *History of Jazz in Reverse* (TUM '11) [8]

Anat Fort

Anat Fort: *A Long Story* (ECM '07) Slow, a soft piano cushion for Perry Robinson's jagged clarinet. [7]

Anat Fort: *And If* (ECM) Quiet, supple meditations on Paul Motian, the inscrutable path beyond Bill Evans. [7]

Billy Fox

Billy Fox's *Blackbirds & Bullets: Dulces* (Clean Feed) Crazy like a maracas player, shuffling three horns, keys, and violin. [7]

Joel Frahm

Joel Frahm: *We Used to Dance* (Anzic) A tenor sax lover's album, modeled on Stan Getz with three-fourths of his late quartet. [7]

Dominic Frasca

Dominic Frasca: *Deviations* (Cantaloupe/Serious Music) Guitar minimalism, the patterns expanding harmonically rather than repeating ad absurdum. [7]

Nnenna Freelon

Nnenna Freelon: *Blueprint of a Lady: Sketches of Billie Holiday* (Concord '05) [3]

Von Freeman

Von Freeman: *Good Forever* (Premonition) At 84 he finally learns to relax and stretch out on a ballad. [7]

Von Freeman: *The Best of Von Freeman on Premonition* (1996-2006, Premonition) Invisible until he turned 75 and morphed into Sonny Rollins' scrawny little brother. [8]

Bob French

Bob French: *Marsalis Music Honors Bob French* (Marsalis Music/Rounder) Even post-Katrina, what worked for Papa Celestin works for his heir. [7]

Erik Friedlander

Eric Friedlander: *Prowl* (Cryptogramophone) ITT honcho Harold Geneen used to preach that if you make your quarters, you'll make your year. This quartet succeeds on the balance and poise of its constituent pieces. The leader's cello, Andy Laster's reeds, Stomu Takeishi's electric bass, Satoshi Takeishi's percussion--each stands out in turn. Exception: "A Closer Walk With Thee," which starts fractured and gains power as it slowly assembles itself into a whole. [8]

Erik Friedlander: *Broken Arm Trio* (Skipstone) Cello-led string bop -- light, loose, slightly oblique. [7]

Erik Friedlander: *Bonebridge* (Skipstone '11) [7]

David Frishberg

Dave Frishberg: *Retromania: At the Jazz Bakery* (Arbors) Plays piano and sings, mostly about baseball players from his youth and further back, especially names rhyming with Van Lingle Mungo. [7]

Bill Frisell

Bill Frisell: *Richter 858* (Songlines) [3]

Bill Frisell: *History, Mystery* (Nonesuch) The string quartet at the heart of Frisell's latest revisioning of classical Americana, all name jazz musicians, forms the sea that Frisell's guitar swims through, occasionally rising up in wonder. They go to Sam Cooke for inspiration and Mali for a blues, and check tunes by Monk and Konitz, but those are merely outposts, as Frisell's writing subsumes all before it. Greg Tardy's sax and Ron Miles' cornet are rare enough to be treats. [8]

Bill Frisell: *Disfarmer* (Nonesuch) Another slice of Americana, stripped down to strings including pedal steel and fiddle, tuned to Depression-era photos of farmers. Frisell's originals are bare soundtrack sketches, with titles like "Think," "Drink," and "Play." But the indelible melodies of covers like "That's All Right, Mama" and "Lovesick Blues" jump from the grooves, spreading their warmth over everything in the vicinity. [8]

Bill Frisell: *Beautiful Dreamers* (Savoy Jazz) The Norman Rockwell of jazz guitarists, growing ever more comfortable framing his string-toned Americana, with Eivand Kang's viola for flair and Rudy Royston's drums for emphasis. The signposts are as familiar as "Beautiful Dreamer" and "Goin' Out of My Head." The originals cast unexpected highlights. [8]

Fred Frith

Maybe Monday: *Unsquare* (Intakt '08) Fred Frith guitar, Miya Masaoka koto, Larry Ochs sax, with guest electronics swirling around no discrete point. [7]

Jake Fryer

Jake Fryer/Bud Shank Quintet: *In Good Company* (Capri '11) Two alto saxophonists: a British young fogey and the last giant of the 1950s west coast jazz scene. Cut one day before Shank died, this is more than a memento. It's the best way to carry on, and not just tradition since most of the old-sounding songs are new. [8]

Satoko Fujii

Satoko Fujii Quartet: *Zephyros* (NatSat) Her crashing entrance shows why she gets compared to

Cecil Taylor. Then she backs off and lets the band do some work. Propelled by Takeharu Hayakawa's electric bass, the rhythm section was built for speed. But husband and trumpeter Natsuki Tamura prefers to wax lyrical even when surrounded by chaos--which gives this music a touching voice on top of the finely drawn manga violence of Fujii's piano. [8]

Satoko Fujii Trio: *Illusion Suite (Libra)* With Mark Dresser and Jim Black, one long and three short pieces full of texture that escalates into energy. [7]

Junk Box: *Fragment (Libra)* Like Ken Vandermark's recent Territory Band albums -- two albums totalling five discs -- Satoko Fujii's four new big-band albums are overwhelming: in such vast universes, anything can happen, everything does, and fatigue sets in long before one can sort out so many marginal treats. At least with this trio you can keep the players straight. She pounds out thick piano chords, while sidekick Natsuki Tamura's surly trumpet adds tension and growl, and drummer John Hollenbeck referees. Basic Fujii. [8]

Satoko Fujii Orchestra Nagoya: *Maru (Bakamo)* If Basie's big band was atomic, this one's thermonuclear. [7]

Satoko Fujii Four: *When We Were There (Libra)* The high point of her eight albums last year, mostly because the Mark Dresser-Jim Black rhythm section relishes her fusion groove as well as her predominant and wildly varied avant interests. Also because trumpet-playing husband Natsuki Tamura continues to mature as a steady, lyrical accompanist. [8]

Satoko Fujii/Natsuki Tamura: *In Krakow in November (Not Two)* Stripped down to piano-trumpet duets, where parry and joust waxes and wanes. [7]

Satoko Fujii Quartet: *Bacchus (Onoff)* Godzilla tries to waltz, succumbs to toxic heavy metals. [3]

Satoko Fujii Orchestra New York: *Summer Suite (Libra)* With esteemed free thinkers at every position -- like Elery Eskelin and Tony Malaby at tenor sax and Steven Bernstein and Herb Robertson at trumpet -- this big band packs fierce solo power, but Fujii flexes all that muscle masterfully. Her suite runs the loud-quiet, sweet-sour gamut, a model of tight composition and daring arrangement, driven by a rhythm section that hews close enough to the beat, with a trio of trombones doing the heavy lifting. [9]

Satoko Fujii Trio: *Trace a River (Libra)* The pianist plays a jaunty little figure, then the notes descend into a loud crash. She wends her way through meditative quiet, then all hell breaks loose. The often inscrutable bassist Mark Dresser finds he can push a groove as hard as anyone, and drummer Jim Black relishes every moment. [8]

Satoko Fujii/Myra Melford: *Under the Water (Libra)* Two avant-pianists square off for three duets and a solo apiece, rumbling and waxing eloquent. [7]

Junk Box: *Sunny Then Cloudy (Libra)* More Satoko Fujii-Natsuki Tamura jousts, with John Hollenbeck's fractured martial drums stirring up trouble. [7]

Satoko Fujii Orchestra Nagoya: *Sanrei (Bamako)* An exhilarating blast of sci-fi fusion with occasional squawkfests and crashes. [7]

Satoko Fujii Ma-Do: *Desert Ship (Not Two)* Bass and drums present, but only to heighten the piano-trumpet intercourse. [7]

Minamo: *Kuroi Kawa - Black River (Tzadik)* Crashing Satoko Fujii piano, soothing Carla Kihlstedt violin, evened out into two discs of intricate serenade. [7]

Satoko Fujii Orchestra Tokyo: *Zakopane (Libra)* Big band, no piano, lots of Kelly Churko guitar, more horns. [7]

Curtis Fuller

Curtis Fuller: *I Will Tell Her (Capri)* A classic Detroit cruiser from the 1950s, the trombonist's band spiffed up with Keith Oxman's tenor sax and Al Hood's trumpet. [7]

Andrea Fultz

Andrea Fultz: *The German Projekt (The German Projekt)* Von Kopf bis Fuss auf Liebe, maybe Brecht/Weill and Hollaender do sound better in the original German. [8]

Joel Futterman

Joel Futterman/Alvin Fielder/Ike Levin Trio: *Resolving Doors (Charles Lester Music)* Piano-sax roughhousing, refereed by an AACM drummer who keeps both sides swinging. [7]

Kenny G

Kenny G: *The Essential Kenny G (1986-2004, Arista/Legacy)* With 30 million records sold, G is by far the most popular, and most hated, man in jazz, if you even grant him that categorization. His degree was in business, and his skill with contracts achieved such coups as his duet to Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World" -- sacrilege to those who ignore how crappy the original strings are. And he certainly knows niche marketing. But his greatest breakthrough has been in brain chemistry, where he's discovered neurons that, when stimulated by his unnaturally pretty soprano sax, cause some people intense pain and others mild anaesthetic pleasure. Exempt from either reaction, I'm left disinterestedly analyzing his craft, and concluding he's a mere hack. [1]

Eddie Gale

Eddie Gale: *Afro-Fire (Black Beauty)* Black rhythm's still happening, but these days Sun Ra gets filtered through Afrika Bambaataa. [7]

Hal Galper

Hal Galper/Reggie Workman/Rashied Ali: *Art-Work (Origin)* A 70-year-old pianist few have heard of -- inspired by Bud Powell, taught by Jaki Byard, always turns out thoughtful albums -- goes live with two 70-year-old avant-gardists, each as fascinating in his own right. [8]

Jan Garbarek

Jan Garbarek: *In Praise of Dreams (ECM)* Sax with strings, only Garbarek's such an ascetic he

allows himself just one viola and a dash of percussion. [7]

Jan Garbarek Group: *Dresden* (ECM) The Norwegian saxophonist's normally crystalline tone is a bit muddied in this rare live double, as is the conceptual clarity of studio albums that wove together music from all over the world. The pieces are here for a recap of a remarkable 40-year career, but the lesson is that it's still a work in progress. [8]

Kenny Garrett

Kenny Garrett: *Beyond the Wall* (Nonesuch '06) Crawling up Mt. Coltrane, making fake vistas look painful. [4]

Kenny Garrett: *Sketches of MD* (Mack Avenue) Garrett's first live album is a nod to Miles Davis, who hired him at the crossroads of their careers. Would be no big deal, but he crosses late-Miles funk with the orgiastic Coltraneisms Miles missed out on. Better still, he gets Pharoah Sanders to deliver them in person. [8]

Giacomo Gates

Giacomo Gates: *Luminosity* (Doubledave Music) Talks his way into vocalese jams but keeps his cool, the humor of "Hungry Man" and "Full of Myself" true because he's neither. [7]

Giacomo Gates: *The Revolution Will Be Jazz* (Savant '11) Gil Scott-Heron done with taste and respect and a bit of sentiment, just buried and already part of the tradition. [7]

Stephen Gauci

Stephen Gauci/Kris Davis/Michael Bisio: *Three* (Clean Feed) Subtle avant sax riffing around abstract piano and mischievous bass. [7]

Tobias Gebb

Tobias Gebb & Trio West: *An Upper West Side Story* (Yummy House '08) Witty drummer-led piano trio fill in spaces between standout guests Joel Frahm and Champian Fulton. [7]

Moncef Genoud

Moncef Genoud: *Aqua* (Savoy Jazz) A blind pianist from Tunisia via Switzerland hooks up with bassist Scott Colley and drummer Bill Stewart for an album that swims in the mainstream but offers a few unexpected twists: a "Summertime" that loses the melody, a Coltrane piece that radically shifts time. When Michael Brecker guests on three cuts, and Dee Dee Bridgewater sings "Lush Life" to close, it's more than marketing for once. The sax rises organically from the mix, and the vocal closes on a poignant note. [8]

Paul Giallorenzo

Paul Giallorenzo: *Get In to Go Out* (482 Music '09) Josh Berman and Dave Rempis enjoy the free

jousting of a pianoless quartet, while the pianist-leader finds clever ways to contribute. [7]

Joe Giardullo

Joe Giardullo: *No Work Today: Nine for Steve Lacy (Drimala)* Meditations on solo soprano sax -- a real tightrope act. [7]

Melvin Gibbs

Melvin Gibbs' Elevated Unity: *Ancients Speak (Live Wired Music)* The moderns speak in hip-hop tongues, homologues to ancient drums, but cross-bred like crazy, even if you can trace all of it, like damn near everything else, back to Africa. Gibbs is a bassist who has worked under band names from Defunkt to Harriet Tubman, with side credits ranging from Sonny Sharrock to Marisa Monte to John Zorn to Femi Kuti -- a career he finally unifies. [8]

Lafayette Gilchrist

Lafayette Gilchrist: *The Music According to Lafayette Gilchrist (Hyena/Shantytone)* Go-go beats and funky bass--free your ass and the pianist will jump, jive, and wail. [7]

Robert Glasper

Robert Glasper: *Double Booked (Blue Note)* Continues to make nice progress as a mainstream piano trioist, but his Experiment is unstable, prone to stink bombs. [3]

Dave Glasser

Dave Glasser: *Evolution (Here Tiz '10)* Basie-bred alto saxophonist comes up with some Monkish mutations. [7]

Ben Goldberg

Ben Goldberg Quintet: *The Door, the Hat, the Chair, the Fact (Cryptogramophone)* Steve Lacy as Zen master, or Dr. Seuss, with Kenny Clarke the cat with the hat. [7]

Ben Goldberg: *Go Home (BAG)* Charlie Hunter fusion grooves with clarinet dressing in lieu of synth, and Ron Miles' cornet for occasional bite. [7]

Larry Goldings

Larry Goldings: *Quartet (Palmetto)* [3]

Dennis González

Dennis González Inspiration Band: *Nile River Suite (Daagnim)* González acts locally but thinks globally. After teaching mariachi at a Dallas high school, he moonlights making avant-jazz records with

no discernible folk elements other than a core belief in the magic of the universe. His theme here is the ancient river of civilization: The Nile runs through New York; the Nile runs through my heart; the Nile runs through us all. Featured is Rip Van Winkle bassist Henry Grimes, fit as his fiddle. Also inspiring are Sabir Mateen and Roy Campbell Jr. [8]

Dennis González's Spirit Meridian: Idle Wild (Clean Feed) The good doctor's prescription for a country "sick with Bush" is "Bush Medicine" -- a delightful calypso fragment recalling "St. Thomas" with an Ornette twist, but fractured into discrete bits. Small pleasures, take them when you can. Oliver Lake's playfulness enhances González's spiritfulness, while the rhythm section keeps things loose. Of course, Bush Medicine is only a palliative. A cure starts with surgery, and the rehabilitation is likely to be slow and wrenching, with so much damage to be undone, and so much that cannot be undone. [9]

Dennis González Boston Project: No Photograph Available (Clean Feed) Working the kinks out on the road to *NY Midnight Suite*. [6]

Dennis González Jnaana Septet: The Gift of Discernment (Not Two) Leena Conquest's vocals are integral here, imparting an aura of spiritual ecstasy, although as usual I prefer the leader's down-to-earth trumpet. Both are propelled by an endless river of percussion -- three drummers including batas, bass, and sparkling Chris Parker piano. [8]

Dennis González: A Matter of Blood (Furthermore) Old school avant-garde, mournful trumpet over a hard-working Curtis Clark-Reggie Workman-Michael T.A. Thompson rhythm section. [7]

Dennis González/João Paulo: So Soft Yet (Clean Feed '11) [7]

Jerry Gonzalez

Jerry Gonzalez: Jerry Gonzalez Y Los Piratas Del Flamenco (Sunnyside) In the flamenco that Gonzalez encountered when he moved from New York to Madrid he found a third ingredient to add to his fusion of rumba and Monk. The old world is evident in Nino Josele's guitar and Diego El Cigala's vocals, but the beats sound Afro-Cuban. This record came from a rehearsal tape, with most tracks limited to two or three musicians. One is just conga and cajon; others muted trumpet, guitar, and percussion. And, of course, Monk goes flamenco, with hand claps. [8]

Jerry Granelli

Jerry Granelli: Sandhills Reunion (Songlines) Granelli's music, constructed from clarinets and baritone sax, guitars and cello, has a spare windswept quality well suited to Rinde Eckert's plain-spoken words about Billy the Kid and the Sand Hills of Nebraska. The words make you think, as with the story of a sheriff who quit after shooting a man, troubled not by regret but how certain he was that he was in the right: "It's a dangerous thing that kind of certainty. I believe doubt is what keeps us sane. Without it a man becomes a monster." [9]

Jerry Granelli/V16: The Sonic Temple: Monday and Tuesday (Songlines) Twin guitar group does eight song set twice, first night more daring, second bluesier -- just like life. [7]

Gordon Grdina

Gordon Grdina's Box Cutter: *Unlearn (Spool/Line)* Vancouver guitarist propels François Houle's clarinets through a world-beat maze. [7]

The Gordon Grdina Trio: . . . *If Accident Will (Plunge)* The oud is delicate and deliberate; the guitar fully charged. [7]

Gord Grdina Trio with Mats Gustafsson: *Barrel Fire (Drip Audio '10)* Vancouver guitarist, can play intricate improv on oud as well, but plugs in here with powerhouse riffs stacked on Tommy Babin's bass. Of course, the sax guest guarantees that this will get ugly, but it usually trailing in the leader's wake. [8]

Henry Grimes

Henry Grimes Trio: *Live at the Kerava Jazz Festival (Ayer)* The sound doesn't favor the return of Ayler's long-lost bassist, but David Murray and Hamid Drake do. [7]

Henry Grimes/Rashied Ali: *Spirits Aloft (Porter)* In the 1960s, Grimes had a knack for being in the right place at the right time, but after vanishing for 35 years who expected he would return to form, much less come up with something new? The David Murray album under his name was a marketing ploy, but Grimes himself has to carry most of the weight in this reunion with drummer Ali. He comes up with a new trick as he almost seamlessly swaps a violin in -- his technique is similar on both, so you've never heard violin like this, and rarely bass. [8]

Marty Grosz

Marty Grosz: *Hot Winds (Arbors)* Rhythm guitarist cranks the winds, supplied by Dan Block and Scott Robinson, up to hot. [7]

Jostein Gulbrandsen

Jostein Gulbrandsen: *Twelve (Fresh Sound New Talent)* Early on, the guitarist lurks in the background of his debut album, letting MOPDTK terrorist Jon Irabagon clear the field with slashing, scratchy tenor sax thrusts. Gulbrandsen's licks accentuate, then insinuate. He turns the corner with the Police's "Message in a Bottle": slow refrain, and crafty deconstruction turning the song to a distant memory. Finally, he emerges clearly in a closing duet with bassist Eivind Opsvik. [8]

Mats Gustafsson

Mats Gustafsson/Sonic Youth: *Hidros 3 (To Patti Smith) (Smalltown Supersound)* A real-time mix of guitar noise and Mats's bull elephant contrabass sax, with Kim Gordon confessing her lack of fashion sense. [7]

Tord Gustavsen

Tord Gustavsen Trio: *The Ground (ECM)* Quiet, almost sedentary piano trio, but remarkably patient

and precise. [7]

Tord Gustavsen Trio: *Being There* (ECM) Low-key, precise, sensible, satisfying -- archetypal ECM piano. [7]

Tord Gustavsen Ensemble: *Restored, Returned* (ECM) Piano ambience elevated by Tore Brunborg sax, W.H. Auden poetry warmed by Kristin Asbjørnson. [7]

Charlie Haden

Charlie Haden/Antonio Forcione: *Heartplay* (Naim) In a sentimental mood, so soft it's almost subliminal. [7]

John Hagen

John Hagen: *Segments* (Cadence Jazz) Free jazz played slow lets you follow the logic. [8]

Jim Hall

Jim Hall: *Magic Meeting* (ArtistShare) The byword on Hall is subtle, but this live trio anchored by bassist Scott Colley provokes the veteran guitarist to reveal if not himself at least his bag of tricks: bright lines that take off from Colley's contrasting bass, tight chords that compress the rhythm, effects that synthesize a nimble sax on Sonny Rollins' "St. Thomas." [8]

Jim Hall & Bill Frisell: *Hemispheres* (ArtistShare) Intricate, intimate guitar duets, subtle and silky, with an extra quartet disc to celebrate. [7]

Rich Halley

Rich Halley Trio: *Mountains and Plains* (Louie) The desolate, rugged landscapes in the cover snapshots are a fitting analogue to the deliberate articulation of Halley's tenor sax in this bare-bones trio. Based in Oregon and trained as a field biologist, with previous records about *Saxophone Animals* and *Coyotes in the City*, Halley obviously comes at free jazz from far afield. And he's collaborated with Dave Storrs and Clyde Reed for so long that they get the balance just right. [8]

Rich Halley Quartet: *Live at the Penofin Jazz Festival* (Pine Eagle) Halley's tenor sax and Bobby Bradford's cornet, blowing free in the wild wild west. [7]

Mary Halvorson

Mary Halvorson & Jessica Pavone: *Thin Air* (Thirsty Ear) Beat up chamber jazz played ineptly for anti-folk, sung worse. [3]

Scott Hamilton

Scott Hamilton Quartet: *Live in London* (Concord) He makes tenor sax seem like the easiest thing in the world to play. [7]

Scott Hamilton: *Back in New York (Concord)* He's looking almost as old as his saxophone, but he sounds fabulous -- so comfortable in his own sound that the comparisons to Sims and Getz and Prez were just grasping at reeds. And now that he's moved to London top U.S. players jump at the chance to play with him. This time his pickup band is Bill Charlap's trio -- the one with the Washingtons, unrelated but they play together more often than most twins. His best in more than a decade. [8]

Scott Hamilton: *Nocturnes & Serenades (Concord)* Slow standards, with "Autumn Nocturne" and "Serenade in Blue" justifying the title, "You Go to My Head" and "Chelsea Bridge" more instantly recognizable, and "Man With a Horn" his calling card. He's made virtually the same record before, and he'll no doubt do it again. After all, who does it better? [8]

Herbie Hancock

Herbie Hancock: *Possibilities (Hear Music '05)* In the movie *'Round Midnight* Hancock played the one musician who had food and preferred it over drink. Can't begrudge him that, nor the fame he built up with and without Miles in the '60s. But even if you credit his headhunting '70s, he's been coasting a long time, and in this joint venture with Starbucks he finally cashes out. Ten songs, a dozen singers plus Santana, a little cocktail piano. It's not awful -- not all of it, anyway -- but the business plan has got to be a lot more interesting. In particular, I wonder how much these has-beens and wannabes -- Christina Aguilera singing Leon Russell counts as both -- had to pay to get their names on the cover. With nine thousand stores peddling a couple dozen titles to millions of caffeine-addled impulse buyers, the rent's gotta be steep. But how long can they keep product this mediocre before some accountant figures the space is better invested in chocolate? [2]

Herbie Hancock: *River: The Joni Letters (Verve '07)* A classy band, especially Wayne Shorter, wasted behind a bevy of vocal caricatures. [3]

Herbie Hancock: *The Imagine Project (Hancock)* As long as Wayne Shorter answers his calls, he'd do the world more good playing jazz than indulging Dave Matthews, Pink, the Chieftains, *et al.* [4]

Sir Roland Hanna

Sir Roland Hanna: *Tributaries: Reflections on Tommy Flanagan (IPO '03)* All of Hanna's solo albums are thoughtful, but his fellow Detroiter sets the bar higher than ever. [8]

Sir Roland Hanna/Carrie Smith: *I've Got a Right to Sing the Blues: The Songs of Harold Arlen (IPO)* Smith's ample dramatic presence is why she's more renowned onstage than in the studio. And when she turns loose on Arlen's flightier fare, like "It's Only a Paper Moon," it's clear that whatever her rights, she's first and foremost a showgirl. Hanna usually records alone, but unlike so many pianists he isn't showy solo. He's a model of precise economy, which serves him especially well as sole accompanist here. His leads frame the songs lucidly. Then he provides the unobtrusive support Smith needs. [8]

Eric Harland

Eric Harland: *Voyager: Live by Night (Sunnyside '11)* [7]

Billy Harper

Billy Harper: *Blueprints of Jazz, Vol. 2 (Talking House)* Amiri Baraka's blues people from Africa to be-bop and hip-hop, atop church sax vamps and big band breaks. [7]

Darryl Harper

The Onus: *Triphony (Hipnotic '05)* Darryl Harper's clarinet trio is a marvel of studied moderation, searching but not rushed, long but not wearing. [7]

Antonio Hart

Antonio Hart: *All We Need (Downtown Sound/Chiaroscuro '04)* [3]

Jon Hassell

Jon Hassell: *Last Night the Moon Came Dropping Its Clothes in the Street (ECM)* But did it really happen if no one was conscious enough to notice? [3]

Roy Haynes

Roy Haynes: *Fountain of Youth (Dreyfus)* His secret is that he keeps his bands young, but they only want to play what Haynes played with the Monk and Coltrane when *they* were young. [7]

Roy Haynes: *Roy-Alty (Dreyfus '11)* [7]

David Hazeltine

David Hazeltine: *Modern Standards (Sharp Nine '05)* They don't write them like they used to, but Hazeltine's fogey enough he doesn't try to push mod past the Bee Gees anyway. [7]

Terra Hazelton

Terra Hazelton: *Anybody's Baby (HealeyOphonic)* Jeff Healey's sometime singer, with growl in her voice and country in her heart. [7]

Jeff Healey

Jeff Healey & the Jazz Wizards: *It's Tight Like That (Stony Plain)* Trad jazz often feels like another lap around the block: old songs, old arrangements, old-fashioned cheer. Chris Barber, a graceful singer with some growl in his trombone, has run that race for 50 years and won it a few times. His guest appearance here rounds out a band that builds on the Hot Club as much as the Big Easy, and completes Healey's own transformation from blind blues guitarist to trumpet king. [8]

Jeff Healey: *Last Call (Stony Plain)* Deeper into trad jazz, dubbing his trumpet and vocals over his roughest, nastiest Eddie Lang guitar, with Venuti-ish violin too. [7]

Percy Heath

Percy Heath: *A Love Song (Daddy Jazz)* The ultimate team player worked on 300 albums before finally cutting one under his own name. But at 79, the sole survivor of the Modern Jazz Quartet is entitled. He's got some songs--old like "Watergate Blues" and new like the title number, which he played at Milt Hinton's funeral. He's got some ideas, like playing the melody to "Django" on bass, and playing cello with Peter Washington's bass. He's got his brother Tootie on drums. And he's got a young pianist he wants to show off, so he lets Jeb Patton take the spotlight for two pieces, one by and the other for Sir Roland Hanna. [8]

Kieran Hebden

Kieran Hebden and Steve Reid: *The Exchange Session Vol. 1 (Domino)* Better known as Four Tet, Hebden's instrument is laptop, on which he improvises in real time -- at least in how he deploys samples that are sometimes jazzlike and often reminiscent of George Russell's electronic sonatas. Reid, following the model of Rashied Ali's *Duo Exchange*, answers on drums, but as you'd expect from a guy who's worked for James Brown and Fela Kuti, often finds a groove. [8]

Kieran Hebden/Steve Reid: *Tongues (Domino)* If Hebden's laptop fails the Turing Test for improv, it's for lack of competition. [7]

Kieran Hebden/Steve Reid/Mats Gustafsson: *Live at the South Bank (Smalltown Superjazz '11)* [8]

Mark Helias

Mark Helias' Open Loose: *Atomic Clock (Radio Legs Music)* Bassist-led sax-drums trio, with Tony Malaby and Tom Rainey on the rough edges. [7]

Gerry Hemingway

Gerry Hemingway Quartet: *The Whimble (Clean Feed)* This is a very potent group. The horns -- Ellery Eskelin's tenor sax and Herb Robertson's trumpet -- can deploy in myriad ways, notably Eskelin's crafty solo constructs and Robertson's rapid fire brass. But the rhythm section is evenly balanced and tightly engaged. With all due respect to the leader and his songbook, the MVP here is Mark Helias, whose rumbling pulse, on electric as well as acoustic bass, sets everyone else up. [9]

