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### O's Place Jazz Magazine

P.O. Box 38430  
Charlotte, NC 28278

## O'pening Thoughts

Just when we thought we could see the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, the Delta variant weighed in. We've had a half million more deaths world wide since our last issue. Here in the US we've got two worlds, those who are vaccinated and those who refuse the solution. It's led to hospitals in threes states getting so full of COVID patients that they are refusing care based on probability to survive, not just for COVID cases but any critical care need.

There's still hope with more people getting vaccinated, boosters and expansion to our youth. We've all been touched in these unprecedented times.

It's tough to read liner notes of any recent release without some discussion of the pandemic, politics, etc. On the flip side, the pandemic taught us to embrace many new technologies, how to effectively work remotely and how to step back from the rat race and reflect of what is really important. Many musicians reached a new depth of

---> Sound advice at a nice price!

[www.OsPlaceJazz.com](http://www.OsPlaceJazz.com)

# O'pening Thoughts cont.

creativity though sometimes riddled with pain. We hear all that in the music with over 120 new reviews across all jazz genres.

Matthew Evans Taylor serves up five volumes of free jazz on The Unheard Mixtapes.



## Jazz Artists Review

We've been busy in the studio working on a new feature, Video Pod-casts: Jazz Artist Review (JAR). My partner in this endeavor is Ron Ancrum, a long time student of jazz and keyboardist. We seek to surface new jazz artists, gain a better understanding of how jazz is surviving, and prospering. Our goal is to fertilize the field of jazz and spread the word. We'll

feature a new interview each month on [www.OsPlaceJazz.com](http://www.OsPlaceJazz.com) with archived shows available to subscribers. Coming Q4! Let us know your thoughts.

Og@OsPlaceJazz.com

O

### THE TOP TEN SCORES

1. ROY HARGROVE & MULGREW MILLER - In Harmony
2. DARA TUCKER - Dreams of Waking
3. BRUCE HARRIS - Soundview
4. BEHN GILLECE - Still Doing Our Thing
4. ALEX CUBA - Mendó
4. WILL LYLE - LA Source Codes
7. FRANCESCHINI, HAYS, LE FLEMING & CALVAIRE - Whole Lotta Love
7. DEE DANIELS - The Promise
7. 8-BIT BIG BAND - BACKWARDS COMPATIBLE
10. KEITH BROWN - African Ripples
10. BOB MINTZER - Soundscapes

### O's Rating Scale (X)

0

65

80

95

Pass

Contemplate

Buy

Strong Buy

*Unbiased Sound Advice from O's Place Jazz*

# Top Traditional Picks

## O's Notes

ARTIST Title Label Perf/Sound	
<b>SCOTT REEVES</b> <b>T<sup>B</sup></b> <u><b>The Alchemist</b></u> <i>Origin</i> <b>84</b>	<p>Scott Reeves is a trombonist and composer who plays in and around NYC in many band configurations. With time on his hands during the pandemic, he unearthed this live performance at City College, Harlem, May 2005. His band was a quintet with Russ Spiegel (g), Mike Holoher (keyboards), Howard Britz (b) and Andy Watson (d). This era found Reeves experimenting with electronic enhancements for his horns and the performance stretches the envelope for a delightful performance. Thanks to the masterful mixing by Brian Montgomery to extract rich audio from the original recording.</p>
<b>TONY MONACO</b> <u><b>Strollin'</b></u> <b>T<sup>K</sup></b> <i>Reid Hoyston</i> <b>81</b>	<p>The B3 is at the core of <u>Strollin'</u> and there's nobody better than veteran Tony Monaco at the helm. Hendrick Meurkens (harmonica), Mark Lucas (g) and producer Reid Hoyston (d) round out the quartet. Meurkens' melodies warmed our soul on "Roz Da Cat" and "A Child Is Born" with soothing solos from Lucas and Monaco as well. Lucas shines on the title track but this is truly a balanced effort, one worth repeating!</p>
<b>CHRIS SAUNDERS</b> <b>T<sup>b</sup></b> <u><b>Dancing with the Widow St. James</b></u> <i>C. Saunders</i> <b>77</b>	<p>Chris Saunders is an entertaining singer, songwriter and trumpet player from San Francisco. His raspy voice fits well with the groovin', soulful blues on <u>Dancing With The Widow St. James</u>. Luis Carbo (perc), Michael Aragon (d), Rob Fordyce (b) and arranger, collaborator, producer Ken Cook (p, organ) join him in a strong club set combining classic covers and originals. Highlights are "Am I Blue", "I Wonder", Lullaby of the Leaves" and "River's Invitation".</p>
<b>JD ALLEN</b> <b>T<sup>B</sup></b> <u><b>Queen City</b></u> <i>Savant</i> <b>76</b>	<p>The pandemic birthed a wrath of solo recordings as musicians were sheltering in place. <u>Queen City</u> is JD Allen's take, a reflective, and expressive solo-sax collection of thirteen tunes. We are given the chance to listen to the isolated, pure tone of JD's tenor saxophone. It is beautiful, piped directly from his soul, including warm lullabies like "Nyla's Sky", one of several highlights in the 40-minute set.</p>
<b>CHUCK OWEN</b> <u><b>Within Us</b></u> <b>T<sup>N</sup></b> <i>Summit</i> <b>76</b>	<p>The Jazz Surge is educator, arranger, producer and composer Chuck Owen's big band. They've been performing for 25 years in different configurations. Today's 19-piece ensemble includes several original members. <u>Within Us</u> is their 7th album, and a live studio recording, one of the few during the pandemic, and you can hear the joyful celebration. Steve Wilson (s-sax, a-sax), Sara Caswell (violin) and guest vibraphonist Warren Wolf are among the strong soloists performing Owen's work, six originals plus "Chelsea Shuffle" (C. Corea) and "Milestones" (M. Davis). Other highlights are "the Better Claim" and the title track.</p>