Gerry Hemingway Quintet: *Double Blues Crossing (Between the Lines)* New players, same odd mix -- clarinets, trombone, cello, bass, drums -- as his old avant-chamber group. [7]

Gerry Hemingway Quintet: *Riptide (Clean Feed '11)* [8]

Ian Hendrickson-Smith

Ian Hendrickson-Smith: *Up in Smoke! (Sharp Nine)* A mainstream sax date like they cut all the time in the late '50s: start with a swinging "The Best Things in Life Are Free," slip in an old ballad, a discreet original, a little bebop, some blues. Nothing ambitious -- just an echo of the days when Coleman Hawkins and Dexter Gordon walked the earth. [8]

Steve Herberman

Steve Herberman Trio: *Ideals* (Reach Music) Subtly hinting at Wes Montgomery groove and Joe Pass craftsmanship. [7]

Benjamin Herman

Benjamin Herman: *Hypochristmastreefuzz* (Dox) An alto saxophonist who styles himself as New Cool and describes his band as a "surf-guitar based, Dutch-impro, cocktail-jazz sort of thing" returns to the doyen of Dutch-impro for two discs of Misha Mengelberg tunes, the tricky mischief exploding into pure joy: "Brozziman" is an r&b honk for the avant-garde, the Ruben Hein vocal goes down easy, and the kwela piece reminds me of a Sonny Rollins calypso. The live disc is even looser and edgier. [9]

Fred Hersch

Fred Hersch Ensemble: *Leaves of Grass* (Palmetto '05) [3]

Fred Hersch Trio: *Whirl* (Palmetto) Returning from a two-month coma: they say near-death focuses the mind, but so does working with a superior bass-drums combo -- John Hébert and Eric McPherson -- and focusing on your own legacy instead of cranking out another songbook tribute. If he sounds like his idol, Bill Evans, he isn't bouncing back. He's just being true. [8]

Matt Herskowitz

Matt Herskowitz: *Jerusalem Trilogy* (Justin Time '10) Tangoish klezmer, lush strings, ELP fusion at least on piano, Prokofiev pops. [7]

Fred Hess

Fred Hess Quartet: *Crossed Paths* (Tapestry) Leaning toward his Lester Young side Hess sounds even more like Von Freeman. [7]

Frank Hewitt

Frank Hewitt: *We Loved You* (Smalls) Hewitt was one of countless guys who spent their lives playing in obscure dives, never lucking or bulling into the spotlight. For nine years up to his death in 2002 he worked and sometimes lived at Smalls, an after-hours club in NYC, garnering fans like Luke Kaven, who founded this label to right the wrong that Hewitt had never released a record. It's easy enough to guess why biz pros passed: Their ideal pianist is a young guy with a distinct edge -- a Brad Mehldau or a Jason Moran. Hewitt sounds warm and comfy, like someone you'd cast for atmosphere before cutting back to the plot. But because he never gets corny or sentimental, he cuts himself a distinctive niche after all. [8]

Frank Hewitt: *Fresh From the Cooler* (1996, Smalls) A bebop pianist who almost slipped through 66 years of life without leaving a trace, Hewitt built enough of a cult during his Smalls residency to inspire a label in no small part dedicated to his legacy. His fourth posthumous release features a trio that steps gingerly around jazz standards such as "Cherokee" and "Monk's Mood" -- nothing fancy, just a rare

touch with for melodic nuance. [8]

John Hicks

John Hicks: *Sweet Love of Mine (High Note)* Cut a month before his death: poignant solo piano, plus further proof of how he lifted everyone around him, even Elise Wood flutes and Javon Jackson sax. [6]

John Hicks & Frank Morgan: *Twogether (2005-06, High Note)* Three piano solos packed around two pairs of alto sax duets, all standard stuff from way back when. This might seem like a lazy product concept, but it's all the more poignant in a memoir for the recently departed. [8]

Buck Hill

Buck Hill: *Relax (Severn)* The mailman always delivers, even when he takes his sweet time. [6]

Maurice Hines

Maurice Hines: *To Nat "King" Cole With Love (Arbors)* Gregory's big brother comes close enough to the mark to beg the question -- why not stick with the originals. Hines's smooth, agile baritone can't touch Cole's one-of-kind voice. But the band spans Cole's career, with more muscle than the Trio and none of the dross of his orchestras. And because Cole was the hippest of pre-rock pop stars, by a margin that has only grown since, the songs live on. [8]

Hiromi

Hiromi: *Brain (Telarc)* Eclectic postmodern piano trio, more or less, with a penchant for gadgets and kung fu. [7]

Jim Hobbs

The Fully Celebrated: *Drunk on the Blood of the Holy Ones (AUM Fidelity)* A trio led by alto saxophonist Jim Hobbs, drunk on Ornette Coleman for starters: start with a basic funk or blues groove, lay on a deceptively simple sax melody, and deconstruct. [9]

Ron Hockett

The Ron Hockett Quintet: *Finally Ron (Arbors)* Longtime journeyman clarinetist gets the Arbors red carpet treatment for another round of those good ole good uns. [7]

Ari Hoenig

Ari Hoenig: *The Painter (Smalls)* Led by the drummer, but Guadeloupean Jacques Schwarz-Bart could write a book on state-of-the-art tenor sax, and French pianist Jean-Michel Pilc can dazzle even when he's dutifully helping out. Recorded live at Fat Cat, it sneaks up on you, like the realization that you've just had a real good time. [8]

Dave Holland

Dave Holland/Gonzalo Rubalcaba/Chris Potter/Eric Harland: *The Monterey Quartet* (Monterey Jazz Festival) Live postbop superstar jam, the pianist's Afro-Cuban vibe feeding everyone's thoughts. [7]

Dave Holland Octet: *Pathways* (Dare2) Quintet plus extra horns, big band range and punch but nimble. [7]

John Hollenbeck

John Hollenbeck: *Rainbow Jimmies* (GPE) A resume stuffer, with two Claudia Quintet cuts, some chamber music and percussion collectives. [7]

William Hooker

William Hooker: *Crossing Points* (1992, NoBusiness) In a duo with altoist Thomas Chapin, the drummer jumps out front and dares the saxophonist to keep up. [7]

Maurice Horsthuis

Maurice Horsthuis: *Elastic Jargon* (Data '08) Music for many strings including bass and guitar, the tone more classical than jazz, and fresh nonetheless. [7]

Wayne Horvitz

Wayne Horvitz Gravitas Quartet: *Way Out East* (Songlines) Where wild but princely bassoon and cello roam. [7]

Jason Kao Hwang

Jason Kao Hwang: *Graphic Evidence* (Asian Improv) A Chinese tinge to the violin, as Francis Wong's soprano sax looks east from Coltrane to come full circle. [7]

Jason Kao Hwang/Edge: *Stories Before Within* (Innova) Dense shades of Chinese jazz fiddle, tarted up by Taylor Ho Bynum's cornet. [7]

Dick Hyman

Dick Hyman/Chris Hopkins: *Teddy Wilson in 4 Hands* (Victoria) Two generations of stride pianists recall the master in five solos and 12 duets. [8]

Rocco John Iacovone

The Rocco John Group: *Don't Wait Too Long* (COCA Productions '07) Iacovone, plays alto sax, cut his teeth in the '70s lofts, cooled his heels in Alaska, returns as gray-haired demon. [6]

Adrian Iaies

Adrian Iaies Trio + Michael Zisman: *Vals de la 81st & Columbus (Sunnyside)* Tango, of course, with Argentine pianist Iaies prancing, and Zisman's bandoneon filling the room with lush, soulful sound. [7]

Abdullah Ibrahim

Abdullah Ibrahim: *Senzo (Sunnyside)* A WDR radio shot of the pianist playing solo: a long, slow meditation that deftly sums up his career, stressing logic and craftsmanship over the his signature South African riffs, which are reduced here to rough diamonds. [8]

Abdullah Ibrahim & WDR Big Band Cologne: *Bombella (Sunnyside)* Fancy how the big band fleshes everything out on its own terms, but Africa runs deep, even with piccolo flute subbed for pennywhistle. [7]

Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya: *Sotho Blue (Sunnyside)* A septet with three saxes and a trombone, just enough tones to let the leader play the band the way Ellington used to, although the piano is more thematic, stitching together the glorious panorama of colors. [8]

ICP Orchestra

ICP Orchestra: *ICP 049 (ICP)* The grizzled veterans of the New Dutch Swing movement recapitulate forty years of evolution: a gravel-voiced ballad, a dip into chaos, resolution into delirious string-driven swooning, a burst of applause that comes from nowhere, less the signature of a live recording than a sound effect that secures their place in the real world. [8]

Mikko Innanen

Mikko Innanen & Innkvisitio: *Clustrophy (TUM '11)* [7]

Jon Irabagon

Jon Irabagon: *I Don't Hear Nothin' but the Blues (Loyal Label '09)* Mostly the alto saxophonist does the killing. [6]

Jon Irabagon: *The Observer (Concord)* MOPDTK slasher won a Monk prize, a contract, Stan Getz's old rhythm section; responds by reconstructing the bebop he used to tear apart. [7]

Jon Irabagon: *Foxy (Hot Cup)* The Sonny Rollins cover takeoff is just as goof, as are the "Foxy"- "Proxy"- "Chicken Pox" titles. Not cowtunes; more like *A Night at the Village Vanguard*. And if Barry Altschul wants to play louder than Elvin Jones, the saxophonist cranks it up that much more. [8]

Sherman Irby

Sherman Irby: *Faith (Black Warrior)* Faith, hope, charity, a fight for life that isn't a kneejerk slogan. [7]

Anne Mette Iversen

Anne Mette Iversen Quartet: *Milo Songs* (Bju'ecords '11) Bassist-composer sets up sweet spots by John Ellis and Danny Grissett with an easy, steady flow. [7]

Vijay Iyer

Vijay Iyer + Mike Ladd: *Still Life With Commentator* (Savoy Jazz) We are living through an era of endless war and atrocity, but experience it as virtual, as sight and sound filtered through media, quarantined from experience, interpreted by commentators. Iyer's programming is appropriately synthetic, chilling Ladd's words, which flit through the ether, not making sense so much as suggesting profundity -- an effect heightened when he translates some into Japanese, others into operatic Italian. [8]

Vijay Iyer & Rudresh Mahanthappa: *Raw Materials* (Savoy Jazz) Rough, unfinished, ill-fitting duets. [4]

Vijay Iyer: *Tragicomic* (Sunnyside) With alto saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa waxing Coltrane-ish, it's tempting to cast Iyer as the new-model McCoy Tyner. He plays with equal facility, but with no swing in his swagger. He sets up rumbling rhythms, then busts them up into abstract blocks. He can delicately ponder a slow spot, and no matter how fast the pace picks up, he's always thinking ahead. He's actually more impressive. [9]

Vijay Iyer Trio: *Historicity* (ACT) Iyer's first piano trio marks personal history, reworking four originals within a context ranging from Andrew Hill and Julius Hemphill to Stevie Wonder and M.I.A. Also shows off his chops: how he drives the rhythm while throwing off sparkling fills. [8]

Vijay Iyer: *Solo* (ACT) Can the best jazz pianist of the last decade do a solo album? Sure, easy. [7]

Vijay Iyer: *Tirtha* (ACT) With tabla for a taste of India, but Prasanna's guitar leans west even when Iyer's piano glances east. [7]

Javon Jackson

Javon Jackson: *Have You Heard* (Palmetto) With his degree from Art Blakey's Hard Bop U. and a masters thesis on Joe Henderson, Jackson cut a series of mainstream tenor sax albums for Blue Note that started out impressive and wound down redundant. Since then he's tried to refashion himself as a soul jazer with a dash of funk, but fails at both. He doesn't have the grit to suggest he staggered into a bar straight from church, and sidekicks Dr. Lonnie Smith and Mark Whitfield don't have enough gravity to land on dirt. Lisa Fischer moans and hectors about it being "funky in here," but nobody in the band notices. [2]

Ahmad Jamal

Ahmad Jamal: *It's Magic* (Dreyfus) An old pianist with a light touch, his trio fluffed up with extra percussion, his catchy melodies undiminished. [7]

Keith Jarrett

Keith Jarrett/Gary Peacock/Jack DeJohnette: *My Foolish Heart: Live at Montreux* (ECM) The dozens of albums Jarrett's "standards trio" have released since 1983 blur together, but here two Fats Waller pieces jump out, brightening the day. Jarrett is every bit as adept with "Four" and "Straight, No Chaser" and the inevitable ballad, and DeJohnette demonstrates why Jarrett has stuck in his trio rut all these years: Who else would you rather play with? [8]

Joan Jeanrenaud

Joan Jeanrenaud/PC Muñoz: *Pop-Pop* (Deconet '10) [7]

Billy Jenkins

Billy Jenkins: *When the Crowds Have Gone* (Babel) . . . you're alone, just guitar and harmonica, crying like Blind Willie Johnson without even the Lord for comfort. [7]

Brent Jensen

Brent Jensen: *Trios* (Origin) Standard curriculum, but the alto saxophonist aces his orals. [7]

Brent Jensen: *One More Mile* (Origin) Studied under Lee Konitz. Teaches woodwinds in Idaho. Doesn't write much, covering Dizzy Gillespie and Sam Rivers, and drawing on his band, effectively his Seattle label's house rhythm section. Sticks with soprano sax, getting a distinctive tone, plied with rigorous logic and panache. I run across a lot of good players in out-of-the-way places, but Jensen belongs in a higher league. [8]

Wellstone Conspiracy: *Humble Origins* (Origin '10) [7]

Ingrid Jensen

Nordic Connect: *Spirals* (ArtistShare '11) [7]

Gabriel Johnson

Gabriel Johnson: *Fra_ctured* (Electrofone) Bold swathes of soundtrack electronica, burnished with bolts of trumpet. [7]

Jeff Johnson

Jeff Johnson: *Tall Stranger* (Origin) Bass-centered trio, the playing field leveled with Hans Teuber's faint reeds and soft splashes on the drums. [7]

Marc Johnson

Marc Johnson: *Shades of Jade* (ECM) If Eliane Elias's label insists she play the pop star, she'll release her serious work under hubby's name. [7]

Darren Johnston

Darren Johnston/Fred Frith/Larry Ochs/Devin Hoff/Ches Smith: *Reasons for Moving* (Not Two '07) Two fierce horns orbit around Frith's dense guitar, the gravity that holds them in thrall. [7]

Darren Johnston: *The Edge of the Forest* (Clean Feed '08) Ben Goldberg's clarinet takes flight immediately, with Sheldon Brown adding extra oomph on tenor sax and bass clarinet while the leader pokes in bits of trumpet and lays in wait for his breaks. This is postbop that looks forward, with such a broad range of moves and details you have to credit the composer. These days virtually all jazz musicians claim that title, but few convince you it matters. [8]

The Nice Guy Trio: *Here Comes . . . the Nice Guy Trio* (Porto Franco) Mingus meets Weill and other discreet pleasures, mostly trumpet-accordion-bass, with occasional guests. [7]

Darren Johnston's Gone to Chicago: *The Big Lift* (Porto Franco) Hits the big city's hot spots: Jeb Bishop, Jason Adasiewicz, Nate McBride, Frank Rosaly. [7]

Darius Jones

Darius Jones Trio: *Man'ish Boy (A Raw & Beautiful Thing)* (AUM Fidelity '09) Beauty is in the ear of the beholder, but raw for sure, with a down and dirty blues base and plenty of squawk on the uptake. His keeps his alto sax down in the tenor range where it sounds scrawny and mean, until he slows down and Cooper-Moore switches from roughhousing diddley-bow back to piano. Elegant, not sure about beautiful. [8]

Darius Jones: *Big Gurl (Smell My Dream)* (AUM Fidelity '11) [8]

Hank Jones

The Great Jazz Trio: *Someday My Prince Will Come* (Eighty-Eights/Columbia '04) Last chance to hear something new from Elvin Jones. [7]

Hank Jones: *For My Father (Justin Time)* The Great Jazz Trio leader, in one of his more reflective moods, settling for a real good jazz trio. [7]

Jessica Jones

Jessica Jones Quartet: *Nod* (New Artists) Family values: Wife and husband play tenor sax, and let their kids, who aren't ready for the AACM yet, sing one cut each. [7]

Oliver Jones

Oliver Jones/Hank Jones: *Pleased to Meet You* (Justin Time) An Oscar Peterson-inspired piano trio reinforced by an elder whose extra piano adds more depth and gravity than flash. [7]

Kidd Jordan

Kidd Jordan/Hamid Drake/William Parker: *Palm of Soul* (AUM Fidelity) Driven from his home

by Katrina, storied but little documented avant-saxophonist Jordan headed for New York to a cult hero's welcome. At 70, he shows signs of mellowing a bit -- or maybe he's just amused by his playmates, who augment their world-class bass and drums with world-class toys like guimbri and tablas. [8]

Sheila Jordan

Sheila Jordan + Cameron Brown: *Celebration (High Note)* She grew up in a coal town, fled to the city, chased Bird, and caught his piano player. George Russell asked her to sing a song in 1962, and she would have been unforgettable for that alone. It was another decade before she worked steadily, but she waltzed away with the album on Roswell Rudd's *Flexible Flyer* -- long my favorite jazz album. At 76 she threw this birthday party, with just bassist Brown behind her. It's an uncharacteristically loose and happy set, strung together from medleys with generous scat and patter, sometimes ad-libbed into the music. Makes me think she's the only real jazz singer left--the only one worth chasing, anyhow. [9]

Sheila Jordan: *Winter Sunshine (Justin Time)* At 79, still the fan, reminiscing about her girlhood crush on Bird, wishing she could scat like Ella. [6]

Barb Jungr

Barb Jungr: *The Men I Love (Naim)* Standardizing Neal Diamond, Todd Rundgren, Bruce Springsteen, Jimmy Webb. [7]

Henry Kaiser

Henry Kaiser & Wadada Leo Smith: *Yo Miles! Sky Garden (Cuneiform)* More dividends from Miles's electric period, the change of trumpeters food for thought. [7]

Lindha Kallerdahl

Lindha Kallerdahl: *Gold (ESP-Disk)* Near-solo voice, proof that the avant-garde can still find new ways to annoy. [3]

Pandelis Karayorgis

MI3: *Free Advice (Clean Feed)* Spaceways Incorporated bassist Nate McBride sets up a steady rolling platform for Pandelis Karayorgis's flights of pianistic fury by fetching seductive riffs from Sun Ra, Duke Ellington, and Hasaan Ibn Ali. This Boston trio was originally formed to play in a rock club, churning out punk-Monk fusion with electric piano. Now, with the piano unplugged and McBride continuing to develop as a subtle and grooveful bassist, they've moved into something new: free jazz boogie woogie? [9]

Manu Katché

Manu Katché: *Neighbourhood (ECM)* Like many session drummers, he calls in chits for his own rare albums, then builds around his guests. In his ECM 'hood, the chosen neighbors are Jan Garbarek and three fourths of Tomasz Stanko's quartet. Like many session drummers, Katché knows how to adapt,

and here he's managed a near-perfect facsimile of the ECM aesthetic--slow, free, with the horns and, especially, pianist Marcin Wasilewski out front. [8]

Arthur Kell

Arthur Kell Quartet: *Traveller* (Fresh Sound New Talent '05) Jordi Pujol named his label for an ad touting the "fresh sounds" of West Coast jazz in the '50s, but his search for nueva cool has focused on New York and Barcelona. The New Talent series produces a steady stream of Honorable Mention wannabes -- tight, cleverly arranged, tepid little albums with much to admire and little to get excited about. This one is exemplary, with Kell's bass firmly anchoring his tunes, while Steve Cardenas's expansive guitar lines and Gorka Benitez's golden-toned tenor sax flesh them out. [8]

Arthur Kell Quartet: *Victoria* (Bju'ecords '09) Bassist writes tight little figures, spun by Brad Shepik's guitar and Loren Stillman's alto sax into harmolodic heaven. [8]

Grace Kelly

Grace Kelly/Lee Konitz: *GraceFullLee* (Pazz Productions) Prodigy entertains world class group, holds her own as they play delightful. [7]

Stacey Kent

Stacey Kent: *Breakfast on the Morning Tram* (Blue Note) French chanson and samba, a recipe for heartbreak penned by Kazuo Ishiguro and scored with soft sax. [7]

Soweto Kinch

Soweto Kinch: *A Life in the Day of B19: Tales of the Tower Block* (Dune) Kinch's previous *Conversations With the Unseen* littered its tasty sax blowing with rap skits. This time he reverses the ratio, burdening both: the raps are saddled with an ambitious narrative concept that's peculiarly British and left waiting a second volume to resolve (not that you care) while the grime beats stunt the instrumentals. He's conscious enough he has one character urging him to "put down the microphone and stick to the sax." But the irony is wasted in this shotgun wedding. [3]

Dave King

Dave King Trucking Company: *Good Old Light* (Sunnyside '11) [7]

Lisa Kirchner

Lisa Kirchner: *Something to Sing About* (Albany '11) [7]

Oleg Kireyev

Oleg Kireyev: *Mandala* (Jazzheads) Born in Bakshiria, perched in the Urals on the ancient seam between Europe and Asia, saxophonist Kireyev's Feng Shui Jazz Project plays delicately balanced east-

west grooves, with a bit of throat singing, a lot of sinuous guitar, a Senegalese conga player, and spiritual encouragement from John Coltrane. [8]

Oleg Kireyev/Keith Javors: *Rhyme & Reason (Inarhyme)* A Russian saxophonist from deep in the Urals, Kireyev worked his way through Poland to the U.S. where he studied under Bud Shank. His recent *Mandala* tapped into diverse streams of world fusion, but here he teams up with pianist Javors for an album of insouciant mainstream, fresh enough to do his late mentor proud. [8]

Kirk Knuffke

Kirk Knuffke: *Amnesia Brown (Clean Feed)* Free trumpet trio, with Doug Wieselman a double threat on clarinet and engagingly primitive guitar. [7]

Adam Kolker

Adam Kolker: *Flag Day (Sunnyside)* Mellow, measured tenor sax quartet, with subtle surprises from John Abercrombie, John Hebert, and Paul Motian. [7]

Lee Konitz

Lee Konitz and Minsarah: *Deep Lee (Enja)* Past 80, Konitz continues to play difficult music with delicate aplomb, backed by Florian Weber's fine piano trio. [6]

Lee Konitz/Frank Wunsch: *Insight (1989-95, Jazzwerkstatt '11)* Improv genius, three solo, six with pianist Frank Wunsch trailing along. [7]

Alex Kontorovich

Alex Kontorovich: *Deep Minor (Shamsa)* From Russia to Israel to the US, where he plays klezmer clarinet and edgy alto sax while teaching math at Brown and researching game theory and stochastic processes -- sounds like some of the latter figured into his "New Orleans Funeral March" and "Waltz for Piazzolla." Brandon Seabrook consistently sets him up with guitar and banjo, and Midrash Mish Mosh drummer Aaron Alexander has the beat down pat. [8]

David Krakauer

Abraham Inc.: *Tweet Tweet (Table Pounding)* Who better than Fred Wesley to add funky bottom to David Krakauer's klezmer clarinet? [7]

Diana Krall

Diana Krall: *From This Moment On (Verve)* The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra doesn't split the difference between Billy May and Nelson Riddle so much as aggregate the virtues of each, but they're no more useful than May and Riddle without a commanding singer. And Krall, who's always been able to put over a song, exerts the necessary authority. And if songs like "Come Dance With Me" and "It Could Happen to You" invite Sinatra comparisons, she's up for that too. [8]

Diana Krall: *Quiet Nights* (Verve) Warmed by soft Claus Ogerman strings, melting the heartbreak of the cold north with nice little samba songs. [8]

Ernie Krivda

Ernie Krivda: *Blues for Pekar* (Capri '11) For the late cartoonist, a Rust Belt second line: hard-swinging postbop. [7]

Steve Lacy

Steve Lacy/Joëlle Léandre: *One More Time* (Leo) The grand master of the soprano sax ended his long residency in Europe with a series of "farewell concerts" in 2002, made all the more final by his death last year. A box is promised, but this duo with bassist Léandre got carved out first. She's worth concentrating on, proving that the bass is a sonic toolkit of amazing breadth. But focus inevitably drifts to Lacy in an intimate performance that is both typical and exemplary. One to remember him by. [8]

Steve Lacy Quintet: *Esteem* (1975, Atavistic) After fifty prolific years, the soprano sax legend's posthumous career gets underway with widow Irène Aëbi sorting through some 300 private cassettes for a series titled "The Leap." The first installment is a raw and deliciously noisy quintet, with Steve Potts doubling the sax on alto and second soprano, plug ugly bass and drums, and Aëbi herself. I never could stand her arch vocals, but there's acid wit in cello and violin. [8]

Mike Ladd

Mike Ladd: *Negrophilia [The Album]* (Thirsty Ear) Perhaps the book would help clear a few things up, but Ladd's words fascinate while his friends kibbitz. [6]

Oliver Lake

Trio 3: Oliver Lake/Reggie Workman/Andrew Cyrille: *Time Being* (Intakt) Journeymen on jazz's leading edge, a hundred collective man-years in the trade and they've never sounded more like themselves. [7]

Andrew Lamb

Andrew Lamb & Warren Smith: *The Dogon Duo* (Engine) Not only does this \$6.79-list CD boast the cheapest packaging I've ever seen, there's nothing bogus in the duets either. [7]

Andrew Lamb Trio: *New Orleans Suite* (Engine) More post-Katrina fallout -- sax and bass, flute and didgeridoo -- with Warren Smith declaiming and hitting things. [7]

Michel Lambert

Maïkotron Unit: *Ex-Voto* (Jazz From Rant '11) Canadian trio, brothers Michel and Pierre Côté and Michel Lambert, mostly parrying the deadened sound of Michel's bass clarinet against subtle bass and drums, but sometimes employing a monster horn, hopefully mating a reed mouthpiece with trumpet

valves and parts of euphonium, capable of ranging below bass sax. [8]

Brian Landrus

Brian Landrus: *Forward* (Cadence Jazz) A postbop smorgasbord, shifting horns anchored by the leader's baritone sax/bass clarinet. [7]

The Landrus Kaleidoscope: *Capsule* (BlueLand '11) [7]

Adam Lane

Adam Lane's Full Throttle Orchestra: *New Magical Kingdom* (Clean Feed '06) The young bassist lists Mingus first among the inspirations for this group, and no matter how much Bootsy Collins or Melt-Banana he thinks he's adding to the mix, Mingus is the name that sticks. Lane's pieces have the master's grand melodic sweep. The soft spots are sweet and poignant, but the band can bring more noise and sheer orneriness than its body count of two saxes, trumpet, guitar, bass, and drums suggests. With the Mingus Big Band looking backwards and running on fumes, and archival scraps like *At UCLA 1965* of minor interest, the future was looking glum. But Lane draws the right lesson: to boldly break new ground. [9]

Adam Lane Trio: *Zero Degree Music* (CIMP '06) As avant-jazz goes, this seems remarkably simple. Lane's pieces are all bass pulse, some slow, most fast. Vijay Anderson drums along, feeding rather than fighting the current. What save this from tedium is saxophonist Vinny Golia, whose rapid-fire sax riffs, on tenor and squeaky soprano, never lose interest, even when he too opts for repetitive patterns. [8]

Adam Lane Trio: *Music Degree Zero* (CIMP '06) With Vinny Golia, more convoluted than the first helping on *Zero Degree Music*. [7]

Adam Lane/Ken Vandermark/Magnus Broo/Paal Nilssen-Love: *4 Corners* (Clean Feed '07) Two composers, two Vikings to brawl with them. [8]

Adam Lane/Lou Grassi/Mark Whitecage: *Drunk Butterfly* (Clean Feed) The bassist gets top billing because of his knack for setting up grooves that turn free-oriented saxophonists on rather than off. He did that with Vinny Golia in *Zero Degree Music*; here he gets the most accessible work ever out of Whitecage. In her liner notes, Slim calls this "avant swinging bebop." She's right. [8]

Adam Lane's Full Throttle Orchestra: *Ashcan Rantings* (Clean Feed) Like Mingus, Lane plays a mean bass, composes pieces that encapsulate the entire jazz tradition and then some, and runs a band that sounds even bigger than it is. The new group dispenses with guitar to deploy seven horns, doubling up on trumpet and trombone for cozy warmth as well as free wheeling. Yet below all that brass the bass dominates the tone and pulse, holding the power back so it's more implied than felt, except when the throttle opens. [10]

Jon Larsen

Jon Larsen: *The Jimmy Carl Black Story* (Zonic Entertainment/Hot Club) Grandmother of invention tells tall tales over chintzy avant-lounge. [7]

Matt Lavelle

Matt Lavelle Trio: *Spiritual Power (Silkheart)* Avant like it ought to be: sharp, shocking, bursting with creative ideas. Bassist Hilliard Greene and drummer Michael T.A. Thompson are worth tracking on their own, but Lavelle has a unique twist: playing three songs each on flugelhorn and bass clarinet, an unprecedented mix. His bass clarinet is utterly distinctive, its normal airiness choked down to short trumpet-like bursts. His native trumpet returns on one track, amid shouts of "Sí Se Puede." Right -- they can. [8]

Matt Lavelle and Morcilla: *The Manifestation Drama (KMB Jazz)* Somehow manages to get his bass clarinet in your face as much as his trumpet. [7]

Matt Lavelle: *Goodbye New York, Hello World (Music Now! '11)* [8]

Babatunde Lea

Babatunde Lea: *Umbo Wetí: A Tribute to Leon Thomas (Motéma)* Dwight Tribble channels the avant-garde's preacher man, Ernie Watts waxes eloquent where Pharoah Sanders turned shrill. [7]

Jerry Leake

Jerry Leake & Randy Roos: *Cubist Live (Rhombus Publishing)* Leake is a percussion collector -- Indian, Persian, Latin American, all over Africa -- his early records playing like his books. Promoting guitarist Roos from player to producer to partner adds much needed muscle tone to the rhythms, and presenting them live add presence -- something even flutes and vocals are good for, especially when the lyrics stick to the integers. [8]

Brad Leali

Brad Leali Jazz Orchestra: *Maria Juanez (TCB)* Groomed in Basie's ghost band, still tapping the great atomic power. [7]

Brad Leali-Claus Raible Quartet: *D.A.'s Time (TCB)* Swing saxophonist in a bebop quartet brings out the Bird but also the funk. [7]

Jeff Lederer

Jeff Lederer: *Sunwatcher (Jazzheads '11)* [7]

Steve Lehman

Steve Lehman: *Demian as Posthuman (Pi)* Twelve short pieces, structured like a bridge with communities on both ends bracketing duo pieces where Lehman plays alto against his own programming and Tyshawn Sorey's drums. Dense and cerebral, with no wasted motion. [8]

Steve Lehman Quintet: *On Meaning (Pi)* Complex, thought-challenging abstractions set to offbeat jingle-jangle riddims. [7]

Steve Lehman Quartet: *Manifold (Clean Feed)* "For Evan Parker" strikes me as a parody, a little joke at the end of a live, vibrant sax-trumpet parry. [7]

Steve Lehman Octet: *Travail, Transformation, and Flow (Pi)* Lehman's octet isn't a big band wannabe. It's a toolkit he employs surgically, making sharp cuts then polishing them up, often with a shower of Chris Dingman's vibes. His alto sax is all but lost in the mix. No need to show off when he has so many other options to juxtapose. [8]

Daniel Levin

Daniel Levin Trio: *Fuhuffah (Clean Feed '08)* Clear, sharp cello, muscled up with Ingebrigt Håker Flaten's bass, accented by Gerald Cleaver's drums. [6]

George Lewis

George Lewis: *Sequel (For Lester Bowie) (Intakt)* Wish he played more trombone, especially for Bowie, whom he treats as obliquely as his *Homage to Charles Parker*. [7]

Dave Liebman

Dave Liebman: *Back on the Corner (Tone Center)* Redeems his Miles Davis debut by jettisoning the keyboards and trumpet. [7]

Contact: *Five on One (Pirouet '10)* Something of a supergroup -- Dave Liebman, John Abercrombie, Marc Copland -- each working their discreet charms. [7]

The David Liebman Trio: *Lieb Plays the Blues à la Trane (Challenge '10)* Back to rugged basics on "All Blues," three Coltrane tunes, Ellington's "Take the Coltrane." [7]

John Lindberg

BLOB: *Earphonious Swamphony (Innova '10)* [7]

Jason Lindner

Jason Lindner: *Ab Aeterno (Fresh Sound World Jazz)* Piano trio, transported with Afro-Latin beats, oud, and melodica. [7]

Erica Lindsay

Erica Lindsay/Sumi Tonooka: *Initiation (ARC)* Unheralded stars team up: spare, Coltrane-ish sax thrashes a bit with rich, loquacious piano. [7]

Charles Lloyd

Charles Lloyd/Billy Higgins: *Which Way Is East (ECM '04)* Recorded in a living room shortly before Higgins' death, two old friends converse, contemplate, fart around. [8]

Charles Lloyd: *Sangam* (ECM '06) *Which Way Is East* offered two home-recorded discs of Lloyd and Billy Higgins farting around with world beats, reeds, and flutes. After Higgins died, Lloyd rounded up some pros -- tabla master Zakir Hussain and trap drummer Eric Harland -- for a trio that has the same aim. With nothing but rhythm to work against, Lloyd breaks free, unleashing the Coltrane-isms he's earned the right to call his own. [8]

Charles Lloyd Quartet: *Rabo de Nube* (ECM '08) A lonely voice crying over a prickly bed of Jason Moran piano. [7]

Charles Lloyd Quartet with Maria Farantouri: *Athens Concert* (ECM '11) [8]

Joe Locke

Joe Locke & 4 Walls of Freedom: *Dear Life* (Sirocco) Replacing the late Bob Berg with the great Tommy Smith, the vibes master pauses, ponders, and carries on. [7]

The Joe Locke Quartet: *Sticks and Strings* (Jazz Eyes) The vibraphonist's favorite strings are on Jonathan Kreisberg's guitars. [7]

Mark Lomax

The Mark Lomax Trio: *The State of Black America (Inarhyme)* Something about growing up in the Middle West gets you to imagining that the whole country is spinning around your calm, clear-eyed pivot point. This Columbus, Ohio sax trio picks up the pieces from the 1960s collision of black power and avant jazz and dispenses with everything superfluous. Dean Hulett's bass and Mark Lomax's drums hold fast to their lore, while Edwin Bayard's tenor sax meditates on the blues and rises up to break down walls. [9]

Fred Lonberg-Holm

Fred Lonberg-Holm Trio: *Other Valentines* (Atavistic '05) Cello-bass-drums, the leader solid and surprisingly mellow. [8]

Luis Lopes

Luis Lopes: *Humanization 4Tet* (Clean Feed) Guitarist-composer's date, but all the choice spots go to heavyweight tenor saxophonist Rodrigo Amado. [7]

Luis Lopes/Adam Lane/Igal Foni: *What Is When* (Clean Feed) Starts with a dissonant guitar nod to Sonny Sharrock nod, ends with badass bass solo. [7]

Humanization 4tet: *Electricity* (Ayler) Guitarist Luis Lopes provides the juice, welding the bass and drums of Dennis González's sons into a taut, metallic undercarriage -- just the platform for Rodrigo Amado's sax bombs. Heavy metal but jazz. [8]

Luis Lopes: *Lisbon Berlin Trio* (Clean Feed '11) [8]

Russ Lossing

Russ Lossing: *Phrase 6 (Fresh Sound New Talent)* This piano trio moves slowly but efficiently, like a team of rock climbers negotiating difficult terrain. Teamwork matters because Lossing's compositions leave many variables to be resolved on the fly. [8]

Joe Lovano

Joe Lovano: *Joyous Encounter (Blue Note)* Lovano's ballad sense is suspect, but they disposed of the evidence last time. [7]

Joe Lovano & Hank Jones: *Kids (Blue Note)* Third time's the charm, as they clear away the concepts and clutter -- the ballad trough on *I'm All for You*, the all-star rhythm that made *Joyous Encounter* routine -- and get down to business. Three tricky pieces by brother Thad are highlights, as is Lovano's "Charlie Chan," about a saxophonist Jones made sense of sixty years ago. [8]

Joe Lovano Us Five: *Folk Art (Blue Note)* The very young band liberates his idiosyncrasies, like playing straight alto sax and tarogato at once -- his Rahsaan Roland Kirk phase. [7]

Allen Lowe

Allen Lowe: *Jews in Hell: Radical Jewish Acculturation (Spaceout)* From Massapequa to Maine, what a long strange trip it's been. [7]

Allen Lowe: *Blues and the Empirical Truth (Music & Arts '11)* [9]

Jon Lundbom

Jon Lundbom & Big Five Chord: *Accomplish Jazz (Hot Cup)* Sax-toting gunslingers take a break to attend church with the Louvin Brothers. [7]

Jon Lundbom & Big Five Chord: *Quavers! Quavers! Quavers! Quavers! (Hot Cup '11)* [7]

Brian Lynch

Brian Lynch: *Brian Lynch Meets Bill Charlap (Sharp Nine '04)* Brilliant trumpet, impeccable supporting piano, professionalism that doesn't show off because it's so self-satisfied. [7]

The Brian Lynch/Eddie Palmieri Project: *Simpático (ArtistShare '06)* A steady stream of bubbly percussion, tasty alto sax, and bright trumpet. [8]

Brian Lynch: *Unsung Heroes (Hollistic Music Works '11)* A tribute to "underappreciated trumpet masters," bop to post-, having done the obvious ones previously. [7]

M

Carl Maguire

Carl Maguire: *Floriculture (Between the Lines)* Tricky compositions, all the harder to pull off after Monk took the low-lying fruit. [7]

Rudresh Mahanthappa

Rudresh Mahanthappa: *Mother Tongue (Pi '04)* But isn't the real mother tongue Coltrane? And isn't Vijay Iyer its Tyner? [7]

Rudresh Mahanthappa: *Codebook (Pi '06)* Where *Mother Tongue* looked to natural languages for transformation tricks, this one moves on to ciphers and encodings. More importantly the leader's postbop alto sax has matured enough that he can no longer be pigeonholed as one of Coltrane's minions. For once, Vijay Iyer's piano doesn't steal the show. [8]

Rudresh Mahanthappa: *Kinsmen (Pi '08)* Like Jason Kao Hwang, Mahanthappa is one of a growing cadre of second-generation Americans who've gone back to study their ancestral culture for clues moving forward. His previous efforts stuck a smear of Indian effects on top of his Coltraneisms, but this time he starts with the masters -- most importantly, Kadri Gopalnath, who did the hard work of translating Indian classical music to alto sax: a solid foundation he builds rich textures on. [8]

Rudresh Mahanthappa's Indo-Pak Coalition: *Apti (Innova '08)* With Pakistani-American guitarist Rez Abassi, both sides are over the conflict, and world-class tabla player Dan Weiss is way beyond. [8]

Rudresh Mahanthappa & Steve Lehman: *Dual Identity (Clean Feed '10)* Two alto saxmen, rising stars at least according to *Downbeat's* critics, in a free jazz quintet mediated by guitarist Liberty Ellman. Mahanthappa has sopped up Coltrane and the Karnatic tradition, but here blends in with Lehman, who learned his stuff from Jackie McLean and Anthony Braxton, with a more accessible take on the latter's compositional discipline. No jousts or flights of fancy; just dense patterns swung over freewheeling rhythm -- live no less. [10]

Rudresh Mahanthappa & Bunky Green: *Apex (Pi '10)* Ever the chameleon, he could pass for Green's old partner Sonny Stitt at the bebop joust. [7]

Rudresh Mahanthappa: *Samdhi (ACT '11)* [8]

Mike Mainieri

Mike Mainieri: *Crescent (NYC)* Last call for Charlie Mariano, playing a lot of Coltrane tarted up with vibes. [7]

Tony Malaby

Tony Malaby: *Adobe (Sunnyside '04)* Most valuable sideman on a handful of albums last year steps forward. [8]

Tony Malaby: *Tony Malaby's Novela (Clean Feed '11)* [7]

Raphe Malik

Raphe Malik/Joe McPhee/Donald Robinson: *Sympathy (Boxholder)* Drummer, trumpet, soprano sax or more trumpet: Sparks fly. [8]

Raphe Malik Quartet: *Last Set: Live at the 1369 Jazz Club (1984, Boxholder)* Historically interesting as Malik's only recording between 1979, when he left Cecil Taylor's group, and his return in the '90s. Also because he shares the spotlight with Frank Wright, a rarely heard tenor saxophonist from the avant '60s. Also because this is one of the earliest recordings where William Parker really flashes his bass. A rare case where the avant-garde gets down and dirty. So much fun that Wright took to singing. So much fun you won't mind that he sucks. [8]

Rafi Malkiel

Rafi Malkiel: *My Island (Raftone)* Latin jazz with all the bells and maracas and a few old-fashioned vocals; the songs broken down by style and country, ranging from Brazil to New Orleans, with Cuba predominant. The leader is an Israeli trombonist whose island is Manhattan. Occasionally a klezmer vibe slips in. [8]

Rafi Malkiel: *Water (Tzadik)* Latin beats, Jewish horns, refreshing when the tide comes in. [7]

Russell Malone

Russell Malone: *Live at Jazz Standard: Volume One (MaxJazz)* In a different venue, could be *Smolderin' at the Half Note*. [7]

Denman Maroney

Denman Maroney Quintet: *Udentity (Clean Feed)* Trumpet and reeds play (relatively) straight, compared to the strange stuff coming out of the hyperpiano. [7]

Branford Marsalis

Branford Marsalis Quartet: *Eternal (Marsalis Music/Rounder)* The front shows an isolated waterfall, the sepia tone leached of all natural color, far removed from the urban world of Buckshot LeFonque. The back cover shows Branford on the lonely end of a garden bench, looking bored out of his fucking skull. The record starts slow and pretty, then slows down, then slows down some more. Built around band originals, it isn't really a "ballad book" -- just a personal meditation album, or a marketer's idea of one. It isn't inept, but this playa was meant to have fun, like on *A Love Supreme Live in Amsterdam*. Here, he doesn't. [3]

Branford Marsalis Quartet: *Metamorphosen (Marsalis Music)* Same quartet as *Requiem* ten years ago, the CEO letting the crew do the work while he perfects his soprano. [7]

Wynton Marsalis

Wynton Marsalis: *From the Plantation to the Penitentiary* (Blue Note) As viewed from the penthouse. [4]

Rebecca Martin

Rebecca Martin: *When I Was Long Ago* (Sunnyside '11) Bare accompaniment by bass and sax sets off her whispery voice, and classic songs help too. [7]

Pat Martino

Pat Martino: *Undeniable: Live at Blues Alley* (High Note '11) [7]

Hugh Masekela

Hugh Masekela: *Live at the Market Theatre* (Times Square/4Q) A 30th-anniversary bash for the Johannesburg venue, and a triumph for the trumpeter/vocalist who put his homeland's music on the world stage in the 1960s. This works as an informal career summary, its two discs allowing him to stretch out and work the crowd and even preach a little, knowing there's more than celebrating left to do. [8]

Nilson Matta

Nilson Matta's *Brazilian Voyage: Copacabana* (Zoho) The bass pulse of Brazil, with Harry Allen's elegant sax swing and wisps of flute. [7]

Nilson Matta & Roni Ben-Hur: *Mojave* (Motéma '11) [7]

Marilyn Mazur

Marilyn Mazur/Jan Garbarek: *Elixir* (ECM) The saxophonist hypnotic as a snake charmer, taming Mazur's exotic percussion. [7]

Rob Mazurek

Starlicker: *Double Demon* (Delmark '11) [8]

Jim McAuley

Jim McAuley: *The Ultimate Frog* (Drip Audio) An enigmatic guitarist from Kansas via Los Angeles offers two discs of homespun duos, rotating Nels Cline for denser guitar, Alex Cline for percussive backdrop, Ken Filiano for bass harmonics, and the late Leroy Jenkins for sharp-edged violin. Call it a cross between Derek Bailey freestyle and John Fahey organicism. [8]

Christian McBride

Christian McBride: *Live at Tonic (Ropeadope)* Three budget discs -- excessive, but each stands alone, and together they define funk fusion today. [7]

Christian McBride & Inside Straight: *Kind of Brown (Mack Avenue)* A flighty quintet like Dave Holland's, just not as well drilled; short on chops too. [4]

Alexander McCabe

Alexander McCabe: *Quiz (CAP)* Alto saxophonist, exceptionally fast, fluid and inventive is a conventional quartet, with piano comping and picking up the threads between his solos. Fortunate that the pianist is Uri Caine, who cleverly extends whatever thought McCabe left off, and never lets the pace slacken. [8]

Pete McCann

Pete McCann: *Most Folks (Omnitone)* A valuable guitar sideman shows his range, from samba to grunge. [7]

Donny McCaslin

Donny McCaslin Trio: *Recommended Tools (Greenleaf Music)* Long a rising tenor sax star, he finally strips down to a format where his chops break away from his postbop ambitions -- like he's strayed from Chris Potter's footsteps to chase after Sonny Rollins. [8]

Kate McGarry

Kate McGarry: *If Less Is More . . . Nothing Is Everything (Palmetto)* Stupid pet tricks, without the cute factor. [2]

Nellie McKay

Nellie McKay: *Normal as Blueberry Pie (Verve)* A younger, hipper, jazzier Doris Day, kind of like the budding artiste. [8]

John McLaughlin

John McLaughlin and the 4th Dimension: *To the One (Abstract Logix)* Forty years of meditation on the one true fusion. [6]

Terrence McManus

Terrence McManus/Gerry Hemingway: *Below the Surface Of (Auricle)* Guitar-drums duo, the drummer's finesse patiently drawing his partner out. McManus's electric guitar is louder, more dissonant, the fractures less by design than by stress. [8]

Terrence McManus: *Transcendental Numbers (NoBusiness)* With Mark Helias and Gerry Hemingway, so call this BassDrumGuitar, a little more abstract given the higher math. [7]

John McNeil

John McNeil/Bill McHenry: *Chill Morn He Climb Jenny (Sunnyside)* Fun and games with obscure bebop gems, with some of that Latin tinge. [7]

Marian McPartland

Marian McPartland & Friends: *85 Candles - Live in New York (Concord)* [4]

Joe McPhee

Trio-X: Moods: *Playing With the Elements (CIMP)* Your basic Joe McPhee--free as a bird, equally adept on sax and trumpet. [7]

Joe McPhee/Paal Nilssen-Love: *Tomorrow Came Today (Smalltown Superjazz)* Dual pleasure with the avant-garde's grand old double threat: sax and trumpet, both uncompromising. [8]

Joe McPhee/Peter Brötzmann/Kent Kessler/Michael Zerang: *Guts (Okka Disk '07)* Two unrepentant veterans of four decades of free jazz wars, swapping riffs over roiling rhythms. [7]

Joe McPhee/Michael Zerang: *Creole Gardens (A New Orleans Song) (NoBusiness '11)* [8]

Brad Mehldau

Brad Mehldau: *Highway Rider (Nonesuch)* Two discs of string-swept pastorate, dotted by the occasional Joshua Redman oasis. [6]

Brad Mehldau/Kevin Hays: *Modern Music (Nonesuch '11)* [7]

Francisco Mela

Francisco Mela: *Cirio (Half Note)* Afro-Cuban rhythmic vamps, no more complicated than than have to be, allowing the international all-stars to follow suit: Lionel Loueke's guitar finds the groove, Jason Moran's piano learns new tricks, Mark Turner's sax stutters with shaded eloquence. [8]

Myra Melford

Myra Melford/Mark Dresser/Matt Wilson: *Big Picture (Cryptogramophone)* Taking a clue from first names, they call themselves Trio M, but are established enough to keep their names on the spine. I figure the complex cerebral stuff is pianist Melford's and credit the bouncy bits to drummer Wilson. There's no doubt that the weird arco bass is Dresser's. He has a huge reputation, but rarely makes albums you can kick back and enjoy. This is the exception. [8]

Myra Melford's Be Bread: *The Whole Tree Gone (Firehouse 12)* She's a dazzling piano player when she takes charge, but mostly she holds back, letting Brandon Ross's guitar, Ben Goldberg's clarinet, and

Cuong Vu's trumpet shape and color her seductive compositions. When she does cut loose, the whole band lifts up. [8]

Sebastiano Meloni

Sebastiano Meloni/Adriano Orrù/Tony Oxley: *Improvised Pieces for Trio (Big Round '10)* A brash piano trio by most standards -- well, maybe not Oxley's. [7]

Helen Merrill

Helen Merrill: *Lilac Wine (Sunnyside '04)* [3]

Pat Metheny

Pat Metheny: *Orchestrion (Nonesuch)* The fancy technology just lets him be himself, more mellifluous than ever. [6]

Lisa Mezzacappa

Lisa Mezzacappa's Bait & Switch: *What Is Known (Clean Feed)* The leader's bass brackets the sonic range where Aaron Bennett's tenor sax and John Finkbeiner's guitar rumble and roil -- deep, dense, with a steady charge and a tendency to get noisy. Two covers: one from Air drummer Steve McCall, the other from Don Van Vliet, a/k/a Captain Beefheart, who knew a thing or two about getting down and dirty. [8]

Andy Middleton

Andy Middleton: *The European Quartet Live (Q-rious)* A saxophonist with patient poise on the slow ones, fierce resolve on the fast ones. [7]

Sei Miguel

Sei Miguel/Pedro Gomes: *Turbina Anthem (NoBusiness '11)* [7]

Allison Miller

Allison Miller: *Boom Tic Boom (Foxhaven)* Drummer-led trio, an even better showcase for Myra Melford's piano than her own album. [8]

Dom Minasi

Dom Minasi: *The Vampire's Revenge (CDM)* One bite too many from Anne Rice, but when your friends are the who's who of the underworld, you get amazing guest solos. [6]

Dom Minasi String Quartet: *Dissonance Makes the Heart Grow Fonder (Konnex)* Guitar-violin-cello-bass, close enough for cranky avant-chamber music. [6]

Bob Mintzer

Bob Mintzer Big Band: Live at MCG With Special Guest Kurt Elling (MCG Jazz '04) [3]

Nicole Mitchell

Nicole Mitchell/Harrison Bankhead/Hamid Drake: *Indigo Trio/Live in Montreal* (Greenleaf Music) Fred Anderson's rough tumbling rhythm section, iced with flute. [7]

Nicole Mitchell's Black Earth Ensemble: *Black Unstoppable* (Delmark) The pied piper of the AACM, her great musical mish-mash marred by faux gospel vocals. [3]

Roscoe Mitchell

Roscoe Mitchell and the Note Factory: *Far Side* (ECM) A double quartet clash: two drummers, two bassists, two thrashing pianos, trumpet sparks to ignite the leader's sax. [7]

Yoko Miwa

The Yoko Miwa Trio: *Fadeless Flower* (PJL) Young mainstream piano trio aim for clean sound, delicate balance, inconspicuous beauty. [7]

Yoko Miwa Trio: *Live at Scullers Jazz Club* (self-released '11) [7]

Soren Moller

Soren Moller & Dick Oatts: *The Clouds Above* (Audial) Another NY-DK connection, piano-sax duets that remain bracing until the flute comes out. [7]

Nils Petter Molvaer

Nils Petter Molvaer: *Live: Steamer* (Sula) Molvaer plays trumpet, but the samples, the loops, and the vinyl DJ Strangefruit abuses are why he matters. [7]

Nils Petter Molvaer: *An American Compilation* (Thirsty Ear) Catching up with a half-decade of frigid Europe-only jazztronica. [8]

Nils Petter Molvaer: *ER* (Thirsty Ear) Molvaer's fusion is the proper heir to Miles Davis's in two respects: he's a master at getting the rhythm tight, and his trumpet adds a bare minimum of human voice without detracting from the machines. His programmed beats grow more complex and varied each time out, here opening up new paths ranging from chill out to a striking Sidsel Endresen vocal. Three cuts return from *An American Compilation*, which also overlaps *Steamer* in Thirsty Ear's campaign to catch up with Molvaer's Europe-only releases. Consumers can weigh the redundancies and bait, but this is where the others were heading. [9]

Nils Petter Molvaer: *Hamada* (Thirsty Ear) Two bass-and-drums eruptions break the arctic chill of trumpet and electronics ambience. [7]

Nils Petter Molvaer: *Baboon Moon* (Thirsty Ear '11) [7]

Ravish Momin

Ravish Momin's Trio Tarana: *Climbing the Banyan Tree (Clean Feed)* Indian percussion, Chinese violin, Middle Eastern oud -- released in Lisbon, but recorded in that old melting pot, Brooklyn. Note that Jason Kao Hwang and Shanir Ezra Blumenkranz are U.S. natives, and the leader is a Hyderabadi student of the *north* Indian classical tradition who went to Carnegie Mellon. That none of the three are too deeply rooted in their ethnicity lets them join together as a distinctive jazz group rather than limiting them to exotic fusion. [8]

James Moody

The James Moody and Hank Jones Quartet: *Our Delight (IPO)* Bebop upstarts, octogenarians now, relishing Gillespie and Dameron. [6]

James Moody: *4B (IPO)* Finely aged standards, no rough edges, no flute, just tenor sax framed for posterity, or a romantic dinner. [7]

Tom Moon

Moon Hotel Lounge Project: *Into the Ojalá (Frosty Cordial '11)* Easy listening sax and groove for critical minds. [8]

Jason Moran

Jason Moran: *Ten (Blue Note)* Postbop stride master rolls over classics and wears out his influences. [7]

Frank Morgan

Frank Morgan: *Reflections (High Note)* Sooner or later, some of Bird's children grow up. [7]

Frank Morgan: *A Night in the Life (High Note)* Plays Bird songs, sweet and soulful -- it isn't just pianist George Cables who reminds me of Art Pepper. [7]

Joe Morris

Joe Morris Quartet: *Beautiful Existence (Clean Feed '06)* Alto saxophonist Jim Hobbs will turn some ears here. I notice a handful of guys like him every year: scattered appearances over a decade or more, nothing that remotely looks like a career trajectory. Guitarist Morris favors long, abstract single-note lines in relatively relaxed settings. He has a sizable catalog, but he's rarely recorded with horns or a rhythm section that would push him. This group features both, and it's gratifying how seamlessly Morris fills in. [8]

Joe Morris/Ken Vandermark/Luther Gray: *Rebus (Clean Feed '07)* Abstract guitar leads spur tenor sax improvising recycling one piece six ways. [8]

Joe Morris: *Wildlife (AUM Fidelity '09)* Not so distinctive a bassist, but like every saxophonist he trios with -- Petr Cancura here -- gets a jolt of freedom. [8]

Joe Morris Quartet: *Today on Earth* (AUM Fidelity) Returns to guitar trading lines with Jim Hobbs -- a kinder, gentler Fully Celebrated. [7]

Chris Morrissey

Chris Morrissey Quartet: *The Morning World* (Sunnyside) The young bassist's indelible grooves are driven home by drummer Dave King and spiced up by King's Happy Apple bandmate Michael Lewis exploring tangential jazz angles with all kinds of saxes. [8]

Sal Mosca

Sal Mosca Quartet: *You Go to My Head* (Blue Jack Jazz) A posthumous teaser from the Tristano school pianist -- breezy, brainy standards from Gershwin, Parker-Gillespie, Konitz-Marsh. [7]

Rakalam Bob Moses

Rakalam Bob Moses/Greg Burk: *Ecstatic Weanderings* (Jazzwerkstatt) Improv with African allusions, abstract piano in a jungle of worldly drums. [7]

Rob Mosher

Rob Mosher's Storytime: *The Tortoise* (Old Mill) More proof that jazz is the semipop classical of the 21st century. [3]

Paul Motian

Paul Motian/Bill Frisell/Joe Lovano: *I Have the Room Above Her* (ECM) Lovano's ballad sense is suspect, but he adds substance to Motian's slow abstractions. [7]