# O's Place Features

## LA Source Codes

## WILL LYLE

Photo: Will Lyle

Bassist Will Lyle is a formidable composer, producer and bandleader who puts together a fine recording, LA Source Codes. It is swinging from the start with “Forasteria” featuring Bob Sheppard (t-sax), Marvin “Smitty” Smith (d) and Mahesh Balisoriyah (p). Lyle adds a cool bass solo on “Be My Love” and he’s back skipping along on “No. 1 Green Street” with Sheppard and Balisoriyah providing an explosive solos as well. They swing hard on “So In Love” in a set that keeps you engaged end to end.

89  
Modern  
Will Lyle  
2021



## TWO FROM: WADADA LEO SMITH

## Sacred Ceremonies

83  
TUM  
Fusion  
2021

Free jazz trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith teams up with bassist Bill Laswell and the late drummer Milford Graves for Sacred Ceremonies, a three-disc set featuring Smith with Graves on disc 1, Smith with Laswell on disc 2 and as a trio on disc 3. Wadada wrote half of the songs on each disc and collaborated with his accompaniment of the rest. The music is indeed scared, insightful and passionate. Each of the musicians has played a large role in Avant Garde jazz and collectively this is a very palatable engagement. We preferred the trio for its depth and complexity but appreciated the first two discs as well.

## Trumpet

79  
TUM  
Avant Garde  
2021

Wadada Leo Smith is a free jazz trumpeter who at 79 years old hasn’t lost a beat! Trumpet is a more relaxed outing (for Smith) recorded in a fifteenth century church (St. Mary’s) in Pohja, Finland. Many times we find solo instrumentalists, and horn players in particular, practicing with their case open for donations on the street. Some of the music is inspiring but the rest of it, questionable. In this case we have a formidable trumpeter performing with a bit more structure and tremendous presence, yet he remains spontaneous. The results are free jazz, solo trumpet at its best. Of note is the 5-part “Rashomn” on the first of three discs including 28 titles.



Photo: Jimm Katz



# O's Place Features

Photo: Last Row Music

90  
Cellar Live  
Modern  
2021



## Bruce Harris Soundview

Trumpeter Bruce Harris leads a quartet with Sullivan Fortner (p), David Wong (b) and Aaron Kimmel (d). It's easy to visualize the band because the recording (excellent special dispersion) makes it easy to isolate band members and appreciate their contributions as if you were at the club. There's a bubbly ragtime groove on "Ellington's Suite" and vocalist Samara McClendon warms up the stage on two selections, notably "Bird of Red and Gold". Bruce swings on "Maybe It's Hazy" that also includes a fine solo from Wong. Harris takes it up a notch on "Hank's Pranks" before warming up the ballad, "You're Lucky To Me". Soundview is the first in a series of releases by Black artists produced by Jeremy Pelt in Cellar Live. We're in for a treat!

### Focusyear Band

Focusyear is a one-year immersion program for exceptionally talented musicians at Jazzcampus (a renowned music school) in Basel, Switzerland." The 2021 edition recorded ten of their original compositions for Bosque. The core octet features Tatiana Nova (vocals), Yakiv Tsvietinskyi (t, tb, flugelhorn), Joshua Schofield (a-sax), Gianni Gagliardi (t-sax, vocals), Lorenzo Vitolo (p), Ethan Cohn (b) and Áron Tálas (d, perc, Rhodes). Jorge Rossy adds vibes on "Mean Street". We enjoyed Tatiana's vocalizations on "The Nordic Shuffle", "Mean Street", "Crash Landing" featuring Schofield & Tálas, the symphonic "Ladina Oswald" and the title track.

77 Modern  
Neu Klang 2021

### Bosque

## Farnell Newton

77  
Modern  
Posi-Tone  
2021

Portland-based trumpeter and composer Farnell Newton made his way to NYC where he teamed up with the Posi-Tone rhythm section including Boris Kozlov (b), Rudy Royston (d, perc) and Art Hira-hara (p) to Feel The Love. Several guests artists join the action as Newton presents a convincing stroll into modern jazz. They get funky on "I'll Catch You" with Newton wailing on the lead line. Other highlights are "Affectionately Roy" featuring Braxton Cook (a-sax), the mellow "A Child Not Yet Born" with Brandon Wright (t-sax), and "Pale" featuring Cook, Michael Dease (tb) & Hira-hara.