Paul Motian: *On Broadway Vol. 4* (Winter & Winter) Fifty years after he came of age in the Bill Evans Trio, Motian may still be jazz's go-to drummer, with a dozen or more new albums over the last two years. But he's not the hardest working. His secret is economy: no flash, nothing so tedious as holding the beat, just a bare minimum to keep everyone on edge. He's stingy enough with this trio-plus-one that he won't let his two guests play on the same cut. Pianist Masabumi Kikuchi warms his spots up, while singer Rebecca Martin cuts hers back to a hushed stroll. In both cases the songs do the work, and Chris Potter's sax fills out the space. [8]

Paul Motian/Chris Potter/Jason Moran: *Lost in a Dream* (ECM) Enigmatic drummer sets two stars adrift, trying to make sense of nothing. [7]

Bob Mover

Bob Mover: *It Amazes Me . . .* (Zoho) Slow, smokey ballads, lustrous sax, Kenny Barron accompaniment, improbably touching vocals. [7]

Maria Muldaur

Maria Muldaur & Her Garden of Joy: *Good Time Music for Hard Times (Stony Plain '09)* More songs about failing banks and two-timing preachers -- the panic is on, but she at least has a plan. [9]

Mark Murphy

Mark Murphy: *Love Is What Stays (Verve '07)* Lost his hip, leaving sensory deprivation and orchestral torture. [1]

Bryan Murray

Bryan and the Haggards: *Pretend It's the End of the World (Hot Cup)* Merle's melodies run through the mill, from Bird to Ornette to Ayler. [7]

Bryan and the Haggards: *Still Alive and Kickin' Down the Walls (Hot Cup '11)* [7]

David Murray

David Murray & the Gwo-Ka Masters: *Gwotet (Justin Time '04)* As with Murray's two previous Guadeloupe albums, a foray into pan-African cosmopolitanism is built around the gwo-ka drums and chant vocals of Klod Kiavu  and Fran ois Ladrezeau. But the rest of the cast is new, including Guadeloupean guitarist Christian Lavisio and Vietnamese/Senegalese hybrid Herv  Samb, extra brass from Murray's Latin Big Band, and featured saxophonist Pharoah Sanders. Where *Creole* settled for lush exoticism, and *Yonn-D * strove for modest authenticity, this one is a nonstop riot of rhythm and horns. [9]

David Murray 4tet & Strings: *Waltz Again (Justin Time '05)* [3]

David Murray Black Saint Quartet: *Sacred Ground (Justin Time)* Begins and ends with two Ishmael Reed lyrics sung by Cassandra Wilson: the title cut, tied to Murray's soundtrack for the Marco Williams film **Banished**, recalls atrocities between 1890 and 1930 when rioting white mobs drove thousands of black Americans from their homes, clearing out whole neighborhoods, while the closer conjures up an ancient Cassandra as "The Prophet of Doom." In between, Murray waxes poetic -- lamenting the past, redeeming the present, offering hope for the future. [9]

David Murray/Mal Waldron: *Silence (2001, Justin Time)* Cut in Brussels a year before Waldron's death, this may now be seen as a remembrance of an all-time piano great, but Murray fills the room so prodigiously that you have to work to hear how skillfully Waldron ties it all together. [8]

David Murray Black Saint Quartet: *Live in Berlin (Jazzwerkstatt)* The piano and bass slots aren't much, but muscular bass clarinet and monster sax prevail. [7]

David Murray Cuban Ensemble: *Plays Nat King Cole: En Espa ol (Mot ma '11)* [8]

Sunny Murray

Sunny Murray: *Perles Noires Vol. I (Eremite)* Free ranging drums, Sabir Mateen's struggling sax, guests -- Dave Burrell gives *Vol. I* a slight edge, but *Vol. 2* is comparable. [7]

Michael Musillami

Michael Musillami's Dialect: *Fragile Forms (Playscape)* Guitarist Musillami dares pianist Peter Madsen to bust them up. [7]

Wolfgang Muthspiel

Wolfgang Muthspiel: *Bright Side (Material)* This Austrian guitarist is hard to characterize. He avoids power chords and single-note bebop runs, does without a funk lick or even a blues move. He gets a soft, metallic tone, sometimes tweaking it with effects. His early work suggested fusion, but lately he's gravitated toward a kind of chamber music. He cites Bach's lute works, Glenn Gould, and Bill Evans as influences -- indeed, he plays more like a pianist than any guitarist I know. *Solo (Material)* offers a detailed exposé of his bag of tricks, but his small group records are more immediately accessible. *Friendly Travelers (Material)* is an engaging dialogue with drummer Brian Blade. But richer harmonically is this record by his trio, with a pair of twins on bass and drums doing his bidding. [9]

Zaid Nasser

Zaid Nasser: *Escape From New York (Smalls '07)* An alto saxophonist who risks sounding like Charlie Parker and winds up showing how it should be done. He taps Ellington for two tunes, wails through "Chinatown My Chinatown," plucks a barnburner from oldtime bebop pianist George Wallington, and strings them together with a couple of originals, including one from pianist Sacha Perry. Not a tribute. More like 55th Street is back in business. [8]

Zaid Nasser: *Off Minor (Smalls '09)* Classical bebopper, smoother and slicker than Bird, and not in such a hurry. [8]

Nanette Natal

Nanette Natal: *I Must Be Dreaming (Benyo Music)* Trading dreams for blues, protesting that "living's hard when it doesn't come easy." [7]

Nanette Natal: *Sweet Summer Blue (Benyo Music '11)* [7]

Roy Nathanson

Roy Nathanson: *Subway Moon (Yellow Bird/Enja)* Notes from the underground, delivered sotto voce with squiggly sax and brass. [8]

Ben Neill

Ben Neill: *Night Science (Thirsty Ear)* One-man trumpet-flavored jazztronica, like Nils Petter Molvaer divorced from the jazz moment. [6]

Willie Nelson

Willie Nelson: *Nacogdoches (1997, Pedernales '04)* Jazz standards with mandolinist Paul Buskirk;

like Picasso, he can palm off doodles as genius. [8]

Willie Nelson/Wynton Marsalis: *Two Men With the Blues* (Blue Note) Neither man feels the blues, but call out a song and chances are they can wing it. [7]

David 'Fathead' Newman

David 'Fathead' Newman: *Life* (High Note) [2]

Paal Nilssen-Love

Paal Nilssen-Love/Ken Vandermark: *Dual Pleasure 2* (Smalltown Supersound) Leftovers from last year's *Dual Pleasure* -- abstract clarinet, avant-honk, drums. [7]

Paal Nilssen-Love/Ken Vandermark: *Milwaukee Volume* (Smalltown Supersound) [8]

Paal Nilssen-Love/Ken Vandermark: *Chicago Volume* (Smalltown Superjazz) Two nights of smoldering sax and lascivious clarinet knocked about by a drummer who rocks in no known time. [8]

Anders Nilsson

Anders Nilsson's Aorta: *Blood* (Kopasetic) A second album, *Janus*, is more varied and virtuosic, with saxophonist Mattias Carlson much more prominent. But this debut stakes guitarist Nilsson's conceptual claim to the mother of all arteries and its pulse of life. Bass and drums thrash, as in dozens of Scandinavian post-punk fusion bands, only the fretwork here is something else -- fond of power chords, but able to pick around them when he wants, with the sax adding menacing overtone to the flash and finesse. [9]

Anders Nilsson: *Aorta Ensemble* (Kopasetic '09) Swedish-American merger: double sax, double bass, double drums, whole lotta guitar. [8]

Hilary Noble

Hilary Noble & Rebecca Cline: *Enclave* (Zoho) Good students. Noble studied sax with George Garzone and Yusef Lateef, but he also did extra credit in Afro-Cuban percussion, and he puts both to use here. Cline picked up her piano from Joanne Brackeen and Chucho Valdés, and she delivers the whole package -- she's impossible to ignore, even in the background. Whereas most Latin jazz gravitates toward siesta, leave it to a couple of Yanks to shake things up. [8]

Kjell Nordeson

Nordeson Shelton: *Incline* (Singlespeed Music '11) [7]

Gia Notte

Gia Notte: *Shades* (Gnote) Tasty standards from Ellington, Weill, and the usual suspects, saxed up by Don Braden. [7]

Sean Nowell

Sean Nowell: *Stockholm Swingin' (Posi-Tone '11)* [7]

Larry Ochs

Larry Ochs/Sax & Drumming Core: *Out Trios Volume Five: Up From Under (Atavistic)* Rova sax quartet man goes it alone, with two drummers hard on his tail. [8]

Jones Jones: *We All Feel the Same Way (SoLyd)* Veteran Russian avant-garde drummer Vladimir Tarasov hooks up with Larry Ochs and Mark Dresser for twisting free improv. [6]

Michiko Ogawa

Michiko Ogawa Trio: . . . *It's All About Love! (Arbors)* She has an expert way with old songs and old-fashioned piano, but she's so in love with her "special guest" saxophonist that she holds back, singing on only five of the 14 standards here. Harry Allen is a big thing in Japan whose records BMG doesn't release here, which is a shame, but Ogawa shows him off more adroitly anyway. When people say he plays like he's never heard Coltrane, they mean he never shows stress, never feels the need to search. He leads with the confident swagger of Coleman Hawkins, fills in with the finesse of Paul Gonsalves, and is sane enough to be delighted with that combination. [8]

Linda Oh

Linda Oh Trio: *Entry (Linda Oh Music)* Bassist-led, balanced sound and structure, with Ambrose Akinmusire's trumpet for ear candy. [7]

Marcin Oles

Marcin & Bartłomiej Brat Oles: *Duo (Fenomedia)* Twins, bass and drums respectively, instant rhythm section for anyone passing through Poland, but complete together. [8]

Harold O'Neal

Harold O'Neal: *Whirling Mantis (Smalls)* Pianist son of Black Panthers in exile goes back to his roots -- bebop. [7]

Greg Osby

Greg Osby: *Channel Three (Blue Note)* In fifteen years on a major label, Osby has pursued all sorts of big ideas, especially about how today's jazz fits in history and might fit into popular culture, but his albums raised more problems than they resolved. This one delivers, largely because his ambitions here are formally constrained within jazz itself. In a trio with bass and drums, Osby wants more than to show off his chops. He wants to make music that precludes any felt need for harmony. That would be old hat in the free world but demands uncommon discipline in the postbop mainstream. [8]

Ed Palermo

The Ed Palermo Big Band: *Take Your Clothes Off When You Dance* (Cuneiform) [1]

Evan Parker

Evan Parker: *The Snake Decides* (1986, Psi) Amazing harmonics and modulations within the stark limits of solo soprano saxophone. [7]

Evan Parker/The Transatlantic Art Ensemble: *Boustrophedon* (ECM) Roscoe Mitchell leads a feisty American contingent to this avant-garde summit, but Parker prevails, his soprano sax rising above it all. [7]

Evan Parker Electro-Acoustic Ensemble: *The Moment's Energy* (ECM) Parker's towering career in the European avant-garde has roughly the same size and shape as Anthony Braxton's, with hundreds of obscure albums spanning 40 years. Odd then that his one widely distributed label should feature a large and eclectic ensemble that all but buries his utterly distinctive soprano sax. Still, this is a breakthrough, with the electronics finally eclipsing the acoustic instruments even as Peter Evans's trumpet and Ned Rothenberg's reeds raise the bar. [8]

Evan Parker/Ingebrigt Håker Flaten: *The Brewery Tap* (Smalltown Superjazz) The prime saxophonist of England's avant-garde sticks to tenor for these pensive improvs, rounded out by a tough young bassist. [7]

Townhouse Orchestra: *Belle Ville* (Clean Feed) On two long, towering improvs Evan Parker does his usual tenor sax thing, with bass, drums, and Sten Sandell's piano mischief. [7]

Evan Parker/Barry Guy/Paul Lytton + Peter Evans: *Scenes in the House of Music* (Clean Feed) Trumpet enfant terrible can't rattle the old guys of the Anglo avant-garde. [7]

Jeff Parker

Jeff Parker: *The Relatives* (Thrill Jockey '05) Underground Chicago guitarist goes smooth, the synth matrix redoubling groove and quirk. [7]

Maceo Parker

Maceo Parker: *Roots & Grooves* (Heads Up '08) The WDR Big Band Cologne goes to heaven, backing the man with the keys to one disc of Ray Charles, a second of James Brown. [8]

William Parker

William Parker Quartet: *Sound Unity* (AUM Fidelity) This is Parker's pianoless quartet, a format that demands two horn players who can dance -- who play together even when they seem to be flying off at odd tangents. Trumpeter Lewis Barnes and alto saxist Rob Brown, little known outside of Parker's discography, make a lovely couple. But in this quartet bassist Parker and drummer Hamid Drake aren't content to keep time: They, too, dance. Perfect balance -- the political analog is equality -- is impossible to achieve, but if you listen to this record four times, each time focusing on a player,

you'll hear four slightly distinct albums, each one coherent. They did it. [9]

William Parker: *Luc's Lantern (Thirsty Ear)* Parker's past work with piano trios leaned heavily toward brawling with the likes of Cecil Taylor and Matthew Shipp. But this time he goes outside his usual circle, tapping drummer Michael Thompson and unknown Eri Yamamoto, an inside-out pianist who reminds me of Geri Allen. Probably the idea is to spotlight his songwriting -- based on folk melodies, some surprisingly pretty, a couple roughed up by old habits, including a Taylorized take on Bud Powell. And by all means keep one ear cocked for the bass. [8]

William Parker/Hamid Drake: *First Communion + Piercing the Veil (2000, AUM Fidelity)* Riddim exercises and intimate exotica, doubling a studio reissue with a live warm-up. [8]

William Parker/Raining on the Moon: *Corn Meal Dance (AUM Fidelity)* Parker's lyrics can get preachy or plain didactic, and singer Leena Conquest amplifies the slightest hint of gospel all too predictably. But his sweeping melodies lift them into the cosmos, and the avant-garde virtuosos in the band never wander: They fill in and extend so expertly (Lewis Barnes' trumpet stands out) that this might even be compelling as an instrumental. [8]

William Parker: *Double Sunrise Over Neptune (AUM Fidelity)* A large group with free-wheeling horns, a string quartet (plus bass), oud, guitar or banjo, two drummers, and an operatic singer from India named Sageeta Bandyopadhyay. Remarkably, it all holds together, paced by a metronomic bassline, which Parker subcontracts so he can work on exotica, including the West African lute called the doson ngonni and squeaky double reed instruments. The sort of miracle Sun Ra used to conjure up, but two planets further out from Ra's home base. [9]

William Parker Quartet: *Petit Oiseau (AUM Fidelity)* Two free-wheeling horns backed by the hardest working rhythm section in avant-jazz -- the leader on bass and Hamid Drake on drums -- this has been a glorious group ever since *O'Neal's Porch* dropped in 2000. Here, surprisingly, the horns hew to the heads and the pulse conjures hard bop. That's what happens when the leader's writing evolves from scenarios into full blown songs. [8]

William Parker: *I Plan to Stay a Believer (AUM Fidelity)* Long awaited. Parker unveiled his inside take on Curtis Mayfield's political thoughts in 2001 and has shopped it around ever since, finally collecting slices from six concerts up through 2008 onto two discs. Leena Conquest sings, Amiri Baraka waxes eloquent, ad hoc choirs come and go. The groove picks up some swing and a bunch of horns. "This Is My Country" could shut down a tea party, or launch another. [9]

William Parker: *At Somewhere There (Barnyard)* Long bass solo, mild and creamy as those things go, followed by experiments on dousn'gouni and double flute. [7]

Nicki Parrott

Nicki Parrott/Rossano Sportiello: *People Will Say We're in Love (Arbors)* A charming standards singer who also plays bass, plus a gawky, adoring pianist. [6]

John Patitucci

John Patitucci Trio: *Remembrance (Concord)* Bassist's record, so note the solos, the sonic balance, the nuanced grooves, not just Joe Lovano. [7]

Mario Pavone

Mario Pavone Sextet: *Deez to Blues (Playscape)* Pavone describes his music as upside down: the bass and piano set the melody while the horns and violin countermove. Pavone's bass is certainly at the center of everything, the core force that drives the piano and drums of long-time comrades Peter Madsen and Michael Sarin, while perturbing Steven Bernstein's trumpets, Howard Johnson's bass horns, and Charles Burnham's violin more erratically. The complexity, even on "Second-Term Blues," is wondrous. [8]

Gary Peacock

Gary Peacock/Marc Copland: *Insight (Pirouet)* Famous bassist and not nearly famous enough pianist snuggle up for discreet pleasures. [7]

Michael Pedicin

Michael Pedicin: *Ballads . . . Searching for Peace (Jazz Hut '11)* [7]

Ivo Perelman

Ivo Perelman: *Mind Games (Leo)* Brazil's iconic tenor saxophonist decided to celebrate twenty years of hardy free blowing with a publicity blitz behind this year's crop. At least three of the records are keepers -- *Soulstorm* (Clean Feed) with its acerbic cello and bass; *The Apple in the Dark* (Leo) with the Gerry Hemingway percussion touch and occasional splotches of dramatic piano; maybe also another intimate drummer duo, *The Stream of Life* (Leo), with Brian Willson -- but your best bet is the most basic, a sturdy sax trio with Willson again (misspelled on the cover) and hard-working Dominic Duval on bass. [8]

Ivo Perelman Quartet: *The Hour of the Star (Leo '11)* [7]

Ben Perowsky

Ben Perowsky Quartet: *Esopus Opus (Skirl)* The drummer borrows three-fifths of Claudia Quintet not to match rhythmic wits but to play with the accordion-reeds sound, covering Hendrix and Beatles and Brazilians, and slipping in an original funeral blues that shows how far New York has moved beyond New Orleans. [8]

Houston Person

Houston Person: *To Etta With Love (High Note)* That's Etta Jones, not James. While the songbooks overlap, and both did Billie Holiday tributes, Jones never played with dynamite. Nor does Person, who produced Jones' records from 1975 to her death in 2001, often adding his own soulful sax. On his own, he delivers the most poignant ballad album of a long career's worth of sax balladry -- perhaps because he's got an excuse for picking sureshot songs, or perhaps because he's entitled. [8]

Houston Person/Ron Carter: *Just Between Friends (High Note)* Pitching woo, directed more at old chestnuts than each other. [7]

Houston Person: *The Art and Soul of Houston Person (1996-2008, High Note)* Joe Fields recorded Person's debut at Prestige in 1966. When Fields moved on to found Muse and High Note, Person was his first hire: a slow moving, easy swinging tenor sax soul man, so consistent his biggest problem has been differentiating his albums. This 3-CD set settles that: 30 classic songs from a dozen mature albums sum him up perfectly. Irresistible for anyone with a taste for tenor sax and a sense of jazz's grand historical arc. [9]

Houston Person: *Mellow (High Note)* God blesses the tenor saxophonist who's got his own. [6]

Houston Person: *So Nice (High Note '11)* [7]

Gianluca Petrella

Gianluca Petrella: *Indigo 4 (Blue Note)* A constructive traditionalist, working from Ellington through Sun Ra, willing to get his trombone dirty. [7]

Enrico Pieranunzi

Enrico Pieranunzi/Marc Johnson/Joey Baron: *Ballads (CAM Jazz)* Lovesome flowers, foolish things, night after night, when all was Chet. [7]

Enrico Pieranunzi/Marc Johnson/Joey Baron: *Dream Dance (CAM Jazz)* An all-star piano trio to rival Keith Jarrett's, if anything less mannered, lighter, spryer. They've played together for most of the last decade, churning out one fine album after another. This one is distinguished by its range: fast, slow, dense, quiet, graceful in any mode and tempo. [8]

Adam Pieronczyk

Adam Pieronczyk: *Amusos (PAO)* Free jazz as postmodern cool, an ether of saxes, bass, cello, beats, voice, where all that is solid melts into air. [7]

Adam Pieronczyk: *Komeda - The Innocent Sorcerer (Jazzwerkstatt '11)* Jazz in Poland came of age in the 1960s, largely through Krzysztof Komeda, a pianist-composer who died young in 1969. Tributes abound, including a Komeda Project analogous to the Herbie Nichols Project, *Litania* from Komeda's trumpet player Tomasz Stanko, and now this one from a saxophonist who was born after Komeda died. The soprano sax is haunting and evocative, the guitar grooveful, the interplay complex. [8]

Augusto Pirodda

Augusto Pirodda/Gary Peacock/Paul Motian: *No Comment (Jazzwerkstatt '11)* [7]

Bucky Pizzarelli

Bucky Pizzarelli: *5 for Freddie: Bucky's Tribute to Freddie Green (Arbors)* The rhythm section tracks Basie's legends well enough -- Mickey Roker for Jo Jones, Jay Leonhart for Walter Page, John Bunch for the Count -- and Pizzarelli can certainly keep the engine humming. But Green was famous

for never taking a solo, which leaves the guitarist in need of someone else for the spotlight. Enter Warren Vaché as Sweets Edison, even lighter on cornet, just enough voice to focus these old swing warhorses, and totally at home. [8]

John Pizzarelli

John Pizzarelli: *Bossa Nova* (Telarc '04) [3]

Michel Portal

Michel Portal/Stephen Kent/Mino Cinelu: *Burundi* (PAO) Kent's didgeridoo provides the varying hums that place this record at the outer reaches of exotica. Cinelu's percussion and occasional yelp or bark drive it rhythmically. Portal's soprano sax is pitched high and eerie, while his bass clarinet is low and down to earth. The African nation that contributed the title accounts for nothing else, except perhaps a world big enough to inspire such otherworldly music. [8]

Chris Potter

Chris Potter Quartet: *Lift: Live at the Village Vanguard* (Sunnyside) Potter's studio albums have always been too slick and too complex. Perhaps too conservative, too. But put him in a club with an all-name quartet and the songs stretch, the solos spread, rough spots break the pace, and chops overcome the damage. This may be why jaded fans swear the only real jazz is invented on the fly. I don't buy that as a rule, but Potter needed some way to take the shine off and let his talent hang out. [8]

Chris Potter Underground: *Follow the Red Line: Live at the Village Vanguard* (Sunnyside) Adam Rogers's guitar snaking over Craig Taborn's blippy Fender Rhodes and Nate Smith's drums makes for a fresh update on the old organ trio -- especially when the pace slows, Taborn looks to be as far ahead of the field as Jimmy Smith was in 1958. Potter can play soul jazz, but he's most impressive when he kicks out the jams, raising r&b honking to a higher plane. [8]

Chris Potter 10: *Song for Anyone* (Sunnyside) Ten musicians, with flute-clarinet-bassoon among the winds and guitar joining the violin-violoncello-bass strings. It seems like every jazz musician aspires to compose and arrange on the large canvas, but more often than not ambition gets the best of them. Potter only manages drab, static backgrounds, then chews them up with his tenor sax. With chops like his, why bother? [4]

Chris Potter Underground: *Ultrahang* (ArtistShare) Electrified with Adam Rogers's guitar and Craig Taborn's Fender Rhodes, the sax whiz card pumps up the volume. [7]

Bobby Previte

Bobby Previte & the New Bump: *Set the Alarm for Monday* (Palmetto '08) Slick rhythm, with drums and vibes leaping over one another, but Ellery Eskelin and Steven Bernstein cut the grease. [7]

Alvin Queen

Alvin Queen: *I Ain't Looking at You* (Enja/Justin Time) A journeyman drummer (who broke in with

Wild Bill Davis, then graduated to Horace Silver and George Benson) emerges from the trenches with messengers who fuse the best of soul jazz and hard bop: groove from Mike LeDonne's B3 and Peter Bernstein's guitar, two-horn fireworks from Terrell Stafford's trumpet and Jesse Davis's sax. [8]

Bruno Råberg

Bruno Råberg: *Lifelines* (Orbis Music) Two discs of Chris Cheek sax and Ben Monder guitar, framed by the bassist-leader into tasty postbop. [7]

Dan Raphael

Dan Raphael/Rich Halley/Carson Halley: *Children of the Blue Supermarket* (Pine Eagle) The setup is simple enough: Raphael declaims his postbeat poetry, Rich Halley chases every stanza with his garrulous postbop tenor sax, and his son the drummer accents. Not sure how the poetry flows on paper, but the mad rush of images is so vibrant you hang on every word, and the sax drives every point home. [10]

Andrew Rathbun

Andrew Rathbun: *Where We Are Now* (SteepleChase) The new standard postbop quintet, guitar vying with piano in lieu of a second horn, tenor sax still in charge. [7]

Edward Ratliff

Edward Ratliff: *Those Moments Before* (Strudelmedia) Nods to Johnny Hodges and Henry Threadgill, soundtrack locales from Spain to the Orient. [7]

Enrico Rava

Enrico Rava: *Full of Life* (CAM Jazz) My fave among four or five recent records by the trumpet legend -- working steadily but slower, taking time to smell the roses. [7]

Enrico Rava: *The Words and the Days* (ECM) Louis Armstrong never went anywhere without a good trombonist; Gianluca Petrella shows trumpeter Rava why. [7]

Enrico Rava/Stefano Bollani: *The Third Man* (ECM) Wizeden trumpet player, upstart pianist, they sail past one another, giving us interleaved halves of two solo albums. [4]

Joshua Redman

Joshua Redman: *Back East* (Nonesuch) Before East takes over with two originals and Coltrane's "India" -- the latter a last session with father Dewey -- Redman has some fun with the West, including a rollicking "I'm a Old Cowhand." He earns his right to play soprano sax on three cuts, and the last time his tenor was this robust was when he played Lester Young in *Kansas City*. [8]

Joshua Redman/Aaron Parks/Matt Penman/Eric Harland: *James Farm* (Nonesuch '11) [7]

Mike Reed

Mike Reed's People, Places & Things: *Proliferation* (482 Music '08) Drummer-led freebop, with two racing saxes invoking the late 1950s Chicago underground and flying off. [8]

Mike Reed's Loose Assembly: *The Speed of Change* (482 Music) Drummer-led postbop, with alto sax, cello, and vibes for a light, trippy air. [7]

Mike Reed's People, Places & Things: *About Us* (482 Music) Following an album about their ancestors they tap into themselves for the sound of Chicago today. [7]

Mike Reed's People, Places & Things: *Stories and Negotiations* (482 Music) New freebop from Chicago, tapping old-timers from Sun Ra's 1950s for fresh stories. [7]

Dianne Reeves

Dianne Reeves: *Good Night, and Good Luck* (Concord '05) She haunts the movie, her role expanded here for a superbly professional primer, reminding us that the soundtrack to the separate and unequal '50s was its shadow. [8]

Steve Reid

Steve Reid: *Rhythmatism* (1976, Universal Sound) Not the fusion drummer. The one who did studio work for Martha & the Vandellas, James Brown, and Fela before drifting into avant-garde obscurity, mostly with Charles Tyler, and recording four DIY albums in the late '70s. His groove on this one is irresistibly snappy, but the main reason for noticing is a wild and woolly Arthur Blythe, in peak form shortly before his major-label debut. [8]

Steve Reid Ensemble: *Daxaar* (Domino '08) Itinerant drummer, with Kieran Hebden's laptop in tow, meets up with Senegalese pros for a slick little groovefest. [8]

Randy Reinhart

Randy Reinhart: *At the Mill Hill Playhouse: As Long as I Live* (Arbors '05) Trad jazz teamwork -- Kenny Davern, Dan Barrett, and John Sheridan are friskier than on their own recent albums. [7]

Dave Rempis

Triage: *American Mythology* (Okka Disk) Sharp ears have pointed out that some of the most exhilarating sax on recent Vandermark 5 albums has come from Mars Williams's replacement, young Dave Rempis. He studied under Vandermark and is similar in tone and logic, but Rempis is, if anything, the more polished player. Where his Quartet album, *Out of Season* (482 Music), is full of promise but awkward, this trio with bassist Jason Ajemian and V5 drummer Tim Daisy is a tour de force. One example: "Rust Belt" starts with creaky percussion, develops through an unaccompanied soprano lament, then breaks open with a drum solo and pumping alto sax: the bustle of Chicago jazz emerging from the ruins of the steel industry. [9]

Rempis/Rosalyn: *Cyrillic* (482 Music) Sax-drums improvs, like Vandermark/Nilssen-Love but more

together. [7]

Júlio Resende

Júlio Resende: *Da Alma (Clean Feed)* Soul jazz from Portugal, dreamy flights of fancy tethered to wide-awake piano. [7]

Júlio Resende: *Assim Falava Jazzatustra (Clean Feed)* Beatwise piano, Perico Sambeat's tasty sax, rumbling rhythm, Pink Floyd cover. [7]

Bob Reynolds

Bob Reynolds: *Can't Wait for Perfect (Fresh Sound New Talent)* This tenor sax debut reminds me of the young, fighting-weight Ben Webster, suggesting that he has a great ballad album in the distant future. Main difference is that he grew up on funk instead of swing. Less impressive are one cut on soprano and some synth programming, signs of the overheated times. [8]

Logan Richardson

Logan Richardson: *Cerebral Flow (Fresh Sound New Talent)* The debut album from a Kansas City alto saxophonist starts a cappella, then takes flight over free rhythms acutely accented by Mike Pinto's vibes. Next up is a wry-toned ballad with Mike Moreno's guitar filling in. Step by step, Richardson works around the edges, showing everything you can do with an alto sax except sit on it. [8]

Tim Ries

Tim Ries: *Stones World: The Rolling Stones Project II (Sunnyside)* A worldwide tour, promoting the Stones' great idea: miscegenation. [4]

Claire Ritter

Claire Ritter: *The Stream of Pearls Project (Zoning '11)* Water songs, from gentle tides to swiftly winding streams, sketched first in simple piano, with other instruments slipping in here and there, eventually cohering into rich portraits of vital ecosystems. [8]

Sam Rivers

Sam Rivers/Ben Street/Kresten Osgood: *Violet Violets (Stunt)* Old times only easier, so reminiscent of his '60s grace it could be a self-tribute. [7]

Duke Robillard

Duke Robillard: *A Swingin' Session With Duke Robillard (Stony Plain)* Blues journeyman swings and grins his way through r&b joints, tickled by post-Dixieland horns [8]

Jason Robinson

Jason Robinson: *The Two Faces of Janus (Cuneiform)* Backed with a fleet-footed band, with crucial interventions by Marty Ehrlich and Rudresh Mahanthappa. [6]

Jason Robinson and Anthony Davis: *Cerulean Landscapes (Clean Feed)* Sax-piano duets, limited palette, fancy abstractions. [4]

Bob Rockwell

Bob Rockwell Quartet: *Bob's Ben: A Salute to Ben Webster (Stunt)* An undeniable pleasure -- if anything, too easy. Rockwell's a mainstream tenor saxman who moved to Copenhagen in 1983, two decades after Webster, and settled into a respected if unspectacular career. He has the master's broad tone but none of his vibrato, so he keeps a respectful distance while luxuriating in a dozen ballads. [8]

Roberto Rodriguez

Septeto Rodriguez: *Baila! Gitano Baila! (Tzadik)* Roberto Juan Rodriguez learned klezmer as a Cuban expatriate in Miami, working bar mitzvahs and Yiddish theatres. His synthesis of Jewish melody and Cuban percussion dreams of roots that never were, yet it is convincing enough that one can imagine generations of *conversos* gathering in private to keep the ancient secrets of their culture alive. This sequel to *El Danzon de Moises* is less surprising but broader and happier, with touches of tango and gypsy dance. [8]

Roberto Rodriguez: *Timba Talmud (Tzadik)* Mixing violin and clarinet with congas, his Cuban-Klezmer fusion is skin deep, a mash-up inspired by juxtaposing titles like "Mambo Kitsch," "Timba Talmud," and "Descarga 1492." (Does that mean "party like the Inquisition just started?") It is party music, fusing the ecstatic impulses of two cultures. He even parties for Obama. [8]

Roberto Rodriguez: *The First Basket (Tzadik)* Soundtrack for a David Vyorst film on early Jewish basketballers -- a pastiche of klezmerish pieces con salsa. [7]

Ari Roland

Ari Roland: *And So I Lived in Old New York . . . (Smalls '07)* The Chris Byars Quartet, bass-ackwards. [8]

Sonny Rollins

Sonny Rollins: *Sonny, Please (Doxy '06)* His first studio album in six years is no more eventful than his average annual checkup over three decades at Milestone. Granted, he sounds exceptionally comfortable, even taking his latest calypso out for a leisurely spin. He also sounds magnificent at any speed. [8]

Sonny Rollins: *Road Shows Vol. 1 (Doxy/Emarcy '08)* Who else could throw together an album of seven concert shots spanning 27 years, with five different drummers, and make it all sound of a piece, much less a tour de force? [8]

Sonny Rollins: *Road Shows Vol. 2 (Doxy/Emarcy '11)* [8]

Wallace Roney

Wallace Roney: *Jazz (High Note)* A brothers band like the Adderleys; too bad Antoine doesn't have a nickname to match his flair, like Cannonball. [6]

Josh Roseman

Josh Roseman: *New Constellations: Live in Vienna (Accurate)* Jah-driven funk, severely bent but rarely broken. [7]

Scott Rosenberg

Rosenberg/Baker/Hatwich/Daisy: *New Folk, New Blues (482 Music)* Not least of all, new new thing. [7]

Daniel Rosenthal

Daniel Rosenthal: *Lines (American Melody '11)* [7]

Keith Rowe

Keith Rowe/Axel Dörner/Franz Hautzinger: *A View From the Window (Erstwhile '04)* [1]

Gonzalo Rubalcaba

Gonzalo Rubalcaba: *Paseo (Blue Note)* The title translates as "stroll": a leisurely walk through pleasant surroundings, but with a contemplative distance. For Rubalcaba this means back in time to his Cuban roots, and sideways through the maze of modern jazz. With his New Cuban Quartet the dominant voice is saxophonist Luis Felipe Lamoglia, who owes more to Coltrane than the Caribbean. But the pace and variety come from the rugged Afro-Cuban terrain that keeps the stroll interesting. [8]

Roswell Rudd

Roswell Rudd: *Trombone Tribe (Sunnyside)* Several tribes, actually: the title group with three trombones and Bob Stewart on tuba; one called Bonerama with five plus a sousaphone; the Gangbe Brass Band of Benin; and Sex Mob, which qualifies when Rudd weighs in; also, scattered unnamed groups with everyone from Eddie Bert to Ray Anderson to Josh Roseman. And what do trombone tribes do? Duh, party! [8]

Roswell Rudd: *The Incredible Honk (Sunnyside '11)* An smorgasbord with Cuban, Cajun, Chinese, and Malian guests, topped by "Danny Boy" stripped down to a bare 'bone. [7]

George Russell

George Russell and the Living Time Orchestra: *The 80th Birthday Concert* (Concept Publishing)

In theory at least Russell was the guy who moved jazz from bebop to postbop, although in practice Miles Davis and John Coltrane are more likely to get the credit. His early records, from *Jazz Workshop* in 1956 until he moved to Europe in 1963, were progressive seeds that still bear fruit. His influence especially in Scandinavia was profound. On returning to the US in 1969, he settled into academia, working on his Lydian Chromatic Concept and writing sweeping orchestral works like "Electronic Sonata for Souls Loved By Nature" and "The African Game" -- the two centerpieces reprised for his big band birthday bash. At 80 you'd think he's slowed down enough we might catch up, but even when he's just having fun, like here, he's still several steps ahead of the game. [8]

Ray Russell

Ray Russell: *Goodbye Svengali* (Cuneiform) A fusion guitarist remembers his own personal Gil Evans. [7]

Timucin Sahin

Timucin Sahin Quartet: *Bafa* (Between the Lines) Turkish guitarist weaves his way in and around a risk-taking John O'Gallagher sax trio. [7]

Michel Sajrawy

Michel Sajrawy: *Writings on the Wall* (Ozella) Israeli guitarist who feels Palestinian plays Montgomery lines with Arabesque fillips. [7]

Samo Salamon

Samo Salamon Quartet: *Two Hours* (Fresh Sound New Talent) Slovenian guitarist hires Mark Helias' Open Loose trio for backup -- a gutsy move. [7]

Bobby Sanabria

Bobby Sanabria: *Tito Puente Masterworks Live!!!* (Jazzheads '11) [7]

Randy Sandke

Randy Sandke: *Cliffhanger* (Nagel Heyer) Mainstream trumpet, riding roughshod over a crackling-hot band. [7]

Randy Sandke and the Metatonal Big Band: *The Subway Ballet* (Evening Star) Only in New York can you imagine each subway stop as a dance, and find a big band to orchestrate it all. [7]

Randy Sandke: *Unconventional Wisdom* (Arbors) So rooted in tradition he named his son Bix, so postmodern he conceived two of his best albums as *Inside Out* and *Outside In*. This one covers all the bases, with his originals fitting seamlessly amidst standards from Berlin, Porter, and Carmichael and

scattered threads from Debussy to Jobim to Bill Evans. Bassist Nicki Parrott adds charming vocals on four tracks, guitarist Howard Alden provides elegant support, and Sandke plays some of the hottest trumpet of his career. [9]

Vittor Santos

Vittor Santos: *Renewed Impressions (Adventure Music)* Trombone samba, the rapid-fire puffs muscling up sly rhythms and flighty melodies. [8]

Bernardo Sasseti

Bernardo Sasseti Trio²: *Ascent (Clean Feed)* The superscript implies a piano trio raised to a higher power, but here Sasseti uses cello and vibes to lower the energy -- the vibes add mere ghost harmonics to his piano, the cello a sweeter, more wistful bass. Some of this was written for soundtracks, which explains its pensive moods, and why the pieces that pick up volume and speed never threaten to fly loose. This music fits into no known jazz tradition. It's more like Eno's *Another Green World* -- unplugged. [9]

Bernardo Sasseti Trio: *Motion (Clean Feed)* Soundtrack piano, calm and composed, pretty but spare, more like serene. [7]

Matt Savage

The Matt Savage Trio: *Quantum Leap (Savage)* Bill James studied the perils in projecting careers from teenage baseball players and concluded that it was virtually impossible. Jazz pianists must be even harder. This 14-year-old's press kit comes with quotes like "another Mozart" and "the future of jazz" from seers named Brubeck and Heath. Still, the album they're attached to offers little beyond sturdy competence -- remarkable for a teen and increasingly rare for Americans of any age, but several quanta short of distinction in a blindfold test. [2]

Cynthia Sayer

Cynthia Sayer: *Attractions (Plunk)* Banjo picker who sings too much fronts a retro dream band featuring guitar picker Bucky Pizzarelli. [7]

Michiel Scheen

Michiel Scheen Quartet: *Dance, My Dear? (Data)* Odd twists and sharp angles, post-Monk, post-Mengelberg even. [7]

Jenny Scheinman

Jenny Scheinman: *Shalagaster (Tzadik)* The klezmer one expects of a violinist on John Zorn's label is just one of many touchstones of this transworld jazz. Hints of India and Brazil also appear, but she's rooted only in the sound of her group. Over Myra Melford's harmonium, Scheinman's violin and Russ Johnson's muted trumpet build up thick layers of sound. And when Melford switches to piano, the

options become more rhythmic. That's what Scheinman sees in the world: options. [8]

Jenny Scheinman: 12 Songs (Cryptogramophone) She has quickly established herself as a versatile violinist working everywhere from ROVA to the Hot Club of San Francisco, but she flashes little virtuosity here. Instead she makes her mark elaborating folk tunes into luminous harmonic textures, shaping the melodies with her violin but leaving it to others to buff up the highlights -- Ron Miles's cornet, Doug Wieselman's clarinets, Rachele Garniez's accordion and piano, and most of all Bill Frisell's never more shimmering guitar. [8]

Maria Schneider

Maria Schneider Orchestra: Concert in the Garden (ArtistShare '04) [4]

Maria Schneider Orchestra: Sky Blue (ArtistShare '07) Poll winner, another Grammy, but leaves me cold; guess I'd rather roll over Beethoven than teach him some Gil Evans tricks. [4]

Adam Schroeder

Adam Schroeder: A Handful of Stars (Capri '10) [7]

Irène Schweizer

Irène Schweizer: Portrait (1984-2004, Intakt) Nothing in this year's bumper crop of solo piano is anywhere near as robust as the three solo cuts on this sampler from 14 albums. Eight duos, mostly with drummers, impress even more. The Swiss free jazz pioneer's straight rhythmic undertow rivals Jarrett's, and her pianistics challenge Cecil Taylor's. But as Schweizer demonstrates on the longest piece ("First Meeting," with trombonist George Lewis), her real talent is her spontaneous response to the challenges of such minuscule aggregations. One of the few compilations ever that makes me want to hear every single one of the source albums. [10]

Louis Sclavis

Louis Sclavis: L'Imparfait des Langues (ECM) I can't find a thread that ties this record together. Working with a familiar drummer and three upstarts -- Marc Baron on alto sax, Paul Brousseau on keyboards, Maxime Delpierre on guitar -- it's as if the veteran clarinetist is just throwing stuff at the wall to see what sticks. It pretty much all does: electronic drones, free sax riffing, rocksteady beats, airy meditations, noisy fusion. The sounds of tradition passing down, and blowing back. [8]

Louis Sclavis: Lost on the Way (ECM) Double reeds romp and roll over Maxime Delpierre's guitar buzz. [7]

John Scofield

John Scofield: A Moment's Peace (Emarcy '11) [7]

Christian Scott

Christian Scott: *Anthem (Concord)* Obvious metaphors for Katrina: trumpet buried in heavy keyboard sludge, loud drums, immobile bass. [3]

Karl Seglem

Karl Seglem: *Ossicles (Ozella '11)* [7]

Trygve Seim

Trygve Seim: *Sangam (ECM)* Large group, the deep horns, accordion and strings move slowly in thick layers of harmony. [7]

Trygve Seim/Andreas Utne: *Purcor (ECM)* Nordic sax-piano duets, some folkloric, some improvised, served chilled. [7]

Will Sellenraad

Will Sellenraad: *Balance (Beeswax)* Long, sinuous guitar lines intertwined with Abraham Burton's earthy sax. [7]

Vince Seneri

Vince Seneri: *The Prince's Groove (Prince V)* NJ's leading Hammond B3 salesman demonstrates his product with guest stars at every turn, including Houston Person on the sax ballad. [7]

Serafin

Serafin: *Love's Worst Crime (Serafin '10)* [7]

Paul Shapiro

Paul Shapiro's Ribs and Brisket Revue: *Essen (Tzadik '08)* Yiddish revivalism so far beyond the pale he's pinching songs from Slim Gaillard. [8]

Steve Shapiro

Steve Shapiro and Pat Bergeson: *Low Standards (Sons of Sound)* On their own, Shapiro's vibes and Bergeson's guitar would be a fine lounge act. But their guests pay off: Annie Sellick has an exceptionally pleasing standards voice, and she alternates with Scott Kretzer, who does his vocalizing through a tenor sax. [8]

Steve Shapiro/Pat Bergeson: *Backward Compatible (Apria)* Swinging guitar-vibes duo, with Nashville Hot Clubber Annie Sellick pledging her love to daddy. [7]

Brad Shepik

Brad Shepik: *Human Activity Suite (Songlines)* The liner notes lecture on anthropogenic climate change, and namedrop a reading list I can vouch for as some of the best nonfiction of the last decade-plus. The music is a different sort of human activity. Shepik's guitar, saz, and tambura skitter across a world of rhythms, most obviously from the Balkans, where Ralph Alessi's trumpet and Gary Versace's accordion converge. [8]

Archie Shepp

The New Archie Shepp Quartet: *Tomorrow Will Be a Better Day (PAO)* I'll take Shepp's revolution over Amina Claudine Myers' gospel, but to him they're probably the same. [7]

Andy Sheppard

Andy Sheppard: *Movements in Colour (ECM)* Kuljit Bhamra's tabla adds soft percussion to the gentle grooves of Arild Andersen's bass and the complementary guitars of Eivind Aarset and John Paricelli -- graceful, compelling movement. The colors come from soprano and tenor sax, generally going with the flow but often rising in full flower above it. [8]

John Sheridan

John Sheridan and His Dream Band: *Swing Is Still the King (Arbors)* Pianist Sheridan and his band of Arbors all-stars arrange a batch of Benny Goodman-linked songs in their own, where the atmosphere is cool and the swing is gravity-free. Rebecca Kilgore enters on the fourth song and sings most of the rest, turning old chestnuts into delectable treats. [8]

Matthew Shipp

Matthew Shipp: *Harmony and Abyss (Thirsty Ear)* Shipp's early records were minimal affairs, often duos where he would project long melodic lines like Bud Powell swept into the avant '90s. Until he hooked up with Thirsty Ear he never showed much interest in rhythm, but working for a rock label brought out his inner David Bowie as he veiled his increasingly percussive play behind horn leads. This one is the breakthrough he advertised on **Nu Bop** and promoted on **Equilibrium**, because finally the masks are gone: no horns, no vibes, just a piano trio plus programmer Chris Flam. Shipp's piano (or synth) is always up front, the pieces are all differentiated by rhythm, and the rhythms are as diverse as Shipp's melodic lines once were. [9]

The Matthew Shipp Trio: *Harmonic Disorder (Thirsty Ear)* His early records were strictly avant-garde piano, often in improv duos, but when he took command of this experimental rock label's jazz series he cranked up the electronics and folded in DJ beats, inventing avant-jazztronica on such releases as *Nu Bop* and *Harmony and Abyss*. Lately he's reverted to solo and trio albums, less to shore up his jazz pianist cred than to prove he never really needed electronics to deliver dense harmonics and snappy rhythm. Nods to Monk and Powell recall roots he's moved beyond. [9]

Matthew Shipp: *Art of the Improviser (Thirsty Ear)* The craft of the jazz pianist -- a solo disc you have to chew on, leavened by a trio that carries you along. [7]

Ricardo Silveira

Ricardo Silveira/Luiz Avellar: *Live: Play the Music of Milton Nascimento (Adventure Music)*

Stripped way down, the delicate songs reveal hidden strengths and wry subtleties. [7]

Sonny Simmons

Cosmosamatics: *Three (Boxholder '04)* Sonny Simmons as workhorse improviser, Michael Marcus on cosmic saxello, Jay Rosen's drums hold it together. [7]

Sonny Simmons: *The Complete ESP-Disk' Recordings (1966, ESP-Disk '05)* Kicking off a great career, give or take 20 years in hell. [8]

Sonny Simmons: *The Traveller (Jazzaway '05)* Sonny goes to Norway, hooking up with Anders Aarum's piano trio and a string quartet conducted by veteran flautist Vidar Johansen. Ordinary in themselves, the string arrangements set Simmons so at ease that he plays with unforeseen grace and clarity. It helps that Aarum's solos spell him, not least because of how they advance the music. [8]

Sonny Simmons: *I'll See You When You Get There (Jazzaway '06)* Minimal Sonny, his alto sax or English horn solos barely clad in admiring bass, piano or drums. [6]

Ted Sirota

Ted Sirota's Rebel Souls: *Breeding Resistance (Delmark)* As with Mingus, there's more to Sirota's music than his titles. By all means read the booklet. Remember Fred Hampton? Ken Saro-Wiwa? How about Don Cherry? Still, when you get to the music it doesn't matter that the stately "For Martyrs" is programmatic while the lovely "Elegy" is personal. Oppression breeds resistance, but neither make music. Thoughtful, passionate musicians do. [8]

Ted Sirota's Rebel Souls: *Seize the Time (Naim)* Hard times, clampdowns, freedom through solidarity, even in Nazi U.S.A. -- Mingus lives, Max Roach too! [7]

Sergi Sirvent

Unexpected: *Plays the Blues in Need (Fresh Sound New Talent)* Pianist Sergi Sirvent's trio twists Monk for old and new needs. [7]

Hat: *Hi Ha (Fresh Sound New Talent)* Sergi Sirvent is an up-and-coming Barcelona-based pianist with a handful of tantalizing albums -- duets with guitarist Santi Careta and drummer Xavi Maureta, a *Free Quartet* with two drummers, a Monk-inspired group called the Unexpected. Those all seemed like rough sketches, but guitarist Jordi Matas fills out a finely balanced quartet here. [8]

Sergi Sirvent & Xavi Maureta: *Lines Over Rhythm (Fresh Sound New Talent)* They start with six from Bird, then lose the training wheels. [7]

David Smith

David Smith Quintet: *Anticipation (Bju'ecords)* Postbop quintet, the shape of jazz du jour, with Nate Radley's guitar anchoring the leader's crackling trumpet. [7]

Keely Smith

Keely Smith: *Vegas '58-Today (Concord)* Louis Prima's straight lady steals his best songs, cops his best lines. [7]

Tommy Smith

Tommy Smith & Brian Kellock: *Symbiosis (Spartacus)* "Cherokee" may have been God's gift to saxophonists, but none have played it as delicately and sensitively as Smith does here. It leads into a series of exquisite ballads, from "Moonlight in Vermont" to "Skylark," each more lovely than the last. And this isn't one of those ballads albums, either. Smith picks up the pace with "Honeysuckle Rose" and reaches into his bebop bag on "Bernie's Tune," where Kellock finally emerges from his supporting role to show you how Bud Powell might have done it. Smith was astonishing back in his teens. Now he's managed to get past that stage and become well-rounded. [9]

Tommy Smith: *Karma (Spartacus '11)* A tenor saxophonist who took the world by storm, then retreated to his homeland to preside over the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra. His protégés help out in this quartet, but all that really matters is the swing and swagger of the man with the big horn. [8]

Wadada Leo Smith

Wadada Leo Smith's Golden Quartet: *Tabligh (Cuneiform '08)* Dense Vijay Iyer-led background, shredded by razor sharp trumpet. [6]

Wadada Leo Smith: *Spiritual Dimensions (Cuneiform)* Two discs, two live sets, two bands, one trumpet unifying two approaches to a semi-popular niche the AACM veteran spent most of his career avoiding. The Golden Quintet juxtaposes him with pianist Vijay Iyer and doubles up on drums, while Organic plugs in three or four guitars and an extra bass, riding on his Yo Miles fusion concept without getting trapped by it. [8]

Wadada Leo Smith and Ed Blackwell: *The Blue Mountain's Sun Drummer (1986, Kabell)* Blackwell was famous as Ornette Coleman's drummer, carrying on with Don Cherry in Old and New Dreams. Smith is the more rigorous trumpet player, and nearly as catholic. He's done lots of solo and duo albums, but Blackwell patiently brings out his best -- mesmerizing trumpet, good-natured flute, mbira, and voice. [8]

Wadada Leo Smith's Organic: *Heart's Reflections (Cuneiform '11)* Smith started in AACM, pursued a career of determined obscurity, then delved into electric Miles at his funkier: the roots of his big -- and mostly electric, including two laptops -- band, from which this sprawling set grows topsy-turvy. Toasting Don Cherry is his most natural move. The closing tributes to Toni Morrison and Leroy Jenkins are rougher going. [8]

Wadada Leo Smith's Mbira: *Dark Lady of the Sonnets (TUM '11)* [7]

Jim Snidero

Jim Snidero: *Crossfire (Savant '09)* Flashy mainstream alto saxophonist teams up with guitarist Paul Bollenback for a sweet, snazzy little quartet. [8]

Lisa Sokolov

Lisa Sokolov: *Presence* (Laughing Horse) When she opens up on "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" you are reminded not of dewy sunshine but of what Robert Jungk dubbed "brighter than a thousand suns" -- something that envelops you in radiation and kisses your ass goodbye. She follows that with "You Do Something to Me" and "Chain of Fools" -- the "ch-ch-chain" torqued up as in "ch-ch-chainsaw massacre." Her own songs are filler, but her covers are so audacious that she's found a new dimension for jazz singing: shock and awe. I've never heard anything like it -- not even Sokolov herself on Gerry Hemingway's delectable *Songs* (Between the Lines), where she hews to the twisted contours of the music. [8]

Lisa Sokolov: *A Quiet Thing* (Laughing Horse) A therapist by trade, she gets so deep under the skin of these songs you can feel the synapses firing as she makes them squirm, most clearly in covers which she slices up in unexpected ways. Her "Lush Life" is cold and stoney; the fear of death in her "Ol' Man River" shakes you to the bone. [8]

Martial Solal

Martial Solal Trio: *Longitude* (CAM Jazz) Eighty-year-old freebop pianist walks on the wild side. [7]

Tyshawn Sorey

Tyshawn Sorey: *Oblique - I* (Pi '11) [8]

Esperanza Spalding

Esperanza Spalding: *Chamber Music Society* (Heads Up) Soft, shapeless strings, layered in all sorts of scat. [3]

Tim Sparks

Tim Sparks: *Little Princess* (Tzadik) The music of klezmer clarinet king Naftule Brandwein loosened up and spread out for fingerpicked guitar, with Greg Cohen's bass and Cyro Baptista's percussion taking further liberties. Genuinely easy listening, but you should really call it jazz. [8]

Chris Speed

Yeah No: *Swell Henry* (Squealer) The Claudia Quintet's flip-side, with Chris Speed working back from the textures instead of forward from the beats. [7]

Gus Spenos

The Gust Spenos Quartet: *Swing Theory* (Swing Theory '08) A sax-toting neurologist from Indianapolis juices up his moonlighting quartet with guests like trombonist Wycliffe Gordon and gravelly vocalist Everett Greene. The latter's two cuts take a while for the personality to take over from

the voice, but the band swings Berlin-to-Gillespie standards with such authority they may have a theory hiding in the maths. [8]

Spring Hill Jack

Spring Hill Jack: *The Sweetness of the Water* (Thirsty Ear '04) [3]

Spyro Gyra

Spyro Gyra: *The Deep End* (Heads Up) [3]

Terell Stafford

Terell Stafford: *This Side of Strayhorn* (MaxJazz '11) Classic songbook, key support from Bruce Barth and Peter Washington, the trumpet focused and polished. [7]

Mary Stallings

Mary Stallings: *Remember Love* (Half Note) Two versions of "What a Difference a Day Makes" -- one with the band, the other a duet with Frank Wess -- mark her for this year's Dinah Washington sweepstakes, where she's less consistent but more interesting than Diana Reeves in *Good Night, and Good Luck*. No idea how old she is -- she's got Louis Jordan on her resume, and a 1961 album with Cal Tjader, but other than that she's only been recording since 1990. One key to this one is the Geri Allen-led band, whose perfectly measured support never intrudes. [8]

Tomasz Stanko

Tomasz Stanko: *Suspended Night* (ECM) As the jazz scene developed in Poland in the '60s, Stanko filled a role similar to Kenny Wheeler's in the U.K.: Although he was most often heard in avant-garde contexts, his own records were so modestly attired that he sounded normal and accessible even if he didn't fall into any recognizable stylistic nook. Now in his own sixties, he's attracted what's always described as his "young Polish quartet" (like Jan Lukasiewicz's "Polish Notation," an attempt to avoid the names -- in this case Wasilewski, Kurkiewicz, and Miskiewicz). Like their debut, *The Soul of Things*, this is built from series of non-obvious variations, and takes a while to come into focus. Think of them as settings for the gemlike clarity of Stanko's trumpet. [8]

Tomasz Stanko: *Rarum Vol. 17: Selected Recordings* (1975-98, ECM '04) Darkest days, greatest dirges, scattered miracles, two of them drummers. [8]

Tomasz Stanko Quartet: *Lontano* (ECM) Slow, bleak, haunting, so subtly understated you'd think inscrutability was the point. [7]

Tomasz Stanko Quintet: *Dark Eyes* (ECM) The avant-garde trumpeter from Poland continues to age gracefully, picking up another group of youngsters, notably Jakob Bro on guitar and Alexi Tuomarila on piano, and keeps firmly in front of them. A fierce section early on makes you wish he'd do that more often, but even when the melodies turn pleasant his trumpet is singular. [8]

Ben Stapp

Ben Stapp Trio: *Ecstasis (Uqbar)* Tony Malaby's tenor sax runs roughshod, but his soprano is the perfect foil for the leader's tuba. [7]

Billy Stein

Billy Stein Trio: *Hybrids (Barking Hoop)* After decades of quiet refinement, subtle shadings of guitar, bass and drums. [7]

Jason Stein

Jason Stein's Locksmith Isidore: *Three Kinds of Happiness (Not Two '10)* Bass clarinet-led free jazz trio, kind of like a big buck with velvet horns. [7]

Jason Stein Quartet: *The Story This Time (Delmark '11)* [8]