Photo: Farnell Newton



## Feel The Love

# O's Place Features

## Elijah Rock

### Matters of the Heart

85  
Ballads  
Elijah Rock  
2021

Elijah Rock is a sophisticated crooner, an entertainer, actor and tap dancer. He attaches his baritone to fresh tunes and classics from The Great American Songbook on Matters of The Heart. Prepare to be romanced with “All I Need Is The Girl”, “The Good Life”, “Around The World” featuring Charles McNeal (s-sax), and “Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off”, a duet with Dominique Toney. The supporting cast is plentiful but it’s Rock’s poise and enduring confidence that makes Matters... a winner.



Photo: Elijah Rock

## Jalen Baker

Modern 2021  
76 Outside In

### This is Me, This is Us

DC native Jalen Baker was raised in Houston and studied both classical and jazz genres as a vibraphonist, percussionist, educator, and composer. That lends an air of sophistication to his music that we hear on This is Me, This is Us, his debut release. The soothing strings blended with vibes and trumpet on “Patience” and “Don’t Shoot” are prime examples. That contrasts with the upbeat, syncopated rhythm on “We Regret To Inform You” and “Healing”. They finish with a lullaby, Stevie Wonder’s “Love’s In Need Of Love Today” featuring Baker alone on vibes.

## Keith Brown

### African Ripples

87  
Space Time  
Modern  
2021

Pianist Keith Brown assembles his trio KB3 with bassist Dezron Douglas and drummers Terreon Gully or Darrell Green. And, he adds an all-star guest list that begs your attention! The music is modern jazz with fierce beats as on “Just You, Just Me”. The infusion of spoken word by Cyrus Aaron on “Epigraph” bleeds acid jazz. Russell Gunn (t) and Anthony Ware (t-sax) add punctuation to the head-bobbing beats notably on “512 Arkansas St.” Melanie Charles infuses warm soulful vocals on “Come Back As A Flower”. African Ripples tells the story of African American music in many different facets. We classified it as Modern Jazz but Brown strikes his mark touching hip hop, rap, gospel, swing and bebop along the way!



Photo: Keith Brown

# O's Place Features

## Mathew Evan Taylor

### The Unheard Mixtapes

In his own words, “I am Matthew Evan Taylor, a musician who composes; a composer who performs; a performer who improvises. I am all of these things and more. The Unheard Mixtapes are my manifesto.” All 5 volumes were recorded during the pandemic.



Photo: Steve James

<b>1: Follow to the End</b> T <sup>A</sup> <i>New Amsterdam</i> <b>77</b>	O's Notes: <u>Follow to the End</u> is Volume 1 of the MixTape series. This one is open and airy especially on the “Sunrise” bookends. In between, the conversations are lucid and coherent. It’s on the shorter side at 32 min but well done with the title track as a standout.
<b>2: Language of the Unheard</b> T <sup>A</sup> <i>New Amsterdam</i> <b>73</b>	O's Notes: Evan speaks <u>The Language of the Unheard</u> on Volume 2. In this case the unheard reflects the despair of the pandemic and political instability with melancholic squawks and pleas for passion.
<b>3: Chamber Music</b> C <sup>F</sup> <i>New Amsterdam</i> <b>74</b>	O's Notes: <u>On The Unheard Mixtape 3: Chamber Music</u> , Taylor introduces a world of solitude. Here even the squawks on “Passacaglia 2” are palatable followed by the ‘tune-up’ on “Nocturne 1”.
<b>4: Isolation Blues</b> C <sup>F</sup> <i>New Amsterdam</i> <b>76</b>	O's Notes: <u>On The Unheard Mixtape 4: Isolation Blues</u> , the theme evolves from a scene that approximates an approaching freight train. As the vision gets more lucid, the conversation is more engaging. The music is a rather solemn as the pervasive blue tones continue through the set at a relaxed tempo. This is perhaps the best of the five Mixtapes.
<b>5: Abstractions In Sound</b> C <sup>F</sup> <i>New Amsterdam</i> <b>66</b>	O's Notes: <u>On The Unheard Mixtape 5</u> , Taylor opens on soprano, moving to alto then flute before reversing the order in five Improvisations. He gives us a sea of saxophones that can be peaceful, enticing, mysterious and/or eerie. Taylor reminds us of the saxophonist in the tunnel exit at Chicago O’Hare (airport) on the way to the trains and parking lot. He’s extracting the most from is instruments and a naked, lengthy display. Show him some love.

<b>ARTIST</b> <b>Title</b> <i>Label</i> <b>Rating</b>	<b><u>Big Band Picks</u></b> <b>O's Notes</b>
<b>8-Bi BIG BAND</b> <u><b>Backwards</b></u> <b>Compatible</b> <b>T<sup>N</sup></b> <i>Teamchuck</i> <b>88</b>	<p>The 8-Bit Big Band is a cross section of some of the world's finest musicians with video gamers. They play the songs behind many video arcade games! But you needn't be a video junkie to appreciate the music. This is a happy big band, especially on tunes like "Saria's Song", "Birdman", "Hydrocity Zone" featuring Grace Kelly on alto sax, and "Want You Gone" with vocals and trumpet solo by Benny Benack III. We also enjoyed "Jump Up Superstar" featuring Grace Kelly, this time on the mic! There is much to enjoy and little to skip on <u>Backwards Compatible</u>, their 3rd volume of great music.</p>
<b>FRANCESCHINI,</b> <b>HAYS, LE</b> <b>FLEMING &amp;</b> <b>CALVAIRE</b> <b>T<sup>B</sup></b> <u><b>Whole Lotta</b></u> <b>88</b> <u><b>Love</b></u> <i>Chesky</i>	<p>Obed Calvaire (d), Bob Franceschini (t-sax), Kevin Hays (p) and Orlando Le Fleming (b) play The Music of Led Zeppelin on <u>Whole Lotta Love</u>. This is a swinging session right out of the gate with the title track. They weave in relaxers like "Immigrant Song" provoking thoughts, and mid-tempo grooves "For Your Life" &amp; "Dazed And Confused". We also liked the soulful "Custard Pie". This is a fine jazz interpretation of the original rock music recorded in high definition.</p>
<b>BOB MINTZER</b>  <b>T<sup>N</sup></b> <u><b>Soundscapes</b></u> <b>87</b> <i>mcg Jazz</i>	<p>Saxophonist Bob Mintzer composes, arranges and conducts the renowned WDR Big Band for a fresh, vibrant, contemporary jazz set, <u>Soundscapes</u>. Mintzer blows warm melodies on top using tenor sax or EWI. The groove on the opener "A Reprieve", grabs you right from the start then continues with "The Conversation" featuring trombonist Andy Hunter and pianist Billy Test. We also enjoyed "Herky Jerky", "Canyon Winds", "One Music" and the curious vibe on "Whack".</p>
<b>MARK MASTERS</b> <u><b>Masters &amp; Baron</b></u> <u><b>Meet Blanton &amp;</b></u> <u><b>Webster</b></u> <b>T<sup>N</sup></b> <i>Capri</i> <b>78</b>	<p>Arranger Mark Masters and trombonist Art Baron take on some of Ellington/Strayhorn's prime material (1940-1042) in Ellington's band featuring Ben Webster (t-sax) and Jimmie Blanton (b). Master's big band includes Bruce Lett (b), Kirsten Edkins &amp; Jerry Pinter (t-sax, s-sax), Mark Ferber (d) and special guest Tim Hagans (t). This is an open-air large ensemble that allows the soloists room to breathe resulting for a very listenable experience.</p>
<b>SAM PILNICK</b>  <b>T<sup>N</sup></b> <u><b>The Adler Suite</b></u> <i>Outside In</i> <b>78</b>	<p>Tenor saxophonist Sam Pilnick developed his chops in Western Michigan and could his way to Chicago where he teaches on many level and lead a nonet for The Adler Suite, inspired by Chicago's Adler Planetarium. The nine compositions are far reaching but not at all off-the-planet. "Star Launch" and "Falling Backwards" are swinging examples of a large ensemble presenting an embraceable package. There are soothing tunes like "Constant Companion" and a touch of funk on "House of the Massives" rounding out a fine set.</p>



# Traditional Selections

ARTIST	Title	Label	X	T
TODD COCHRAN	Thenn And Again, Here And Now	<i>Sunnyside</i>	74	T <sup>B</sup>
GREG LOUGHMAN	Re: Connection	<i>Greg Loughman</i>	73	T <sup>B</sup>
DOUG MACDONALD	Live In Hawaii	<i>dMac</i>	73	T <sup>B</sup>
PEARRING SOUND	Socially Distanced Duos	<i>Pearring Sound</i>	73	T <sup>B</sup>
BRIAN WOODRUFF	A Centering Peace	<i>Queen Jazz</i>	73	T <sup>b</sup>
REBECCA KILGORE	The Rebecca Kilgore Trio - Vol. 1	<i>Heavywood</i>	73	T <sup>b</sup>
FALKNER EVANS	Invisible Words	<i>CAP</i>	72	T <sup>B</sup>
KEITH LOFTIS	Original State	<i>Long Tone</i>	72	T <sup>B</sup>
DAVE MILLER	The Mask-erade Is Over	<i>Summit</i>	72	T <sup>B</sup>
FRANK MORELLI/KEITH OXMAN	The Ox-Mo Incident	<i>Capri</i>	72	T <sup>S</sup>
WILL BERNARD	Ancient Grains	<i>Positone</i>	71	T <sup>B</sup>
TIM HAGANS	A Conversation	<i>Waiting Moon</i>	71	T <sup>N</sup>
DAN MORETTI	Tres Libre	<i>Roots Grooves</i>	71	T <sup>B</sup>
KEVIN SUN	<3 Bird	<i>Endectomorph</i>	71	T <sup>B</sup>
STEVE TINTWEISS	Markstown	<i>Inky Dot</i>	69	T <sup>A</sup>
TYSHAWN SOREY	Autoschediasms	<i>Cantaloupe</i>	66	T <sup>A</sup>
BENOIT DELBECQ	Gentle Ghosts	<i>Jazzdor</i>	62	T <sup>A</sup>

*Jazz thrives, our legacy artform!*

## O's Rating System

O's Place has evolved with our listeners to create a rating system based on three factors: Performance, Sound Quality, and the quality of the Package (including liner notes). The primary criteria is Performance followed by Sound and finally Package.