Bobo Stenson

Bobo Stenson Trio: *Cantando (ECM)* Triangulating Silvio Rodriguez, Alban Berg, and Ornette Coleman -- into something else. [7]

Joan Stiles

Joan Stiles: *Hurly-Burly (Oo-Bla-Dee)* Twice she sings, but her focus is piano jazz, which she organizes as a pyramid: Mary Lou Williams is her special interest; Ellington and Monk are her guiding lights; Fats Waller, Ray Charles, and Jimmy Rowles provide further amusements. She writes things like "The Brilliant Corners of Thelonious' Jumpin' Jeep" to stitch it all together, but what moves this beyond concept is the dream band she commands in units from duo to sextet: Jeremy Pelt, Steve Wilson, Joel Frahm, Peter Washington, Lewis Nash. [8]

Joan Stiles/Joel Frahm/Matt Wilson: *Three Musicians (Oo-Bla-Dee '11)* [7]

Thomas Stønen

Thomas Stønen: *Pohlitz (Rune Grammofon)* Solo improv by a Norwegian drummer who's impeccably Nordic on his ECM album *Parish* and dabbles in post-rock electronica elsewhere. Here his credits read, "beatable items, live electronic treatments, music" -- not sure whether the latter is a distinct input or merely the sum of the parts. His percussion tones recall Harry Partch, but he does swing some. [8]

John Stowell

Scenes: *Rinnova (Origin)* John Stowell's guitar trio -- subtle craftsmanship for postbop ambience. [7]

Marcus Strickland

Marcus Strickland: Quartets: *Twilight* (Strick Muzik '96) Hard bop heaven for two discs, but the plugged quartet has more juice. [7]

Marcus Strickland Twi-Life Group: *Open Reel Deck* (Strick Muzik '07) Malachi Rivers recites and cajoles over state-of-the-art sax quartet. [7]

Marcus Strickland: *Triumph of the Heavy: Volume 1 & 2* (Strick Muzik '11) [8]

Dave Stryker

The Stryker/Slagle Band: *Keeper (Panorama)* Dave Stryker's fleet guitar changes, warmed up with Steve Slagle's blues-inflected alto sax, with dependable bassist Jay Anderson and redoubtable drummer Victor Lewis keeping time: postbop journeymen pull a minor masterpiece out of decades of earnest toil. [8]

Helen Sung

Helen Sung Trio: *Helenistique (Fresh Sound New Talent)* Overachieving mainstream pianist tackles the standards and writes one herself. [7]

John Surman

John Surman: *Flashpoint: NDR Workshop - April '69 (1969, Cuneiform '11)* [7]

Tierney Sutton

The Tierney Sutton Band: *On the Other Side (Telarc)* She declares her pursuit with eight songs featuring "happy" in the title, plus "You Are My Sunshine," "Smile," and "Great Day!" -- more fascinated with the search than the attainment, which she has reservations about anyway. Maybe that explains the odd song out, "Haunted Heart" -- the whole album feels haunted, from its tentative opening "Get Happy" to its wistful closer "Smile." Last time her shtick was "I'm with the band"; this time the band's with her. [8]

Steve Swallow

Steve Swallow/Ohad Talmor Sextet: *L'Histoire du Clochard: The Bum's Tale (Palmetto '04)* [3]

Steve Swell

Steve Swell's *Slammin' the Infinite: 5000 Poems (Not Two)* The dependable, long-struggling avant trombonist drops his best album ever and the main things you notice are how Sabir Mateen has a tour de force on everything from flute to tenor sax, and how new pianist John Blum crashes the rhythm to shards. But the trombone does keep up, and holds the chaos together. [8]

Ben Syversen

Ben Syversen: *Cracked Vessel* (self-released) Avant-trumpet trio forgoes bass support for guitar interference. [8]

Jamaaladeen Tacuma

Jamaaladeen Tacuma: *For the Love of Ornette* (Jazzwerkstatt) Prime Time bassist sneaks Coleman into the studio and teases him with new turns on old times. [7]

Natsuki Tamura

Gato Libre: *Nomad* (No Man's Land) Ten pieces, named for cities and months of a tour through Europe, with Spanish guitar by Kazuhiko Tsumura and Italian accordion by Satoko Fujii establishing a folkish milieu for leader Natsuki Tamura's plaintive trumpet. Tamura has been working his colors into Fujii's chaotic canvases all along; here his impressionism flowers. [8]

Gato Libre: *Kuro* (Libra) Natsuki Tamura's avant-folk quartet, with Kazuhiko Tsumura's tart guitar and Satoko Fujii's swaying accordion. [7]

Natsuki Tamura/Satoko Fujii: *Chun* (Libra) Husband-wife duets, his trumpet warm and supportive, her piano stark and brash. [7]

First Meeting: *Cut the Rope* (Libra) Trumpeter Natsuki Tamura's noise band, free jazz in a cartoon world, the bam-pop-pow splashed large and crude. Guitarist Kelly Churko churns out the electronics, while Satoko Fujii works her piano as a percussion machine. Amusing when they're just scattering shit; irresistible when they tap into a groove. [8]

Chad Taylor

Chad Taylor: *Circle Down* (482 Music) Drummer-led piano trio, a snappier strategy than letting the pianist run things. [7]

Tom Teasley

Tom Teasley: *Painting Time* (T&T Music) Worldwide beats and crisp, healthy horns, pop jazz minus the junk food. [7]

Joe Temperley

Joe Temperley/Harry Allen: *Cocktails for Two* (Sackville) Hits with Brits, the baritonist setting the tone and pace, Allen as ever respectful of his elders. [7]

Dan Tepfer

Dan Tepfer/Lee Konitz: *Duos With Lee* (Sunnyside) Young pianist, ancient genius, no drama, nothing rushed, just pick a key and improvise. [7]

Ignasi Terraza

Ignasi Terraza Trio: *IT's Coming* (TCB) Mainstream piano, the bass mixed up to make it a real trio, remarkable for its balance and warmth. [7]

Henry Threadgill

Henry Threadgill Zooid: *This Brings Us to Volume 1* (Pi) Too much flute, some dead spots, but miraculous stretches confirm the leader's genius, a relief after too long a break. [7]

Henry Threadgill Zooid: *This Brings Us To: Volume II* (Pi) More of last year's hit, and better I'd say: the flute never flails against the tense, jagged rhythms and contrasts neatly with tuba or trombone. And guitarist Liberty Ellman makes even more taking off from those rhythms. [8]

Kevin Tkacz

Kevin Tkacz Trio: *It's Not What You Think* (Piece of Work of Art '08) A Bill Carrothers piano trio improvising around a bassist leader who likes to play in the dirt. [7]

Julius Tolentino

Julius Tolentino: *Just the Beginning* (Sharp Nine) Fancy hard bop with Jeb Patton piano and extra brass, sandwiched by originals celebrating Parker, lamenting Jacquet. [7]

Charles Tolliver

Charles Tolliver Big Band: *With Love* (Blue Note/Mosaic) [4]

David Torn

David Torn: *Prezens* (ECM) Rip Torn's cousin played guitar on some fusion albums in the '80s, working with such usual suspects as Bill Bruford and Tony Levin, before moving on to soundtrack work and the group Splattercell. Here he employs Hard Cell -- Tim Berne's trio with keyboardist Craig Taborn and drummer Tom Rainey -- for a dark, demonic comeback. Berne's alto sax adds bite to Torn's power chords, Taborn juices up the electronics, and the always superb Rainey muscles up. [8]

Gian Tornatore

Gian Tornatore: *Sink or Swim* (Fresh Sound New Talent '04) Flounders a bit at first but by the end he's swimming with Coltrane. [8]

Allen Toussaint

Allen Toussaint: *The Bright Mississippi* (Nonesuch) A New Orleans pro with beaucoup connections shows a light touch for trad jazz. [8]

Ralph Towner

Ralph Towner/Paolo Fresu: *Chiaroscuro* (ECM) Lushly resonant guitar, stately trumpet, a masterful match of color and texture. [6]

Trombone Shorty

Trombone Shorty: *Backatown* (Verve Forecast) New Orleans horn line tricked up with synth beats and bogged down with guest vocals and a stab at grunge. [3]

Erik Truffaz

Erik Truffaz: *Saloua* (Blue Note) Trumpet-frosted jazztronica with trans-Mediterranean rap -- lessons for Israelites and Ishmaelites alike. [7]

Vassilis Tsabropoulos

Vassilis Tsabropoulos/Anja Lechner/U.T. Gandhi: *Melos* (ECM) Gurdjieff melodicism if not mysticism, the real chamber jazz. [7]

Assif Tsahar

Assif Tsahar/Cooper-Moore/Hamid Drake: *Lost Brother* (Hopscotch) Cooper-Moore emerges as a double threat: no piano, just homemade toys. His ashimba slips in between Drake's frame drums for stretches of pan-African groove, with Tsahar's bass clarinet gently tooting along. But when Cooper-Moore cranks up the twang of his one-stringed diddley-bow, Tsahar switches to tenor sax and his usual Aylerisms lurch into overdrive, a style we might as well call avant-honk. [8]

Assif Tsahar/Cooper-Moore/Chad Taylor: *Digital Primitives* (Hopscotch) They mean Postmodern Primitives but have the good sense to look for another term. Cooper-Moore is central. His homemade string instruments -- diddley-bow, mouth bow, bango -- add a hillbilly twang to Harry Partch tonality, and he sings one, "Ol' Saint Peter," which is more campfire tale than hymn. The others are bemused, with Taylor's possibly digital beats sometimes sounding like balafon, and Tsahar putting his new thing sax on the back burner until the closer, comping and cooing on bass clarinet and pulling out the old didgeridoo. [8]

Digital Primitives: *Hum Crackle & Pop* (Hopscotch) Cooper-Moore has the real folk jazz spirit, clowning on homemade instruments and singing one piece that starts politically obvious but comes to exemplify the freedom he espouses. Assif Tsahar, on tenor sax and bass clarinet, and Chad Taylor, on all things percussive, adapt their free jazz, playing along without settling into mere groove. [9]

Steve Turre

Steve Turre: *The Spirits Up Above* (High Note '04) A robust mainstreaming of Rahsaan Roland Kirk, but Kirk went further out than anyone here. [7]

Steve Turre: *Delicious and Delightful* (High Note) Bright, bold flavors -- Billy Harper, Larry Willis,

the trombonist of course; even the conch shell contributes. [7]

McCoy Tyner

McCoy Tyner: *Quartet* (McCoy Tyner Music/Half Note) The Coltrane Quartet pianist's first investment in his own label is both low-budget and surefire: a live album with a new quartet that rivals the old one but fits a little more comfortably around his own substantial songbook. Tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano rises to the occasion, but Tyner can still muscle in to make a point. [8]

Gebhard Ullmann

Gebhard Ullmann: *Don't Touch My Music I* (Not Two) A 50th birthday milestone, with Julian Arguëlles and Steve Swell offsetting, and disciplining, the leader's reeds. [7]

Gebhard Ullmann: *Don't Touch My Music II* (Not Two) A second helping, a bit sloppier and rowdier than the first. [6]

Conference Call: *What About . . . ?* (Not Two) Prodigious avant sax/clarinetist Gebhard Ullmann roars and roils over Memphis-based pianist Michael Jefry Stevens. [8]

The Ullmann/Swell 4: *News? No News!* (Jazzwerkstatt) Avant shuck and jive, freewheeling tenor sax or bass clarinet brought down to earth by gritty trombone. [7]

James Blood Ulmer

James Blood Ulmer: *In and Out* (In+Out) As his grizzled vocals sink deeper into the blues, his harmolodic guitar skeeters beyond. [8]

Nana Vasconcellos

André Vasconcellos: 2 (Adventure Music '11) [7]

Allan Vaché

Allan Vaché and Friends: *Ballads, Burners and Blues* (Arbors) Trad clarinetist lays out his business card, neglecting to mention "Besame Mucho." [7]

Warren Vaché

Warren Vaché: *Dream Dancing* (Arbors) The difference between this and *2Gether*, the duo Vaché and Bill Charlap cut for Nagel Heyer in 2000, is the difference between a fine Danish-modernist antique and an overstuffed easy chair. With bass and drums, Charlap eases back, and Vaché settles into his comfort zone. Now that he's too old to be called a young fogey anymore, maybe the notion that his genteel swing is retro should also be retired. [8]

Warren Vaché and the Scottish Ensemble: *Don't Look Back* (Arbors) Fronting a phalanx of strings has been a stock dream of virtuosos since before Charlie Parker and Coleman Hawkins, but few have

made anything interesting out of the opportunity -- two exceptions are Stan Getz's *Focus*, because of the futurist strings, and Art Pepper's *Winter Moon*, in spite of them. Vaché might have fared relatively well here, as he has in such intimate settings has his Bill Charlap duet *2Gether*, but the 12-strong, baroque-rooted Scottish Ensemble is dead weight. [3]

The Warren Vaché/John Allred Quintet: *Top Shelf (Arbors)* Aging young fogeys advance, reminiscing about the swinging '50s. [7]

Bebo Valdés

Bebo Valdés & Javier Colina: *Live at the Village Vanguard (Calle 54/Norte '08)* Cuban classics made simple, just bass supporting the 86-year-old master. [7]

Johnny Valentino

Johnny Valentino: *Stingy Brim (Omnitone)* Postmodern guitarist picks from the past--organ trios, Italian roots, the days when tuba ruled bass. [7]

Bo Van De Graaf

Bo's Art Trio: *Live: Jazz Is Free and So Are We! (Icdisc)* The poet's sane revolution is just for fun, like Bo van de Graaf's sax. [7]

I Compani: *Mangiare! (Icdisc)* Bo van der Graaf's soundtrack serenaders take spaghetti westerns and load on the sauce and cheese. [7]

Ken Vandermark

The Vandermark Five: *Elements of Style . . . Exercises in Surprise (Atavistic)* Most of Ken Vandermark's groups are forums where musicians get together and kick shit around, but his flagship group exists just for him. With Jeb Bishop on trombone and Dave Rempis adding a second saxophone -- often the lead with Vandermark switching off to big or small clarinet--the Five has has one of the most potent horn sections in jazz. Indeed, what's most striking here is how smoothly they play in unison, how smartly they play in contrast, and how sharply they stop and spin on a dime. Each of the first six pieces pursues a distinct idea, and the other--the 20:10 "Six of One" -- marshalls at least as many more. For once, the risks and daring of free jazz are arranged as precisely as in a crack big band. [9]

Ken Vandermark/Brian Dibblee: *Duets (Future Reference)* A whole album of Vandermark bass clarinet, wrapped around the bassist's lovely melodies. [7]

Tripleplay: *Gambit (Clean Feed)* The delta from Spaceways Inc. to Tripleplay is the replacement of Hamid Drake with Curt Newton, but switching bassist Nate McBride from electric to acoustic shifts the feel from funk to blues. Both moves make the band more intimate, and Ken Vandermark responds with some of his most thoughtful chamber jazz. Even if it was made up on the fly, which it largely was. [8]

FME: *Underground (Okka Disk)* The initials stand for Free Music Ensemble, a nod to the famous FMP label, but if free suggests falling back on your instinctive wits, for Ken Vandermark that means

blowing with rock roughness and r&b honk. Especially when the group is built around Nate McBride of Spaceways Inc. and Tripleplay and Paal Nilssen-Love of School Days. [8]

Sonore: *No One Ever Works Alone (Okka Disk)* Three free saxes (or clarinets), never reducing themselves to a choir. [7]

The Vandermark 5: *Alchemia (Not Two)* Of course, this is over the top, even for an artist as exhaustively documented as Ken Vandermark: five nights in Krakow, two sets each, plus a couple of jam sessions bring the total to twelve discs. Serious students can plot variations in the repeated songs, note how three new songs compare to the later studio versions on *The Color of Memory*, and see how the band works classics by Rollins, Kirk, and others. The rest of us will just pick discs at random. The surprises seem endless. [8]

The Vandermark 5: *The Color of Memory (Atavistic)* Clocking in at just over eighty minutes, it wouldn't have been hard to squeeze this down to a single disc. Some pieces, such as the one that jams dedications to Ray Charles, Elvin Jones and Steve Lacy into one "Suitcase," feel underdeveloped. And the recent albums' spin-on-a-dime arrangements have turned loosey-goosey. Makes one wonder if eight albums dropping one per year isn't getting to be a rut. But the loose stuff on the second disc overcomes my doubts, mostly by showing how powerfully the band has developed around the overworked leader. [8]

FME: *Cuts (Okka Disk)* What makes Free Music Ensemble Ken Vandermark's best pure improv showcase is how conducive bassist Nate McBride and drummer Paal Nilssen-Love are to his basic style -- rough, rock hard, punkish. That may not have been the idea when he named the group to honor Germany's avant-noise FMP label, but this is a band that could have been designed to kick out the jams. Still, most cuts do have soft parts -- clarinet with minimal accompaniment, McBride often arco -- and these cohere like never before. [9]

The Vandermark 5: *A Discontinuous Line (Atavistic)* The initial effect of Fred Lonberg-Holm's cello replacing Jeb Bishop's trombone is to move the group from tight horn arrangements back into rough and ready free jazz. The other is that the saxes have moved down a notch -- Dave Rempis to tenor and Ken Vandermark to baritone -- to fill the bottom Bishop vacated and to kick up more dirt. The result is a bruising, brainy Wild West bar band: what the Territory Band promised, but slimmed down and fired up. [8]

The Vandermark 5: *Free Jazz Classics Vols. 3 & 4 (Atavistic)* Two bonus discs from early editions of studio albums, one exploring Sonny Rollins's compositions from the '60s, the other engaging Rahsaan Roland Kirk. Both sources manifested freedom less in form than through their outsized personalities. The V5's front line of two saxes plus dirt trombone spreads their singularities out and formalizes their innovations. But they also preserve the familiar heads, providing handles for the mischief that follows, and eliciting some of the group's most boisterous, and accessible, play. [9]

Sound in Action Trio: *Gate (Atavistic)* Two drummers: Robert Barry, from Sun Ra Arkestra, and Tim Daisy, from Triage and numerous Ken Vandermark projects, including the flagship 5. One horn, Vandermark's, constantly on the spot. Half originals, all dedicated to drummers; half modern jazz pieces, with Dolphy offering a clarinet feature, and Coltrane setting up some ferocious tenor sax. [8]

Powerhouse Sound: *Oslo/Chicago Breaks (Atavistic)* Another Ken Vandermark vehicle, or actually two. He wrote a batch of dedications to beats and raw power -- Coxsone Dodd, King Tubby, Lee Perry,

Burning Spear, Miles Davis, Hank Shocklee, the Stooges -- and took them first to Oslo then to Chicago. Nate McBride, in his Spaceways Inc. electric bassist mode, made both trips. In Oslo, Lasse Marhaug's electronics plug into the Ingebrigt Haker Flaten-Paal Nilssen-Love rhythm team, a powerhouse platform for Vandermark's tenor sax. But the Chicago group has an extra dimension in Jeff Parker's guitar. Some Vandermark band names are obscure, but this one is just what it claims. [9]

Vandermark 5: *Beat Reader (Atavistic)* Opening up feature space for cellist Fred Lonberg-Holm slows them down, drawing in Ken Vandermark's clarinet for approximate ballads. Still, most of this is loud enough, and when they crank it up, what you notice even more than Dave Rempis' lead sax lines is how strong an agile Vandermark has gotten on baritone. A composer's group with improvisers' skills, they haven't dropped a merely good record since 2000's *Burn the Incline*. [8]

Territory Band-6 With Fred Anderson: *Collide (Okka Disk)* Ken Vandermark's territory band makes more sense centered on Anderson, who breathes soul into the transatlantic avant's peculiar blues. [7]

Ken Vandermark: *Collected Fiction (Okka Disk)* Two discs of improv duets with four bassists well known from Vandermark groups, conceptualized as day and night -- the former bristling avant interchanges, the latter slower and quieter, as close to Quiet Storm as Vandermark is likely to get. [8]

Fire Room: *Broken Music (Atavistic)* Lasse Marhaug's electronics short-circuit Vandermark/Nilssen-Love. [4]

Vandermark 5: *Annular Gift (Not Two)* With Fred Lonberg-Holm's cello and electronics broadening the palette, including what sounds like a more refined return to Jeb Bishop's guitar, the band returns to Alchemia in Krakow, and whips out a furious set that stands proudly alongside the *Alchemia* box. [8]

Lean Left: *The Ex Guitars Meet Nilssen-Love/Vandermark Duo, Volume 1 (Smalltown Superjazz)* The Ex has long been Holland's analogue to the Mekons -- left-wing post-punks with a knack for singles riffs -- but while the Mekons wandered into country music, the Ex-ers dabbled in Afrofunk and avant-jazz. Guitarists Andy Morr and Terrie Ex expand the sonics with squelchy reverb and distortion, while the avant jazzers rock out. [8]

Lean Left: *The Ex Guitars Meet Nilssen-Love/Vandermark Duo, Volume 2 (Smalltown Superjazz)* Another "Chunk of Lung" hits the floor, but Vandermark leaves the guitarist alone for their "Knuckle Cracking Party." [7]

Free Fall: *Gray Scale (Smalltown Superjazz)* Ken Vandermark's fourth take on the Jimmy Giuffre trio, where Håvard Wiik's piano finally rivals Paul Bley's for fluid invention, and centers the bass and clarinet abstractions. [8]

Side A: *A New Margin (Clean Feed '11)* [8]

Albert Van Veenendaal

Albert van Veenendaal/Meinrad Kneer/Yonga Sun: *Predictable Point of Impact (Evil Rabbit)* Dutch piano trio, mostly hard rhythmic stuff, which Kneer's bass and Sun's percussion are clearly up for. Van Veenendaal's prepared piano offers some surprises, especially when the group slows down a bit. Dutch avant-garde jazz is known for biting humor. Here the joke is edge and energy you can still tap your toes to. [8]

Johnny Varro

Johnny Varro & Ken Peplowski: *Two Legends of Jazz (Arbors '09)* Journeymen on piano and clarinet evoke the legendary era of small group swing. [6]

Fay Victor

Fay Victor Ensemble: *Cartwheels Through the Cosmos (ArtistShare)* She reminds people of Betty Carter, perhaps because so few jazz singers ever look to break new ground. Victor's voice is relatively unmannered, but one trait she does share with Carter is her ability to command a band worth listening to with or without her: guitarist Anders Nilsson is always up to something interesting, while bassist Ken Filiano and drummer Michael T.A. Thompson have a knack for showing up unheralded on good albums. The songs explore the cosmos, but the closer homes in on earth. [8]

Miroslav Vitous

Miroslav Vitous: *Universal Syncopations II (ECM '07)* Funk horns and multiple drummers whitewashed by heavenly voices. [3]

Miroslav Vitous Group with Michel Portal: *Remembering Weather Report (ECM)* Strange thing, memory, blotting out fusion keyboards in favor of Dvorak variations on Ornette and Miles. [7]

Alexander Von Schlippenbach

Alexander Von Schlippenbach: *Monk's Casino (Intakt)* Three discs storm through the complete works -- the 70 pieces Monk wrote mostly early, then rehashed as long as he lived without ever coming close to exhausting their twists and turns. Schlippenbach, like Monk, refrains from extemporizing, letting the horns grapple with the melodies. But where Monk usually featured tenor sax, this quintet spreads out with Axel Dörner on trumpet and Rudi Mahall on bass clarinet. They're also likely to rush the tempo and/or get a bit noisy, but even after three decades of post-Monk hermeneutics they're still in thrall to the text. [10]

Rob Wagner

Rob Wagner/Hamid Drake/Nobu Ozaki: *Trio (Valid)* Uneasy in post-Katrina New Orleans, meditating on shock, awe, sham, and shame. [8]

Ulf Wakenius

Ulf Wakenius: *Notes From the Heart (ACT '06)* Songs by Keith Jarrett, respectfully interpreted by a Swedish guitarist best known for keeping Oscar Peterson company. Lars Danielsson plays some quiet piano as well as his usual bass, and Morten Lund drums. Simple, subtle, delicate -- I've reached for it often lately, finding that it both relieves stress and rewards attention. [8]

Ulf Wakenius: *Love Is Real (ACT)* Following his gratifyingly spare Keith Jarrett songbook album, *Notes From the Heart*, the Swedish guitarist takes on another pianist's repertoire: EST's Esbjörn Svensson. The rockish rhythms support fancier arrangements, some with strings and horns. Cut before

Svensson died in a scuba diving accident, it turns out to be an elegant and touching tribute. [8]

Mike Walbridge

Mike Walbridge's Chicago Footwarmers: *Crazy Rhythm* (Delmark) A career summary, tacking eight new tracks onto the reissue of an LP from 40 years ago. The extension is seamless: Trad jazz hasn't evolved much, at least for the banjo and drums changes. More importantly Kim Cusack returns on clarinet and alto sax, contrasting sharply and sweetly with Walbridge's tuba. Minor instruments in most such bands, they take the spotlight here. [8]

Chris Walden

The Chris Walden Big Band: *No Bounds* (Origin '06) [2]

Torben Waldorff

Torben Waldorff: *Afterburn* (ArtistShare) Special award for best performance by Donny McCaslin in a supporting role. [7]

Greg Wall

Greg Wall: *Later Prophets* (Tzadik '04) The folklore around Ezekiel's bones sets the table, but sax transcends ancient roots. [7]

Bennie Wallace

Bennie Wallace: *The Nearness of You* (Enja/Justin Time) With a model draped over him and his saxophone erect, this is the most blatant makeout record he's ever recorded, but he's been evolving into a smoothie for a decade or more: Starting with *The Old Songs*, he's explored sax balladry more intensively than anyone since Ben Webster. While he lacks the master's fat vibrato, he still gets a distinctive tingle from his hard-earned modernism. The albums are remarkably consistent, differentiated mostly by the pianists. This time it's Kenny Barron, who shepherded Stan Getz through his own late ballad phase. [9]

Cedar Walton

Cedar Walton: *Seasoned Wood* (High Note) A 74-year-old pianist does a lot of little things he rarely gets credit for, like writing for horns -- Vincent Herring and Jeremy Pelt never enter a song here unless they have something cogent to say, which isn't always the case on their own albums. The pianist is in top form too, maybe because Peter Washington and Al Foster leave him no slack. [8]

Doug Wamble

Doug Wamble: *Bluestate* (Marsalis Music/Rounder) [3]

David S. Ware

The David S. Ware Quartets: *Live in the World (Thirsty Ear)* Three discs, three concerts, three drummers. Aside from the drummers, the Ware Quartet is the longest running small group in history. Ware almost never works outside of the group, but his cohorts, William Parker and Matthew Shipp, have distinguished careers in their own right, and their own stardom gets more play in these looser concert gigs than on the studio albums. Looking back, the energy jolt that arrived with Susie Ibarra and the shift to electronics heralded by Guillermo E. Brown may have been side-effects of the maturation of the three mainstays. That the drummers matter less is made clear on the date with the redoubtable Hamid Drake sitting, and merely blending, in. [8]

David S. Ware Quartet: *Renunciation (AUM Fidelity)* Reportedly the finale of the most formidable quartet since Coltrane's, with stars William Parker and Matthew Shipp and a series of drummers marking epochs within the era. One more live shot to go with *Live in the World*. [8]

David S. Ware: *Shakti (AUM Fidelity)* A new quartet, with guitarist Joe Morris the second seed. The Indian motifs are part of Ware's spiritual quest, but when he plays it's hard to escape the here and now. While most tenor saxophonists have tried to sound like John Coltrane, Ware simply lived the life, finding his own unique way, elevating everyone around him. [8]

David S. Ware: *Saturnian (AUM Fidelity)* The inevitable solo tenor sax-stritch-saxello album, practice as slow-motion performance. [7]

David S. Ware: *Onecept (AUM Fidelity)* His life saved by a kidney transplant, the avant saxophonist's rehab continues: first the solo *Saturnian* improv with stritch and manzello for variety, now he adds bass and drums -- old hands William Parker and Warren Smith, who can follow him anywhere. He works up subtle schemata, but the main thing you hear is his towering sound. [8]