The ratings (X) have the following weightings and will provide a score from 0-100 with average reviews in the 70 range. Our new ratings are similar to traditional academic ratings.

**Performance: 15x, Sound: 5x, Package: 1x**

0	65	80	95
Pass	Contemplate	Buy	Strong Buy



# O's Latin Features

## Alex Cuba Mendó

Alex Cuba was born Alex Puentes in Cuba before blossoming as a singer, multi-instrumentalist, producer and songwriter in Canada. His lyrics are in both Spanish and English and he also plays most instruments on the album. His combination of scatting, vocalese, spoken word and traditional Latin lyrics over a pleasant, festive backdrop makes Mendó a sizzler. Highlights include the cooler “Amor En La Distancia”, “Si Tú Me Quieres”, “Mundo Nuevo” featuring Lila Downs, the brassy “H X H”, and “Corazón Gitano” with flamenco artist, Antonio Carmona.

Photo: Eduardo Rawdriguez



89  
Caracol  
Latin  
2021

## Ojoyo

72 Sunnyside  
Latin 2021

## Plays S Afrojazz

There's a cool, festive, Latin flavor that resides across the entire set that makes S Afrojazz enjoyable listening. That vibe is actually a blend of South African music and American music: S Afrojazz, created by saxophonist, composer and leader of Ojoyo, Morris Goldberg. Plays S Afrojazz is a rerelease of the 1996 original and it still packs a punch! Chris Botti (t), Anton Fig (d) and Cyro Baptista (perc) are among the talented band members. The festive spirit was readily embraced then and is still fresh. “Harare”, “Madagascar” and “Sophiatown Society” are highlights.

## Alí Bello

2021  
AGBA Music  
Latin 79

## Inheritance

Inheritance is a contemporary Latin jazz album featuring violinist Ali Bello and The Sweet Wire Band. Their uncommon, instrumental combinations result in a fresh and inviting session. Bello bathes us in silky melodies on “Song To Marina” along with guest violinist Regina Carter. We also enjoyed “Bella's Blues” featuring Jaleel Shaw on sax, “Caracas”, and “For All Saints”.



Photo: Ali Bello

# O's Latin Features

## Antonio Adolfo *Jobim Forever*



Photo: Paul Constantinides

**78**  
**2021**  
**Latin**  
**AAM**

Pianist Antonio Adolfo follows his tribute to Milton Nascimento with *Jobim Forever*, featuring the music of Antonio Carlos Jobim. His band is exemplary including Lula Galvao (g), Paulo Braga (d), Rafael Barata (d, perc), Danilo Sinna (a-sax), Marcelo Martins (t-sax, s-sax, fl) and Rafael Rocha (tb). Solos are precise and the changes are crisp. Adolfo's orchestrated arrangements are wonderful presenting nine of Jobim's best in warm and festive lights. "Wave", "How Insensitive", "Favela" and "The Girl From Ipanema" are notable in a stellar set.

## Alex Conde

**Latin 2021**  
**Zoho 83**

## *Descarga for Bud*

Spanish pianist Alex Conde leads a quartet with Jeff Chambers (b), Colin Douglas (d) and John Santos (congas, bongos). Sergio Martinez adds percussion on 6 of the 9 selections. Last time Conde served up fresh arrangements of Monk. *Descarga for Bud* is a more transformational series of Latin arrangements on Bud Powell's bebop! It is executed to perfection! Highlights are "The Fruit" and "Tempus Fugitive" with Mike Olmos (t). Conde's work shines throughout the session for a strong outing!

## Charlie Sepúlveda

## *This is Latin Jazz*

Charlie Sepúlveda is a heralded trumpeter, composer, bandleader, professor, and Grammy Winner. He leads *The Turnaround Band* for his latest release *This is Latin Jazz*, an explosive, session including many special guests. Lead lines rotate band members through the spotlight with a vibrant glimmer that left us energized. Crisp brass accents from Steve Turre (tb), Randy Brecker (t), Miguel Zenon (a-sax) and of course Sepúlveda, make this one sizzle. There are lots of racy, syncopated beats featuring drummer Francisco Alcalá and conguero Nicholas Cozaboom, underscoring the essential Afro-Cuban beat!

**2021**  
**Latin**  
**High Note**  
**79**



Photo: Charlie Sepúlveda

# O's Piano Features

## two from **Satoko Fujii** *Moon On The Lake*

Moon On The Lake features pianist Satoko Fujii in her Tokyo Trio, a rare grouping for her. Bassist Takashi Sugawa, a fresh, new voice with Fujii, takes the spotlight on the opener “Hansho”, immediately making his presence known. Drummer Ittetsu Takemura rounds out the band leading to a crisp, syncopated, free-jazz recording. Of course, Fujii contributes many inspiring solos along the way as an “Aspiration”, supplemented by Sugawa’s work with the bow. These are like-minded improvisers who inspire each other.

**84**  
Avant  
Garde  
Libra  
2021



Photo: Toru Sasaki

## *Piano Music*

**85**  
Avant  
Garde  
Libra  
2021

This is another solo piano effort from free jazz pianist Satoko Fujii. She resides in Kobe City, Japan with her husband, producer Natsuki Tamura. They’ve lived together in Boston, New York, Berlin and Tokyo capturing pulses from around the world, now reflecting on them in her music. She uses a number of devices to extract unique sounds from her grand piano creating eerie, dark and introspective music that is many ways reflective of where we are. We were drawn into the music, just two selections over ~45 minutes. The audio quality is excellent, furthering our enjoyment.

## *The Piano Music of Dick Hyman*

### Steven Harlos

**79**  
Arbors  
Ballads  
2021

Widely acclaimed pianist and educator Steven Harlos takes on The Piano Music of Dick Hyman, the legendary veteran who gets to marvel at the interpretations of three of his compositions. Most notable is “Piano Man” typically performed by Hyman as a 32-minute composition but broken into 24 pieces by Harlos. The brilliance in this piece is Hyman’s interpretation of many great pianists before him. Harlos takes that to another level by gently massaging Hyman’s original. This solo effort illustrates many different jazz styles and combines elements of two talented pianists.



Photo: University of North Texas

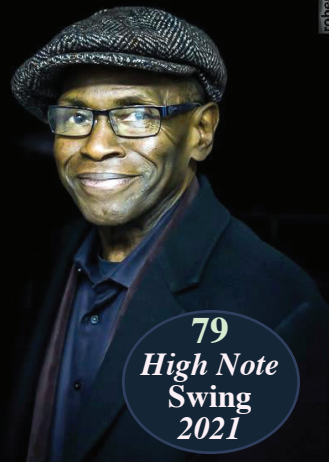


# O's Piano Features

## George Cables

### Too Close For Comfort

Pianist George Cables leads a romantic engagement in a trio with bassist Essiet Essiet and drummer Victor Lewis. Four of the ten selections are Cable originals and the rest are newly arranged standards, all focused on love. They cook on “Klimpel” and dance on “Roses Poses”, one of two Bobby Hutcherson compositions. The interaction between the band mates is seamless across a range of meters making a set that is not Too Close For Comfort. In fact, we anxiously await the time when we can snuggle up and embrace our friends.



79  
*High Note*  
Swing  
2021

## Art Hirahara

2021 Fusion  
*Positone 76*

### Open Sky

Pianist Art Hirahara has resonant passages throughout the set, alone and with his core trio including Boris Kozlov (b) and Rudy Royston (d). Of note are “Cittadella” and “I’m Getting Sentimental Over You” (solo), “Groundswell” and “Together Apart” featuring an explosive exchange between Royston and guest tenor saxophonist Nicole Glover. We also enjoyed the playful spirit of Open Sky, featuring guest Behn Gillece on vibes, Kozlov’s work on “Sunday Morning” and Hirahara on “Empathy”. This is a cool, relaxing set.

## Close To Home

## Ari Erev

74  
*Ari Erev*  
Pop+ Jazz  
2021



Israeli pianist and composer Ari Erev assembles a fine group of musicians, friends and counsel for Close To Home. Assaf Hakimi (b), Gasper Bertoneclj (d), Gilad Dobrecky (perc), and Yuval Cohen (s-sax) form the core band with Erev. Hadar Noiberg adds flute on two selections notably the opener, “Israeli Story” with a fresh bounce from the rhythm section. There are also reflective ballads like “Childhood Scenes” and the lazy “Saturday’s Coffee”. The program alternates between these two themes for an appealing session.

Photo: Ari Erev

# O's Piano Features

## Jill McCarron

Jill plays piano and leads a quartet with bassist Paul Gill, drummer Andy Watson, and Will Anderson on sax and flute. This is a strong team and the spotlight is widespread. McCarron shines on "My Ideal" along with Gill. They swing hard on "One For Amos" featuring Anderson and Gill with a fine bass solo using the bow! Then Anderson plays flute to serve up a taste of Brazil on "Chovendo Ana Roseira". We also enjoyed the syncopated "Short Story".

**78**  
**Bebop**  
**Jill McCarron**  
**2021**

## Jazz Motif

## Adam Glaser

**R&B+Jazz 2021**  
**Adam Glaser 74**

## Excursions

Bass, guitar, drums and electronic keyboards fill the air on Excursions, the second release from composer, multi-instrumentalist, Adam Glaser. He departs from the trio format of Wide Awake performing all of the music using virtual instruments. He cuts across a wide range a contemporary jazz genres over the 15 selections. "Con Artist" is a little funky. "Who Wants Lentil Soup" is more adventurous, and the happily syncopated "A Little Bit of Your Love" highlights Glaser's organ prowess. We also enjoyed the banjo on "I'm Ready". Adam's creativity bodes well.

## Bobby West

## Leimert Park After Dark

65-year-old pianist and composer Bobby West leads a trio with bassist Jeff Littleton and drummer Daniel Bejarano. All three musicians are based in Los Angeles where West was recently honored as a living legend by the Leimert Park Jazz & Blues Society. The core trio is actually all you need on this set for great entertainment. They shine on "Lullaby Of The Leaves", "Get Set", "Leimert Park After Dark" and "I Used To Be Loose". West has toured the world over the decades but always comes back to his home base in LA where he recorded this tribute, his debut as a leader to one of the premier African American cultural centers.