David S. Ware/Cooper-Moore/William Parker/Muhammad Ali: *Planetary Unknown (AUM Fidelity)* More progress: a new quartet with older players than the old quartet, the old fire too. [8]

Marcin Wasilewski

Marcin Wasilewski Trio: *January (ECM)* A near perfect quietstorm of ECM piano, with every little detail carefully locked into place. [7]

Kim Waters

Kim Waters: *In the Name of Love (Shanachie '04)* [3]

Bobby Watson

Bobby Watson & Horizon: *Horizon Reassembled (Palmetto)* Victor Lewis & the Jazz Messengers make their long-awaited return. [7]

Aaron Weinstein

Aaron Weinstein: *A Handful of Stars (Arbors)* Nineteen-year-old fiddler achieves dream of playing with Bucky Pizzarelli and Houston Person and proves one smart young fogey. [7]

Mark Weinstein

Mark Weinstein: *Algo Más (Jazzheads)* Flutes, chants, hand drums, soft homespun Afro-Cuban roots. [7]

Walt Weiskopf

Walt Weiskopf Quartet: *Recorded Live April 8, 2008 (Capri '11)* Presented as a memento of the late drummer Tony Reedus, a night of hot mainstream sax in South Carolina. [7]

David Weiss

David Weiss & Point of Departure: *Snuck In (Sunnyside)* Twenty-first century Jazz Messengers, with horns sparring, guitar slinking, nothing as obvious as hard bop. [7]

Ezra Weiss

Ezra Weiss: *The Shirley Horn Suite (Roark '11)* A pianist's tribute to the pianist, although four Shirley Nanette vocals flatter the singer, too. [7]

Mort Weiss

Mort Weiss/Ron Eschete: *All Too Soon (SMS Jazz)* Clarinet-guitar duets -- a late bloomer from the bebop generation, a young 7-stringer who can swing. [6]

Mort Weiss: *Raising the Bar (SMS Jazz)* Small businessman, picked up the clarinet at 65, plays solo on well-worn covers, gets by on charm. [7]

Mort Weiss: *Mort Weiss Meets Bill Cunliffe (SMS Jazz '11)* [7]

Kenny Wheeler

Kenny Wheeler: *What Now? (CAM Jazz)* The mild man of Europe's avant-garde in a drumless all-star quartet. [6]

Mark Whitecage

Mark Whitecage & the Bi-Coastal Orchestra: *BushWacked: A Spoken Opera (Acoustics)* Except for one lyric written in 1776, the spoken words come from news reports, but they rivet your attention. The intent is outrage, but I find the words, so unflinchingly rooted in the real world, calming -- compared to the anarchic jazz swirling around them. [8]

Wolter Wierbos

Wolter Wierbos: *3 Trombone Solos (Dolfjin)* Limited instrument, seldom given such range of expression. [7]

Kenny Werner

Kenny Werner: *Balloons (Half Note '11)* [7]

Kenny Wheeler

Kenny Wheeler/John Taylor/Steve Swallow: *One of Many (CAM Jazz '11)* [7]

Howard Wiley

Howard Wiley and the Angola Project: *12 Gates to the City (HNIC Music '10)* A folklorist bearing the heavy weight of history, a saxophonist yearning to break free. [7]

Corey Wilkes

Corey Wilkes: *Drop It (Delmark)* The hot young trumpet out of Chicago, funkier than that mosquito's tweeter. [7]

Cassandra Wilson

Cassandra Wilson: *Loverly (Blue Note)* After numerous attempts to modernize the songbook and capitalize on a deep voice invoking Vaughan-Carter-Lincoln, she retreats into a scattered set of old songs, and comes up with her most satisfying album. It's all in the details: the Jason Moran piano that drives "Caravan"; the upbeat sass of "St. James Infirmary"; the way she wraps her voice around Reginald Veal's solo bass "The Very Thought of You." [8]

Gerald Wilson

Gerald Wilson Orchestra: *Detroit (Mack Avenue)* The six-part suite commissioned for the venerable bandleader's former hometown hits all the right notes: sterling solos, including notable use of Yvette Devereaux's violin and son Anthony Wilson's guitar, backed by solid section work combining power and finesse. Two pieces cut with a star-studded New York group are even sharper. [8]

Matt Wilson

Matt Wilson Quartet: *That's Gonna Leave a Mark (Palmetto)* Andrew D'Angelo lives, and after a brutal illness is back, as fierce as ever, facing his alto sax off against Jeff Lederer's tenor. No postbop niceties this time. The drummer has to raise his game just to keep up, and he does. [8]

Andrea Wolper

Andrea Wolper: *Parallel Lives* (Jazzed Media '11) [7]

Francis Wong

Francis Wong: *Legends & Legacies* (Asian Improv) Two of Lawson Inada's poems detail the beginning and the end of America's WWII internment of Japanese Americans, while a third testifies that "something grand" can still come out of their ordeal. Glenn Horiuchi's shamisen and Miya Masaoka's koto are the sounds of the past, while tuba and Wong's reeds flesh out a jazz band of the future, straddling the globe they came from. The odd piece out is about police harassment of Latinos-- or so those who don't know history would think. [8]

Phil Woods

The Phil Woods Quintet: *American Songbook II* (Kind of Blue) With Brian Lynch and Bill Charlap, so supremely mainstream you feel like saluting. [7]

Brandon Wright

Brandon Wright: *Boiling Point* (Posi-Tone) Auspicious tenor sax debut, runs in fast company and burns up the track. [7]

Jacob Young

Jacob Young: *Evening Falls* (ECM) Norwegian guitarist runs the backcourt, sets up plays for trumpet and bass clarinet to score. [7]

Paul Zauners

Paul Zauners Blue Brass: *Soil* (PAO/BluJazz) Austrian trombonist, a connoisseur, collecting fine songs from Africa and Afro-America, burnishing them to a fine luster. [7]

Miguel Zenón

Miguel Zenón: *Jibaro* (Marsalis Music/Rounder) This starts out as the music of Puerto Rico's countryside, a thick stew of Arabic and African roots, its seasoning crossed with elements from Cuba and points south. But Zenón isn't tempted by folk instruments or traditional melodies. He maps the extraordinarily complex rhythms onto standard jazz piano-bass-drums, then improvises fast, jaunty alto sax lines in lieu of the usual vocalist. [8]

John Zorn

John Zorn: *Alhambra Love Songs* (Tzadik) A composer's album, like recent work attributed to Bach or Brahms, or more to the point like Zorn's own voluminous *Filmworks* -- simple and elegant pieces for a Rob Burger piano trio. In fact, several pieces are dedicated to filmmakers, although the opening Vince

Guaraldi dedication frames Zorn's ambitions: popular as in accessible, not pop, never schmaltz. [8]

Jesse Zubot

ZMF Trio: *Circle the Path* (Drip Audio) Avant violin, a Revolutionary Ensemble for liberal Vancouver. [7]

The Consumer Guide: Groups

Abraham, Inc.

See David Krakauer.

The Aggregation

The Aggregation: *Groove's Mood* (DBCD) LaTanya Hall sings a couple of Stevie Wonder songs, bait for Eddie Allen's brass stylings. [7]

Agogic

Agogic: *Agogic* (Tables and Chairs '11) [7]

Aida Severo

Aida Severo: *Aida Severo* (Slam '09) Piano-mediated free jazz, the two horns pulled in but not locked together. [7]

Angles

Angles: *Every Woman Is a Tree* (Clean Feed) Swedish sextet, full of sharp angles with rough edges, three horns slugging it out, vibes the sound of breaking glass. [7]

Angles: *Epileptical West* (Clean Feed) Leader/alto saxophonist Martin Küchen's other group is Exploding Customer. Trumpeter Magnus Broo's main group is Atomic. There seem to be scads of young Scandinavians who cut their teeth in rock bands then switched to jazz when they found they could play wilder, maybe even louder. A sextet, with trombone for extra dirt and vibes for extra sparkle, live and loose in Coimbra. [9]

Atomic

Atomic/School Days: *Distil* (Okka Disk) Another Vandermark's Oslo-Chicago mashup, not as studious as Powerhouse Sound -- more like the wrap-up party. [6]

The Bad Plus

The Bad Plus: *Give* (Columbia) Everything you read about them is true, more or less. They're an acoustic jazz piano trio, but amplifiers pump up their volume as much as they want, and they amplify themselves by augmenting each other's parts instead of expressing themselves. Their hard rock covers are a commercial gimmick that pays off because the songs were built to flex muscle to begin with, and because improvising on pop hits is older than Charlie Parker anyway. They're the next big thing in jazz, but any jazz that gets noticed looks big. The new album is denser, deeper, brighter, and more complex

than the first two. All true, more or less. [8]

The Bad Plus: *For All I Care (Heads Up)* Semi-simple variations reduced to a numb, disintegrating torpor by a singer loaded on lithium. [3]

BassDrumBone

See Ray Anderson.

Batagraf

Batagraf: *Statements* (ECM) Short phrases or pregnant words like "blowback" offset by percussion and fragmented sound effects. [7]

Bayashi

Bayashi: *Rock (Jazzaway)* Norwegian avant-sax trio -- two vets dating back to George Russell days, and TDWR drummer Thomas Strønen. [7]

Bebop Trio

Bebop Trio: *Bebop Trio* (Creative Nation Music '11) [7]

Big Satan

See Tim Berne.

Blink

Blink: *The Epidemic of Ideas* (Thirsty Ear) Rebel Souls from Chicago awash with ideas, mostly of the postrock/freebop sort. [7]

BLOB

See John Lindberg.

Bloodcount

See Tim Berne.

The Blue Note 7

The Blue Note 7: *Mosaic* (Blue Note) Too mod for the Bill Charlap trio; too congested for the extra horns and guitar. [4]

The Blue Series Continuum

El-P/The Blue Series Continuum: *High Water (Thirsty Ear)* The third album in less than a year for the Blue Series Continuum, a band that shares its name with Thirsty Ear's avant-jazz series, both of which have wandered deep into DJ territory. Each release is staffed by artistic director Matthew Shipp and his usual crew and each has a different guest producer. *The Good and Evil Sessions* was an upbeat groove album. The relatively abstract *Sorcerer Sessions* indulged Shipp's avant-classical tendencies. This one shows more meat, probably because El-P carves what the band gives him rather than smothering it in sauce. [8]

The Blueprint Project

The Blueprint Project: *The Blueprint Project (Creative Nation Music)* Jared Sims (saxes), Eric Hofbauer (guitar), and Tyson Rogers (piano) split the writing credits with little evident pecking order or stylistic uniqueness. They are talented, well educated, thoroughly modern. They can do post-bop, post-Monk, post-Ornette; they can play gospel and tango and free. All they needed was bass and drums, so they hired Cecil McBee and Matt Wilson. One of the few jazz groups that feels communal. [8]

The Blueprint Project: *People I Like (Creative Nation Music)* The guest rhythm section takes a mischievous turn: Han Bennink. [7]

Boxhead Ensemble

Boxhead Ensemble: *Nocturnes (Atavistic '06)* Sonic wallpaper for guitar and cello. [6]

Brazilian Trio

Brazilian Trio: *Forests (Zoho)* Helio Alves, Nilson Matta, Dudka Da Fonseca: names that needn't hide behind a flag, not least because their piano jazz doesn't betray a single Brazilian cliché. [7]

Bridge Quartet

Bridge Quartet: Night (Origin) Saxman Phil Dwyer cooks up some Rollins, Parker, Monk, with an intriguing spice from "Isfahan." [7]

Bryan and the Haggards

See Bryan Murray.

Buffalo

Buffalo: *Collision (Duck) (Screwgun)* Two-thirds Bad Plus plus cellist Hank Roberts skewing the groove and Tim Berne's alto sax bowling over and ducking under. [7]

Chaise Lounge

Chaise Lounge: *Symphony Lounge (Big Round '10)* Cool-toned lounge act, Marilyn Older singing, Charlie Barnett on guitar, old-fashioned songs, unnecessary strings. [7]

Claudia Quintet

Claudia Quintet: *I, Claudia (Cuneiform)* John Hollenbeck's pieces are all rhythm and tone: the former from drums and vibes, the latter from accordion and clarinet, all pastel-colored instruments that tend to blend together. The music doesn't swing, but it doesn't aim for minimalist repetition either. The pieces build up from basic patterns, evolve, and mutate: From such simple rules strange complexities emerge. [8]

The Claudia Quintet: *Semi-Formal (Cuneiform)* Leader John Hollenbeck is a drummer, so it isn't a surprise that the pieces are all rhythm studies and the band has to play along with him. Although the soft tones -- accordion, clarinet, vibes -- still predominate, the textures have loosened up since 2004's *I Claudia*, even incorporating a bit of pedal steel. But the most welcome innovation comes when Chris Speed reminds us that he also plays a mean tenor sax. [8]

The Claudia Quintet: *For (Cuneiform)* I can't conceive of post-jazz or post-rock -- two filing suggestions for John Hollenbeck's ensemble -- but post-minimalism would make sense: the beats are similar, and the melodies emerge in soft tones, pixilated and dithered like the artwork. But the self-imposed limits have been discarded for real-world complexity -- resonant acoustic instruments, shifting time, even passages where Matt Moran talks and Chris Speed squawks. Only a dead-ender wouldn't call it jazz. [8]

The Claudia Quintet + Gary Versace: *Royal Toast (Cuneiform)* Too rigorous for cocktail jazz, even though the soft instruments lean that way. [7]

Chicago Underground

Chicago Underground Trio: *Slon (Thrill Jockey)* The first cut is acoustic, with Rob Mazurek's cornet racing over a fast beat. The second is electronic, a fractured beat with the cornet providing a bare wash of color. The rest work between those poles, with the electronics more prevalent, but the real kick coming from the cornet soaring over Chad Taylor's drums. Synthesis isn't the point; why be "underground" if not to experiment? [8]

Club D'Elf

Club D'Elf: *Now I Understand (Accurate)* As the name implies, this is less a group than a meeting place, with a website listing more than 100 conspirators beyond a core -- bassist Mike Rivard, drummer Eric Kerr, and oudist Brahim Fribgane -- that favors fast grooves and world fusion. Special guests abound, with key whiz John Medeski, avant-violist Mat Maneri, and turntablist DJ Logic the best known. My faves are the kids on the reggae "Just Kiddin'" and the rapper who sounds like Dr. Doom. [8]

Contact

See Dave Liebman.

The Cookers

The Cookers: *Cast the First Stone (Plus Loin Music)* Billy Harper-Eddie Henderson supergroup, horns roaring for action, pianist George Cables slipping in a little boogie. [7]

Correction

Correction: *Two Nights in April (Ayer)* Sebastian Bergström's hard-edged piano trio, leans free on a rock solid base. [7]

Cosmosamatics

See Sonny Simmons.

Dead Cat Bounce

Dead Cat Dance: *Chance Episodes (Cuneiform '11)* [7]

Decoy

Decoy & Joe McPhee: *Oto (Bo Weavil)* World's freest saxophonist combusts caustically with Hammond B3 trio. [7]

De Nazaten

De Nazaten & James Carter: *Skratyology (Strotbrock '09)* The offspring of libertine Prince Hendrik promiscuously adopt the rhythms of former Dutch colony Surinam, with three drummers and lots of brass. The guest isn't really needed, but he puts on a mighty demonstration of his prize-winning baritone sax nonetheless. [8]

De Nazaten & James Carter: *For Now (Strotbrock '11)* The constant need to feed labor into their colony turned Suriname into a global melting pot, and the post-colonial reflux brought the world's rhythms back to the Netherlands where they melded with the world's most surreal jazz underground to form this party band. Sounds a bit like calypso when they venture a vocal. Picked up a world class baritone saxophonist, too. [8]

Digital Primitives

See Assif Tsahar.

Duo Nueva Finlandia

Duo Nueva Finlandia: *Short Stories* (TUM) Piano-bass improv by Eero Ojanen and Teppo Hauta-aho, who've played together forty years -- tight, but never sweet. [7]

East West Quintet

East West Quintet: *Vast* (Native Language Music) Not only don't they know how to fuse jazz and rock, this Brooklyn group is even confused about its name. [3]

Echoes of Swing

Echoes of Swing: *Message From Mars* (Echoes of Swing) Bassless quartet from Bavaria, the two horns do more than echo the swing of Bernd Lhotzky's piano. [7]

EEA

See Peter Epstein.

E.S.T.

E.S.T.: *Seven Days of Falling* (215 Records) Scandinavia's Bad Plus, raised not on Nirvana but on Blur and Oasis, the weltschmerz articulated as texture. [7]

Ethnic Heritage Ensemble

See Kahil El'Zabar.

Exploding Customer

Exploding Customer: *Live at Tampere Jazz Happening* (Ayler) Swedish freebop quartet, two horns performing aerial acrobatics, and the usual great drummer -- in this case, Kjell Nordeson. [7]

Exploding Customer: *At Your Service* (Ayler) Two-horn quartet from Sweden, play free bop with garage rock energy, except when they're teasing a vibe. [7]

FAB Trio

See Joe Fonda.

Farmers by Nature

See Gerald Cleaver.

Fat Cat Big Band

Fat Cat Big Band: *Meditations on the War for Whose Great God Is the Most High You Are God* (Smalls '09) [6]

Fat Cat Big Band: *Angels Praying for Freedom* (Smalls '09) Two separate discs cross Ellington and Mingus for postbop swing and back-to-the-future politics. [6]

Fieldwork

Fieldwork: *Simulated Progress* (Pi) On first approximation, this is a piano trio with Steve Lehman playing the bass parts on alto and soprano sax, where they take on a life of their own. Lehman has such a strained, narrow tone that his work tends to duck behind the piano, anchoring the rhythm and painting the background. But then the pianist is Vijay Iyer, who can lead by the sheer force of his percussiveness and has a knack for putting the finishing touches on whatever Lehman and drummer Elliot Humberto Kavee throw at him. [9]

Fieldwork: *Door* (Pi) Steve Lehman's alto sax distills the acidic tones of his mentors Jackie McLean and Anthony Braxton, which might seem to limit him, but his trio support here from pianist Vijay Iyer and drummer Tyshawn Sorey is so brimful with clever ideas and good cheer that he simply brings them back into earthly balance. Too tight to be a supergroup, although the individual talents warrant that claim. [8]

Fight the Big Bull

Fight the Big Bull: *All Is Gladness in the Kingdom* (Clean Feed) Bigger, and louder, than ever, with Steven Bernstein joining the fray. [7]

Fire Room

See Ken Vandermark.

Firehouse

Firehouse: *Live at Glenn Miller Café* (Ayer) Jon Lindblom's punk-jazz guitar, with horns piled on because they're loud. [7]

First Meeting

See Natsuki Tamura.

FME

See Ken Vandermark.

Food

See Iain Ballamy.

Fourplay

Fourplay: *Journey* (Bluebird '04) [2]

The Frank and Joe Show

The Frank and Joe Show: 33 1/3 (Hyena '04) The three vocal spots -- campy Janis Siegel on "Don't Fence Me In," debonair Dr. John on "Sheik of Araby," torchy Jane Monheit on "Besame Mucho" -- shine so bright you wish they'd recruited more guests, but guitarist Frank Vignola has to get his licks in, beginning his beguine and jamming Mozart, ramrodding Rimsky-Korsakov at Dave Edmunds speeds, and ending in a shimmering oasis of "Stardust." [8]

The Frank and Joe Show: 66 2/3 (Hyena '05) [4]

Free Fall

See Ken Vandermark.

The Fully Celebrated

See Jim Hobbs.

Garage A Trois

Garage A Trois: *Outre Mer* (Telarc) Two percussionists, Charlie Hunter guitar, and Skerik sax work through a soundtrack's worth of moods and atmosphere, all smartly anchored and acutely detailed. Suitable for background, painless if you happen to tune in, not so ebullient it wears you out. So simple -- it's what jazz-funk fusion should sound like, or would in a world free of kitchen-sink production and opportunistic cross-promotion. [8]

Gato Libre

See Natsuki Tamura.

Gauche

Gauche: *Deep Night* (Gauche) San Francisco gypsies roast Django-fied oldies in their hot club. [6]

The Gift

The Gift: *Live at Sangha: Nov 6, 2004* (Bmadish) Roy Campbell-William Hooker free-for-all, refereed by the noisy bass of Jason Hwang's violin. [7]

The Great Jazz Trio

See Hank Jones.

The Godforgottens

The Godforgottens: *Never Forgotten, Always Remembered (Clean Feed '09)* Sten Sandell's organ doesn't trip up the free rhythm, and Magnus Broo's trumpet burns bright. [8]

Grupo Los Santos

See Paul Carlon.

Happy Apple

Happy Apple: *The Peace Between Our Companies (Sunnyside)* This starts with the trio's signature sound, drums so sharp and loud they rip right through you. The drummer is Dave King, better known for his other band, the Bad Plus. While the latter prides itself as an *acoustic* piano trio, this one rides happily on Erik Fratzke's electric bass, with multireedist Michael Lewis adding a voice. The pieces alternate between hard and soft. In soft mode they go for avant-scratch; in hard mode Lewis rocks Aylor/Coltrane while King knocks your socks off. [8]

Happy Apple: *Happy Apple Back on Top (Sunnyside)* Bad Plus drummer Dave King's other power trio, with Erik Fratzke's bass plugged in and Michael Lewis leading on one sax or another. Given their Minneapolis address, it's tempting to call them the Hüsker Dü of free jazz, assuming you can manage the translation. It is jazz, after all, and while they like rock grooves more than most, they never leave it at that. [8]

Harriet Tubman

Harriet Tubman: *Ascension (Sunnyside)* Fusion band aims high, adding trumpet and turntables to Coltrane's rafter raiser. [7]

Hat

See Sergi Sirvent.

Honey Ear Trio

Honey Ear Trio: *Steampunk Serenade (Foxhaven)* Tough young tenor sax trio can still wax sentimental on "Over the Rainbow." [8]

Humanization 4tet

See Luis Lopes.

I Compani

See Bo Van Der Graaf.

Ibrahim Electric

Ibrahim Electric: *Meets Ray Anderson (Stunt)* When they turn up the heat the Danish guitar-organ-drums trio is more rockish than its soul jazz avatars. And when they dial it down they're knee deep in the blues. Neither trait is all that remarkable, but their meeting with the trombone master was inspired. After all, Anderson's first language is gutbucket, so when he growls and groans he delivers the dirt this band needs. But he can improvise on their grind, punching out lightning solos then diving back into the grime. [8]

Ideal Bread

Ideal Bread: *Transmit: Vol. 2 of the Music of Steve Lacy (Cuneiform '10)* [8]

Industrial Jazz Group

Industrial Jazz Group: *Industrial Jazz a Go Go! (Evander Music)* Andrew Durkin's big band unveils new models--Dion, Elmore James, Pérez Prado, Oliver Nelson. [7]

Inzinzac

Inzinzac: *Inzinzac (High Two)* A guitar-sax-drums trio playing "rock music in odd time signatures" -- by "rock" they mean loud, and by "odd" they mean odd. Guitarist Alban Bailly, who named the group for his home town in Brittany, drives his pieces, but more often than not Dan Scofield's soprano sax provides the sharp, shiny, metallic edges. [8]

The Jack & Jim Show

See Eugene Chadbourne.

Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey

Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey: *Walking With Giants (Hyena)* Badder than the Bad Plus, but that's because they cheat with gadgets to project the bass like a horn. [7]

Jaruzelski's Dream

Jaruzelski's Dream: *Jazz Gawronski (Clean Feed)* Politically tinged Polish jokes in the Italian group's titles, freebop sax in their grooves. [7]

Jazz at Lincoln Center's Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra

Jazz at Lincoln Center's Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra: *Noche Inolvidable (Palmetto '05)* [4]

The Jazz Passengers

The Jazz Passengers: *Reunited (Justin Time)* The Peaches & Herb hit, bent and laced with avant-skronk, padded with two Debbie Harry leads from the good old days. [7]

Jewels & Binoculars

Jewels & Binoculars: *Floater (Ramboy)* Bob Dylan's lyrics and voice so dominate his songs that you rarely notice that they have melodies. Michael Moore, Lindsey Horner, and Michael Vatcher did, and set about exploring them, tapping a lyric fragment from "Visions of Johanna" for their group name. They've struck real Americana here: bits of folk, blues, and gospel that waft through the air on the light breeze of Moore's reeds -- mostly clarinet. The first, *Play the Music of Bob Dylan*, is more experimental with more obvious songs. This one is more methodical. Both: [8]

Jewels and Binoculars: *Ships With Tattooed Sails (Upshot)* Michael Moore plays more alto sax and less clarinet on this trio's third volume of wordless Dylan songs, which should give them a harder edge, but the trio -- Lindsey Horner on bass, Michael Vatcher on drums -- sound more serene than ever, a feat of meticulous balance. Two previous records picked off Dylan's more obvious tunes, so most slip past me unrecognized, doing what filler should do, holding the album together around landmarks like "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)" -- three with Bill Frisell, whose Americana interests are right at home. [9]

Jones Jones

See Larry Ochs.

Junk Box

See Satoko Fujii.

Lean Left

See Ken Vandermark.

Led Bib

Led Bib: *Sensible Shoes (Cuneiform)* Double sax fusion group, drawing from rock the concept that the path to the next is to play louder. [6]

Lincoln Jazz Center Orchestra

Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra: *Don't Be Afraid . . . The Music of Charles Mingus (Palmetto)* This became inevitable once flacks tried to draw an orchestral line from Ellington to Mingus to Marsalis -- otherwise, wouldn't Mingus be a bit too outré for the uptown crowd? Mingus has yet to develop into a repertory staple, at least outside of the official tribute bands Sue Mingus rides herd on, and even there recent albums like *I Am Three* suggest they're running on fumes. What's missing from all the remakes is

Mingus himself -- the virtuoso bassist, of course, but more importantly the leader who drove small bands to play huge. Here 15 musicians play small. At the end of the tricky title piece about the clown, they even laugh small. [3]

Lucky 7s

Lucky 7s: *Pluto Junkyard (Clean Feed '09)* Freebop grunge, muscled up with double-barreled lead trombones, gussied up with splashes of cornet and vibes. [7]

Lyambiko

Lyambiko: *Shades of Delight (Nagel Heyer)* She's an Afro-German who sings perfectly nuanced English. They're an eponymous band of determinedly optimistic *übermenschen*. Together they demonstrate their taste and smarts many times over. The song list ranges from Irving Berlin to Mose Allison, from Oscar Brown Jr. to Van Morrison. They do Strayhorn for drama rather than beauty and Jobim for subtlety rather than beat, then work a little bossa into "Morning" just to show they can. She even gets to dig into her real or imagined roots in a couple of African pieces -- one woven into a "Savannah Suite" that starts with a jungle rhythm they choose to call "Drum and Bass and Bananas." [8]

Maikotron Unit

See Michel Lambert.

Mambo Legends Orchestra

Mambo Legends Orchestra: *¡Ten Cuidao! Watch Out! (Zoho '11)* [7]

Mauger

See Mark Dresser.

Maybe Monday

See Fred Frith.

Metropole Orkest

Metropole Orkest: *54 (Emarcy)* Vince Mendoza rolls out so much red carpet for John Scofield that nobody notices the guest star. [3]

MI3

See Pandelis Karayorgis.

The Microscopic Septet

The Microscopic Septet: *Lobster Leaps In (Cuneiform '08)* Vintage postmoderns regroup for a rousing round of trad jazz in a tradition wholly their own. [8]

The Microscopic Septet: *Friday the Thirteenth: The Micros Play Monk (Cuneiform)* Adding three extra saxophones to Monk's basic sax-piano-bass-drums arrangements opens them up into a kaleidoscope of color. Phillip Johnston's soprano refracts Steve Lacy, while Mike Hashim's tenor can't help but swing. [8]

Minamo

See Satoko Fujii.