**81**  
**Soulville**  
**Bebop**  
**2021**

Photo: Bobby West



# O's Piano Features

## Cettina Donato & Ninni Bruscutta

### I Siciliani

78  
Fusion  
2021  
Alfa

Cettina Donato is an Italian pianist, composer, arranger and educator, a Berklee College graduate proficient in both classical and jazz.

She combines the genres in a way that appeals to both audiences. I Siciliani is her latest release with vocalist, actor Ninni Bruschetta. All of the music is fresh, originals by Donato behind the works of the late Italian poet Antonio Caldarella. Donato and Bruschetta embrace the poems as their own, a taste of jazz and romance. It is a bit intoxicating!



Photo: Cettina Donato

## *two sides of* Steve Million

### Jazz Words

81  
Origin  
Ballads  
2021

Million opens with a ragtime groove before featured vocalist Sarah Marie Young takes the helm on “Heavens to Monkkitroid” to start the action. Juan Pastor (d), John Sims (b) and Jim Gailloreto (a-sax, fl) round out the quintet. But Just Words is a showcase for Young who expresses herself with splendor and soul on “Mis’ry Waltz” and “Loss”. Sarah’s voice is delicate yet powerful on “Cold Wind” with strong solos by Sims, Million and Gailloreto (fl). It’s a different, appealing session for Steve.

### What I Meant To Say

Pianist and composer Steve Million leads a quartet including Steve Cardenas (g) and Ron Vincent (d), a team that has performed together for many years. Bassist John Sims is a younger, recent addition and he fits in well. They start with the mellow “Open the Book” followed the upbeat “Old Earl”. “The Company” feels like fusion courtesy of Cardenas but most of the rest of these tunes have a light, modern jazz feel with Steve dancing around the keyboard especially on “Situations”. There are well developed solos across the band throughout the session keeping listeners fully engaged.

76  
Origin  
Fusion  
2021



Photo: Steve Million

# O's Sax Features

Photo: Evan Arntzen

## Evan Arntzen Counter melody



**82**  
*Dot Time*  
*Ragtime*  
**2021**

Evan Arntzen is a master of reeded instruments and focuses our attention of the jovial music of the early 20th century with swing, ragtime and blues. The music includes many Counter melody(s) a characteristic of the genre, illustrated best on “Muskrat Ramble” and “Smile”. Vocalist Catherine Russell adds fresh lyrics alongside the bubbly piano of Dalton Ridenhour. Arntzen (cl) swings hard in “Georgia Cabin” and “Counter Intuitive” while the trumpets (Jon-Erik Kellso & Mike Davis) dance on “Put ‘em Down Blues”. This is a spirited set that begs for good times. It’s just in time!

## Kenny Shanker

Alto saxophonist, composer and with Daisuke Abe (g), Mike Eckroth They cook on “Prestissimo”, “Mirth” and featuring guest trumpeter Bill Mobley. They show balance simmering on “It Never Entered My Mind” and swinging on “Without A Song” and “I’m Old Fashioned”. We preferred the upbeat energetic tunes but Shanker exudes confidence at all tempos using dynamics and tone to impact his imprint.

**81**  
*Bebop*  
*Wise Cat*  
**2021**

Beautiful Things producer Kenny Shanker leads a quintet (p), Yoshi Waki (b) and Brian Fishler (d). “Orange and Gray”, all Shanker originals

## Smoke + Mirrors

Smooth jazz saxophonist Steve Cole brings us a fresh set of ten tunes that are instantly familiar, fun and helping usher in new summer memories. We especially enjoyed the groove on “Loves Me, Lives Me Not”, “Wayman” and “It’s A House Party”, the latter two with Ricky Peterson playing organ. Producer David Mann handles all other keyboards, synth bass, electronic drums, sax and horn arrangements. Mel Brown adds bass on four selections with Mark Egan (b) and Todd Sucherman (d) naturalizing “Justice”.

## Steve Cole



**2021**  
*Mack Ave.*  
*Smooth*  
**79**

Photo: Steve Cole



# O's Sax Features

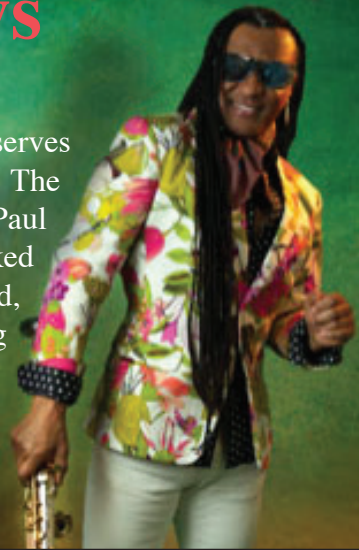
Photo: Marion Meadows

78

Smooth  
Shanachie  
2021

## Marion Meadows Twice As Nice

Smooth jazz saxophonist Marion Meadows serves up yet another album of chart busters on Twice As Nice. The production team is “can’t miss” with Jeff Lorber (keys), Paul Brown (g), Chris “Big Dog” Davis (keys) and Meadows. We liked “Yesterday Is Gone” featuring vocalist Donnelly Smallwood, and the mesmerizing finale, “The Thrill Of Rain” featuring guitarist Paul Brown. Other highlights are “Step To This” and “Lunchbox”. This is a very good CD to set and forget when you are cooking dinner, driving or just getting into your groove.