Mostly Other People Do the Killing

Mostly Other People Do the Killing: *Shamokin!!! (Hot Cup)* Leonardo Featherweight's liner notes introduce many of the jokes: leader Moppa Elliott emulating the "classic slap-style bass playing of Milt Hinton and Victor Wooten"; Kevin Shea's drums shifting from "Gene Krupa-esque tom-tom facility to Shaggs-style freedom"; trumpeter Peter Evans' "dog whistle shrieks, Buddy Bolden quotes, and coffee grinder tone"; saxophonist Jon Irabagon's knack for "seamlessly melding Najee and Zorn"; numerous references to "livestock at slaughter." Abbreviated MOPDTK, billed as a "bebop terrorist band," they rip up history and make it anew while reusing proven hooks. [10]

Mostly Other People Do the Killing: *This Is Our Moosic (Hot Cup)* Moving forward in history from their bebop terrorism, Moppa Elliott's gang appropriates his home turf of Moosic, PA, to play on and around Ornette Coleman. Often sounds like a deranged New Orleans brass band, sometimes even breaking into melody. [8]

Mostly Other People Do the Killing: *Forty Fort (Hot Cup)* The history lesson this time spotlights a 1962 Roy Haynes album, *Out of the Afternoon*, mostly exploited for its cover, a shot of the band lost in the woods, overdressed and underequipped. Haynes had Roland Kirk doubling up on his horns, but Moppa Elliott gets a similar flair from two players, and skips Tommy Flanagan's piano, which would only slow things down. They've grown out of their juvenile terrorism, delighted that they've now secured a slot in the tradition they used to mock. [9]

Mostly Other People Do the Killing: *The Coimbra Concert (Clean Feed)* As rough and tumble as you'd expect, beating up not the bebop classics but their own bent deconstructions thereof. [7]

Mount Analog

Mount Analog: *New Skin (Film Guerrero '04)* [3]

Mylab

Mylab: *Mylab (Terminus)* If a jazz auteur can play orchestra, why not computer? Producer Tucker Martine and keyb man Wayne Horvitz started with samples of old folk melodies, then built up these musical tableaux by adding whatever struck their fancy -- banjo and viola, sax and flugelhorn, church

organ and electro blips, but mostly rhythm, supplementing Martine's beats with Bobby Previte's drums. [8]

The New Jazz Composers Octet

The New Jazz Composers Octet: *The Turning Gate (Motéma)* Postbop composers scratching each other's back, bolstered by enough horns to keep everyone flying. [7]

New York Standards Quartet

New York Standards Quartet: *Unstandard (Challenge '11)* The only thing post-boppers like more than standards is rolling their own. [7]

Nice Guy Trio

See Darren Johnston.

Nordic Connect

See Ingrid Jensen.

NOW Orchestra

NOW Orchestra & Marilyn Crispell: *Pola (Victo)* Coat Cooke's Vancouver-based free ensemble is provincial enough to feel the need to keep the anarchy intact, even when their guest breaks out. [7]

Nublu Orchestra

Nublu Orchestra: *Conducted by Butch Morris (Nublu)* Morris's registered trademark (Conduction®) still reads like mumbo jumbo, but he does have an uncanny knack for keeping large groups creative and clutter-free -- nowhere more so than with this Avenue C house band, with horns from downtown jazzbos and vocals from underworld refugees (Love Trio, Forro in the Dark, Brazilian Girls). [8]

NY Jazz Initiative

NY Jazz Initiative: *Mad About Thad (Jazzheads '11)* Eight Thad Jones compositions, scaled for octet and lit up by brilliant horn play. [7]

NYNDK

NYNDK: *The Hunting of the Snark (Jazzheads)* Too rowdy for chamber jazz, even if the touchstones are classical, if that's what you call Ives, Grieg, Perle, *et al.* [7]

The Onus

See Darryl Harper.

Other Dimensions in Music

See Roy Campbell.

Paradigm Shift

Paradigm Shift: Shifting Times (Nagel Heyer) Less a throwback to the organ-guitar soul jazz of the '60s than an update, ready to cross over but not to beg. [7]

Paraphrase

See Tim Berne.

Powerhouse Sound

See Ken Vandermark.

Premier Roeles

Premier Roeles: *Ka Da Ver* (Vindu '11) Dutch free jazz bash -- the sort of thing that will be touted thirty years from now in some critic's Unheard Music Series. [7]

Profound Sound Trio

Profound Sound Trio: *Opus de Life* (Porter) Credit Andrew Cyrille and Henry Grimes for holding this together; Paul Dunmall even gets his bagpipes to behave. [8]

Puttin' On the Ritz

Puttin' On the Ritz: *White Light/White Heat* (Hot Cup) Sometimes when they try to kill they only maim themselves. [3]

Quadro Nuevo

Quadro Nuevo: *Tango Bitter Sweet* (Justin Time) Cosmopolitan folk music, too pat for jazz, too danceable for chamber music. [7]

Quartet B

Quartet B: *Crystal Mountain* (Fonó) Sometimes they switch to tarogato and bouzouki, even bring in a guest cimbalom player, but these Hungarians aren't folkies. Their folklore is just part of a good Communist education, like the classics. In this context, leader Mihaly Borbely, who also plays in the

folk group Vujisics, sounds as clear and spacious on soprano sax as Jan Garbarek. And his bouzouki player spends far more time on a guitar he deploys with the studied eclecticism of Bill Frisell. [8]

Quartet Offensive

Quartet Offensive: *Carnivore (Morphius)* Punk-fusion quintet, softened with bass clarinet and fuzz guitar. [7]

Radio I-Ching

Radio I-Ching: *No Wave Au Go Go (Resonant Music)* Avant-wandering rock refugees -- Andy Haas on curved soprano sax and electronics, Don Fiorino on guitarlike things, Dee Pop on percussion -- pull together. Their worldbeat originals smoke the jazz covers, which serve as ethereal exotica -- except for "Judgment Day," which redeems their faith in Americana. [8]

Rake-Star

Rake-Star: *Some Ra (Spool/Line)* Canadians who look and sound like they just arrived from Saturn. [7]

RED Trio

RED Trio: *RED Trio (Clean Feed)* Prepared piano trio, where Hernani Faustino's bass is almost as percussive as, and even more discordant than, Rodrigo Pinheiro's piano, while Gabriel Ferrandini's percussion is nothing but. [8]

Rova

Rova: *The Juke Box Suite (Not Two)* A saxophone quartet, as tight as non-stars can be after twenty years of interaction, loosen up with a world-music jukebox concept. With Bruce Raskin's baritone the prime mover, the pulse doesn't let up, and the themes -- Finnish folk to choro to Afro-Balkan to mambo to White Stripes -- gives them plenty of accessible ideas to work with. The slower unison themes are rich, the breakaways startling. [9]

Rova & Nels Cline Singers: *The Celestial Septet (New World)* Sax quartet + guitar trio, a perfectly matched band, but sometimes they cancel out each other's idiosyncrasies. [7]

Scenes

See John Stowell.

The Second Approach Trio

The Second Approach Trio With Roswell Rudd: *The Light (SoLyd)* Passing through Moscow, the great trombonist gets sucked into a maelstrom of flying scat and piano like he never left the '60s. [7]

Shot X Shot

Shot X Shot: *Shot X Shot (High Two)* Intertwining sax quartet, with two Sonic Liberation Front veterans returning to the home front. [7]

Sonic Liberation Front

Sonic Liberation Front: *Ashé a Go-Go (High Two)* As in David Murray's gwo-ka, drummer Kevin Diehl finds his inspiration in the relict rhythms that kept Africa alive in the Caribbean. But the Sunny Murray student does more than build postbop jazz around Cuban bata drums: he messes with the classic rhythms, at times losing the pulse and wandering free. Same for the tenor sax -- like Ayler, Terry Lawson starts with simple folk melodies and pushes them into frenzy. But three tracks feature vocals, and these reconnect the free jazz to its Lukumi roots. The most striking is the simplest, with Chuckie Joseph singing over nothing but his own strummed guitar--which pays dividends on the '60s avant-garde's fascination with pan-Africana by finally getting under its skin. [10]

Sonic Liberation Front: *Change Over Time (High Two)* Their third album offers more of the same mix of Afro-Cuban Lukumi rhythms, avant-garde daring, and communal popcraft. Drummer Kevin Diehl studied with Rashied Ali before taking up the bata drums and launching his revolution. This time the songs don't go much beyond chants, compared to their sweet and sour *Ashé a Go-Go*, but the avant-ethnic fusion is still potent, and Dan Scofield's sax rises to the call. [8]

Sonic Liberation Front: *Meets Sunny Murray (High Two)* Bata beats and avant-sax, joined by Kevin Diehl's mentor but a bit out of sorts. [7]

Sonic Openings Under Pressure

Sonic Openings Under Pressure: *Muhheankuntuk (Clean Feed)* Writhing snakey improv lines against David Pleasant's densemetriX beat, with a momentary torrent of rap. [7]

Sonore

See Ken Vandermark.

Sound in Action Trio

See Ken Vandermark.

String Trio of New York

String Trio of New York with Oliver Lake: *Frozen Ropes (Barking Hoop)* They spar mostly, but find common ground on "Texas Koto Blues." [7]

Sun Ra Arkestra

See Marshall Allen.

Tarbaby

See Orrin Evans.

Territory Band-

See Ken Vandermark.

The Thing

The Thing: *Garage (Smalltown Superjazz)* Mats Gustafsson's heavier metal power trio undoes your new wave faves, then plays Brötzmann to relax. [7]

The Thing: *Now and Forever (2000-05, Smalltown Superjazz)* Mats Gustafsson's Don Cherry tribute band morphs into acoustic postrock monster, badder than the Bad Plus in every way. [6]

3ology

3ology: *With Ron Miles (Tapestry)* This Colorado sax trio remain intimate enough to merit the introspective moniker as Miles' cornet fits in and draws them out. [8]

Tin Hat

Tin Hat: *Foreign Legion (BAG)* Chamber jazz, tightly arranged around the string framework of Carla Kihlstedt's violin and Mark Orton's guitar, subtly colored by Trio-breaker Ben Goldberg's clarinets. Might have been too pat, but Ara Anderson breaks out of the piano slot, emerging as a triple threat with romping pump organ and biting trumpet. [8]

Townhouse Orchestra

See Evan Parker.

Tribecastan

Tribecastan: *Strange Cousin (Evergreene Music)* Cosmopolitan hillbilly music, a Don Cherry passport stamped with Balkan accents. [6]

Trio 3

See Oliver Lake.

Triot

Triot with John Tchicai: *Sudden Happiness (TUM '04)* As when Johnny Dyani's township jive bursts out of the dominant gray and ominous matrix. [8]

Trio-X

See Joe McPhee.

Tripleplay

See Ken Vandermark.

Triptych Myth

See Cooper-Moore.

Turtle Island String Quartet

Turtle Island String Quartet: *A Love Supreme: The Legacy of John Coltrane (Telarc)* The title suite has lately lost its untouchable status, but nowhere else has it been so trivialized. Jimmy Garrison's signature bass line barely registers on cello, and the violins can't lead at all. With the last two movements reduced to 2:44 and 2:47, all they acknowledge is a lack of ideas. And they don't let you off easy: the album slogs on to 64:17 with standard fare like "Naima" and "My Favorite Things" -- no chance hoping for "Ascension" just to hear them croak. [2]

Unexpected

See Sergi Sirvent.

Vicious World

Vicious World: *Plays the Music of Rufus Wainwright (Spinaround '11)* [7]

Wellstone Conspiracy

See Brent Jensen.

World Saxophone Quartet

World Saxophone Quartet: *Political Blues (Justin Time)* The political situation has gotten so dire that the old masters feel compelled to write tirades. David Murray and Oliver Lake go so far as to step up to the mike, while Hamiet Bluiett recruits gospel heavyweight Carolyn Amba Hawthorne to excoriate the nation's "Amazin' Disgrace." In the first recorded understatement of his career, Murray complains that "the Republican Party is not very nice." But like most Americans, they'd still rather party than protest, so they bring their friends in. In the spirit of anger, Craig Harris weighs in on the "Bluocracy" -- Lincoln Center's, presumably, they've been on the front lines of that political struggle all their careers. All Blood Ulmer has to offer is "Mannish Boy," but why not? They've always struck me as uptight without bass and drums, but with a backbeat and their blood up they're the champs. [9]

World Saxophone Quartet: *Yes We Can (Jazzwerkstatt)* Murray and Bluiett celebrate Obama, with

Kidd Jordan for Lake's grit, and James Carter for Hemphill's soul. [7]

Yeah No

See Chris Speed.

Yerba Buena Stompers

Yerba Buena Stompers: *The Yama-Yama Man (Stomp Off)* Second generation revivalism, inspired less by King Oliver (whose two cornet, banjo and tuba lineup set the mold) than by Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band, which invented trad jazz. The Stompers' John Gill started by ransacking those charts for such unambitious delights as *Dawn Club Favorites* and *New Orleans Favorites*. Running low after four albums, they're finally forced to dig deeper, such as the 1908 title song. Watters should be proud. Oliver might wonder about the backward thinking. I just get off on the ebullient good humor which has always been the heart of jazz. [8]

Zed Trio

Zed Trio: *Lost Transitions* (Ayler '10) [7]

Zentralquartett

Zentralquartett: *11 Songs - Aus Teutschen Landen (Intakt)* These German Volkslieder themes recall medieval dances and marches with the spritz of circus music, but the razzle-dazzle is in the way the avant-jazz group tears them up and tosses them around. Conrad Bauer, who mangles trombone as gruffly as anyone since Albert Mangelsdorf, is the main perpetrator, with piano, reeds and drums getting their share of the action. [8]

ZMF Trio

See Jesse Zubot.

Zu

Zu & Spaceways Inc.: *Radiale (Atavistic)* The delta between the impeccably free-jazz DKV Trio and Spaceways Inc. is in the bass players: Spaceways' Nate McBride favors hard funk rhythms, which are food for thought for Ken Vandermark and Hamid Drake. Where their first album explored Funkadelic and Sun Ra, on the second Vandermark wrote originals with the same vibe in mind. Zu are a trio from Italy dominated by the baritone sax of Luca T. Mai. They showed up in Chicago a few years back and cut *Igneo*, produced by punk ideologue Steve Albini with Vandermark sitting in. The first half of this album is just Zu and Vandermark, improvising around simple twists, the two saxes looming heavily. The second half brings in the rest of Spaceways for a double trio, which rips through pieces by the Art Ensemble and Sun Ra, and rocks out on two Funkadelic grooves. [9]

Reissues and Vault Music

The main section of this book is limited to artists who released new music in the early 21st century, and that section includes releases from our time period of earlier music -- some reissues but mostly things that hadn't been previously released. This section collects reviews of new releases of older music by artists not in the main section. Expanding this with biographical introductions and lists of significant work would blow this project up to impossible size, especially as it would beg the question of all those other artists who weren't recycled in our time period. On the other hand, these records were a big part of what critics working in our period (since 2000) dealt with on a regular basis. They were a significant part of *Jazz Consumer Guide* and my other columns (especially *Recycled Goods*), and I don't feel like throwing the writing away just for the tidiness of dates.

Individual and group names are mixed here, and multiple-artist compilations ("various artists") are included, their titles sorted in with the artist names.

Amalgam: *Prayer for Peace* (1969, FMR '02) The authors of *The Penguin Guide to Jazz* have a soft spot for the English avant-garde of their youth. Their highest rating is a crown, which they reserve for a few personal favorites: 74 in the seventh edition, out of more than 13,000 records surveyed. Yet they give crowns to six English jazz albums from 1968-72 -- a famous one by John McLaughlin and five others unlikely to be known by any non-obsessive. They are interesting records -- that's why the *Guide* is so essential -- but this one stands out. The sound has amazing presence, the bass hugging you while the drums ping off your bones and Trevor Watts's alto sax cuts right through you. When he shifts from the dirgelike intro to full metal screech you can feel the earth move, but the record never flies out of control and never loses its touch or its humanity. A classic, but who knew? [10]

Count Basie Orchestra: *Mustermesse Basel 1956 Part 1* (1956, TCB '09) Early New Testament band, the arrangements just barely sub-atomic, but with Old Testament virtues, like soloists who aren't just cogs in the machine. [8]

Jimmy Blythe: *Messin' Around Blues* (Delmark) Classic Chicago piano from the 1920s, extracted from pianola rolls. [7]

Phil Bodner: *Once More With Feeling* (1960s-70s, Arbors) Prolific studio pro offers a taste of old-fashioned clarinet. [7]

James Brown: *Soul on Top* (1969, Verve) This extends Ray Charles's omnivorous big band soul, with Brown reinventing standards--"That's My Desire," "September Song," "Every Day I Have the Blues," "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag"--in front of Louie Bellson's orchestra, which arranger-conductor Oliver Nelson barely manages to discipline, so caught up is the band in the singer's excitement. In Brown's discography, just a curio. But in the whole history of big band jazz, there's never been a singer like him. [9]

Jaki Byard: *A Matter of Black and White* (1978-79, High Note '11) [7]

Benny Carter: *Sax a la Carter* (1960, Capitol Jazz) A quartet with Jimmy Rowles, Leroy Vinnegar and Mel Lewis; a few standards; just an easy swinging Friday in L.A. [8]

Commitment: *The Complete Recordings 1981/1983 (NoBusiness)* One of those records that must have seemed interesting but unfocused at the time sounds prophetic now, especially padded out to two-disc length with a rousing live set. Will Connell's flutes and reeds don't so much lead as dodge Jason Kao Hwang's razor-sharp violin, amplified by William Parker's bass and prodded along by Zen Matsuura's drums. [8]

Curlew: *1st Album/Live at CBGB 1980 (1980-81, DMG/ARC)* If this be fusion, the rock component is New York No Wave, punk's dead end. The jazz side provides the skills to beat funky and free at the same time, and to forgo the vocals in favor of George Cartwright's ecstatic sax. [8]

Miles Davis: *Birdland 1951 (1951, Blue Note '04)* [3]

Miles Davis: *The Complete On the Corner Sessions (1972-75, Columbia/Legacy '07)* Six discs collecting 16 indecisive and inconclusive studio sessions at least explain why *On the Corner* was Davis's most disparaged album: the edits tried to force excitement out of a minimal funk groove that needed long stretches of time to breathe. Davis never watered his fusion down for the masses. They came to him, and he made them wait before frosting the groove with brief bursts of piercing trumpet. [8]

Miles Davis Quintet: *Live in Europe 1967: The Bootleg Series Vol. 1 (Columbia/Legacy '11)* A month in the touring life of the famous Second Quintet, a routine reordering of the remarkable. [8]

Gerd Dudek/Buschi Niebergall/Edward Vesala: *Open (1977, Atavistic)* The records revisited by Atavistic's Unheard Music Series went unheard for reasons -- Baby Dodds talking and Sun Ra lullabies are novelties at best. Free jazz from '70s Europe holds up better, but old Brötzmann and Schlippenbach are unlikely to convince non-fans, and rarities from Keith Hazevoet and Mario Schiano will never be more than cult items. So this one is a find. Dudek pursues Coltrane's ghost on two saxophones, flute, and shenai -- a double-reed oboe from India, like blowing into a buzz saw. Bass and drums aren't supporting roles; they add dimensions. [8]

Duke Ellington: *The Bubber Miley Era (1924-29, Jazz Legends '03)* Before swing, the Hot Club of Harlem in its flaming youth. [10]

Duke Ellington: *Ellington Uptown (1947-52, Columbia/Legacy '04)* Hodges-less, coming out of his most pretentious composerly period, scratching and kicking to hang on. [9]

Bob Greene: *St. Peter Street Strutters (1964, Delmark '09)* A Jelly Roll Morton specialist at Preservation Hall, with banjo and tuba, and Ernie Carson as King Oliver. [7]

Julius Hemphill/Peter Kowald: *Live at Kassiopeia (1987, NoBusiness '11)* [7]

Andrew Hill: *Mosaic Select (1967-70, Mosaic)* After *Passing Ships*, the rest of Blue Note's unreleased Hill -- sharp Charles Tolliver, sour Sam Rivers, and strings. [7]

Andrew Hill: *Pax (1965, Blue Note)* The recent *Time Lines*, the avant-pianist's second return to Blue Note, strikes me as his career average album, but his elevation to living legend has spurred the label into restoring his catalog. A few years ago only the universally revered *Point of Departure* was in print. Now, recommended reissues include *Black Fire*, *Smoke Stack*, *Judgment!*, *Andrew!!!*, and the rediscovered *Dance With Death*. On another obscure one, he holds the center down so firmly that Freddie Hubbard and Joe Henderson can go as far out as they ever got. [8]

Isotope: *Golden Section* (1974-75, Cuneiform '08) Unreleased sets unleash Gary Boyle, spinning Montgomery-sized note strings with McLaughlin-inspired steeliness. [8]

Eero Koivisto & Co.: *3rd Version* (1973, Porter) Avant fusion from Finland, McLaughlin-influenced guitar/keybs with a saxophonist who steps boldly forth. [8]

Charles Mingus Sextet with Eric Dolphy: *Cornell 1964* (Blue Note) A rough and amusing draft for *Town Hall Concert* and all those Euro bootlegs Sue Mingus fumes over. [6]

Mizell: *The Mizell Brothers at Blue Note* (1972-77, Blue Note '05) [3]

New York Art Quartet: *Old Stuff* (1965, Cuneiform) A short-lived group, long remembered -- their plainly titled third album, *35th Reunion*, was cut in 1999 -- they worked more in altoist John Tchicai's Copenhagen than in New York. These radio shots are a happy find, especially for Roswell Rudd's gritty trombone. [8]

Art Pepper: *Mosaic Select* (1956-57, Mosaic) Jail never straightened Pepper out, but each time he got out his music burst forth with greater urgency and sadder maturity. After a year in the Fort Worth slammer, he emerged as a master, not a disciple, of Charlie Parker -- cf. his expansive "Yardbird Suite," his own wizened "Straight Life," his jousts with trumpeter Jack Sheldon. These sessions were his first career peak. [9]

Art Pepper: *Unreleased Art, Vol. 1: The Complete Abashiri Concert* (1981, Widow's Taste) [8]

Art Pepper: *Unreleased Art, Vol. 2: The Last Concert* (1982, Widow's Taste) Widow Laurie Pepper lays claim to a pair of bootlegs, recorded at a time when the great alto saxophonist was walking dead but playing miraculously. At Abashiri, even Art is taken by his "Body and Soul," proclaiming it "one of the nicest things that I think I've played in my life." He closes with a hard swinging clarinet feature: "When You're Smiling." Can't help but. [8]

Art Pepper: *Unreleased Art, Vol. III: The Croydon Concert, May 14, 1981* (Widow's Taste) A hot set with a "favorite group" he rarely recorded with -- remarkable as usual. [8]

The Flip Phillips Quartet: *Live at the Beowulf* (1977-78, Arbors) One reason they don't make 'em like they used to is that now all the JATP jousts have passed on. [7]

Don Pullen: *Mosaic Select* (1986-90, Mosaic) Pullen had a gimmick: he would turn his hands over and smash out huge clusters of notes with his knuckles. It was an astonishing sound, and he could produce it long enough to take your breath away. But it was less a gimmick than the ultimate example of his unprecedentedly physical attack on the piano. He built up harmonies with explosions of dissonant color and rhythmic complexity, as fast as Art Tatum with his curlicues. But he died in 1995, at 51 neither a shooting star nor a living legend, and his records have vanished--especially the eight he cut for Blue Note from 1986 until his death. This limited edition squeezes the first four onto three CDs. The first two are quartet albums with r&b-flavored saxophonist George Adams. Both are rousing, especially the first. The next two were trios, where the focus is even more squarely on his piano. He was also the most interesting organist to emerge since Larry Young, and his later *Ode to Life* is poignant and moving. But this was the pinnacle of his pianistic power. [10]

Sun Ra: *Spaceship Lullaby* (1954-60, Atavistic '04) [3]

Sun Ra: *Some Blues but Not the Kind That's Blue* (1973-77, Atavistic '07) Two "small group"

sessions that fell through the cracks and wound up in Atavistic's remarkable Unheard Music Series. Mostly covers, familiar songs like "My Favorite Things" and "Black Magic" shot into unforeseen orbits. The horns cut the grease, but the piano (or organ on the 1973 tracks) dominates: Ra's mix of stride, bebop, and something from the outer reaches of the galaxy is pretty amazing. [8]

Sun Ra & His Astro-Infinity Arkestra: *Strange Strings* (1966-67, Atavistic '09) Waves of mysterious bowed and plucked string instruments crash on a shore of log drums and tympani, with a squeaky door bonus. [7]

Sun Ra & His Solar Arkestra: *Secrets of the Sun* (1962, Atavistic '09) Space drums and space birds among the scattered lineups and rotating instruments, with Ra's rough piano jumping hither and yon. [6]

Jimmy Rushing: *The Scene: Live in New York* (1965, High Note '09) His blues touched by grace, charm, and swing, a singer who could bring out the old-time religion in brothers Sims and Cohn. [8]

Horace Silver: *Live at Newport '58* (Blue Note) Minor archive find, fills a gap with Louis Smith and Junior Cook rehearsing classics, the choicest "Señor Blues." [8]

Slow Poke: *At Home* (1998, Palmetto) Recorded by Lounge Lizards/Sex Mob bassist Tony Scherr at home in Brooklyn, laid back blues for sophisticates with no reason to be blue. Slide guitarist Dave Tronzo stretches out melodies by Duke Ellington and Neil Young, and saxophonist Michael Blake sails effortlessly along. [8]

Soprano Summit: *In 1975 and More* (1975-79, Arbors) Kenny Davern and Bob Wilber formed their double soprano sax group in 1972, met frequently through the end of the decade, and held occasional reunions as late as 2001. Sidney Bechet was their obvious focus, but these archives include a session devoted to Jelly Roll Morton, and two non-summits: a Davern clarinet trio, and a Wilber group with Ruby Braff. [8]

Sounds of Liberation: *Sounds of Liberation* (1972, Porter) Before the dark age of conservatism descended upon us, before Reagan, just before Watergate, this is what the future that might be sounded like: funky conga rhythms sprinkled with sparkling Khan Jamal vibes, topped with Byard Lancaster's avant-sax all but screaming freedom, justice, good times. [8]

Ralph Sutton & Dick Cary: *Rendezvous at Sunnie's 1969* (Arbors) Sutton was the postwar era's nonpareil stride pianist, so he offers little here that hasn't already been demonstrated many times. So focus on Cary, who cut his teeth on piano with Louis Armstrong and trumpet with Eddie Condon. Here he sticks to trumpet and alto horn -- looks like a miniature tuba -- adding a wizened, soulful voice to Sutton's flashy little trio. [8]

***That Devilin' Tune: A Jazz History* (1895-1950, WHRA)** Miles Davis reduced jazz history to four words: Louis Armstrong Charlie Parker. Ken Burns's 10-hour *Jazz* didn't go much further than to add Miles Davis. Martin Williams' canon-establishing five-CD *Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz* was more judicious, but he disposed of the origins problem by contrasting two takes of "Maple Leaf Rag" -- one by Scott Joplin, the other by Jelly Roll Morton. Compiler Allen Lowe takes the contrary approach, picking records for the questions they raise. He's repackaged his book into four boxes totalling 36 CDs, 854 songs. Researchers will want the first box, which doesn't get to Armstrong until the last cut. Fans might start with the third, which announces "swing is here" and never lets up. [10]

Harry Whitaker: *One Who Sees All Things* (1981-82, Smalls) Avant-fusion, reverting to the true radicalism of bebop. [7]

Mary Lou Williams: *A Grand Night for Swinging* (1976, High Note '08) Of course she can swing, but wait till you hear her deconstruct. [8]

Frank Wright: *Unity* (1974, ESP-Disk) A saxophonist so far out he would have slipped by unrecorded were it not for ESP's "only the artist decides" philosophy. But two 1965-67 albums registered his name, and occasionally a live tape surfaces, such as this one from the Moers Festival. It builds on a terrific rhythm section: Bobby Few's crashing piano, Alan Silva's volcanic bass, and on drums Rashied Ali's brother, appropriately named Muhammad. Wright always brought the noise, and in the end even rocks out. [8]

Larry Young: *Of Love and Peace* (1966, Blue Note) Young pushed the Hammond B-3 further than anyone as he moved from blues to new thing. He cut his 1965 masterpiece *Unity* with an all-star lineup, but the more reckless non-stars here -- George Morgan and James Spaulding for Joe Henderson, Eddie Gale for Woody Shaw -- inspire Young's most vigorous organ. Except for the final cut, a meditation on Islam that remains timely. [8]