## ALTOIZM



Photos: Afar Music

76  
Modern  
2021  
Afar

Altoizm is a triage of powerful alto saxophonists making their self-titled debut recording. They are Sharel Cassidy, Rajiv Halim, and Greg Ward in front of a rhythm section with Richard D. Johnson (p), Jerimiah Hunt (b) and Michael Piolet (d). The music is all original including a couple of borrowed chord changes from Benny Golson and Cedar Walton with Cassidy’s “Thoroughbred” and “Cedar’s Groove”. The collective musicianship of this Chicago-based team is exemplary and hopefully that proximity leads to more live performances and future collaborations.



# O's Drummer Features

## The Drummer Loves Ballads

### John Armato

Drummer John Armato is an unusual cat for a drummer. He favors the warm vibe of ballads to the pounding of a jam session, as he explains on “How ‘bout a Ballad?” The Drummer Loves Ballads is his debut album. He assembles a team of 25+ musicians to kindle your fire. The flow of special guest artists starts with Warren Vaché (t) on “Dreamsville”. Lisa Henry (vocals) and Doug Talley (sax) are featured on “At the Trocadero”, Brett Jackson stars on “Night Lights”, Houston Person (sax) and Vaché team up on “Don’t Worry ‘bout Me”, then Rob Gutierrez and the late Molly Hammer sing on “Moonlight”. Armato keeps it light with brief interludes then shows his chops on “Poinciana”. A fine effort that reunited friends to express fine music.



### Shawn Glyde

Drummer, composer and educator

*Blue Canoe*

**2021 Fusion 77**

### The Pyramid Factor

Shawn Glyde leads a fine band that includes bassists Jimmy Haslip and John Patitucci, guitarists Larry Koonse and Rich Severson, vocalist Meghan McKown and many others. The Pyramid Factor is a compilation album on Blue Canoe with some of his best work to date. The music is all remixed and remastered by Rick Breen. We enjoyed “Tony’s Temple”, “Gong’s Market”, the club groove on “Blind”, and “Nine Steps”.

### Abe Rounds

### The Confidence to Make Mistakes

Australian drummer, percussionist, vocalist and composer Abe Rounds now resides in Los Angeles playing with Meshell Ndegeocello. Abe steps out with his first solo recording, The Confidence To Make Mistakes, a heavily percussion-laden session. He is portraying a massive dose of inner feelings in eleven songs spread over 22 impactful minutes!



# O's Vocal Features



**88**  
Ballads  
*Dee Daniels*  
2021

## The Promise

### Dee Daniels

Dee Daniels has a deep soulful voice that she spreads over mature R&B with supporting harmonized vocals from Steve Grissette, Amy Grissette, Martha Lynn Smith, Tania Hancheroff, husband, executive producer Doug Fleming and some over dubs. Daniels is a melodic singer with well-articulated, meaningful lyrics, making these spiritual songs work inside and outside of church! The music is a strong backbone for Dee's original compositions.

Photo: Dee Daniels

## Kristin Callahan

Kristin has a warm, inviting voice. The songs are mostly classics Seppa. Callahan opens with a unique with sweet vocal harmonies. There's a cool, swinging bounce on "Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise" and a rather funky arrangement of "Caravan" featuring Seppa. We also enjoyed "The Shadow of Your Smile".

**78**  
Ballads  
*K Callahan*  
2021

## Lost In A Dream

that has listeners Lost In A Dream, arranged by co-producer, bassist Eliot arrangement of "Lush Life" finished

## Dara Tucker

### Dreams of Waking: Music

### For A Better World

Dara Tucker's voice is soft, warm and inviting. Dezhon Douglas (b), Cyrus Chestnut (p), John Ellis (t-sax, s-sax) and Johnathan Blake (d) are some of the talented supporting cast. Tucker sings fresh arrangements of "You Haven't Done Nothing Yet", "Someday We'll All Be Free", "What's Going On" and "Make Someone Happy". These are all Dreams of Waking: Music For A Better World. It's both timely and well executed!



**92**  
Ballads  
*Cherry Hill*  
2021

Photo: Dara Tucker



# O's Vocal Features

## Beverley Beirne *Dream Dancer*

Beverley Beirne is a well-articulated alto singer from the UK presenting her third album as a leader, Dream Dancer. It's an upbeat, bouncy, cabaret-style set. Accompanying Beirne are Sam Watts (p), Rob Hughes (sax, fl), Flo Moore (b) and Ben Brown (d, perc). There are fresh arrangements of twelve lesser-known tunes and classics, notably "Bill", "Winter Moon" and "Let's Face The Music and Dance".

77  
33 Jazz  
Ballads  
2021



Photo: Beverley Beirne

## Amber Weekes

2021 Ballads

*'Round Midnight Re-Imagined*

Soulful vocalist Amber Amber Inn 75 Weekes breathes her magic into 'Round Midnight Re-imagined. She chooses a dozen classics to recreate her family's history in New York City during the Post Harlem Renaissance Period. Amber performs the songs through her own lenses, a risky endeavor that pays dividends with the help of extensive liner notes. Among the best are the bluesy "Hazel's Hips", "Sistermoon/Summertime", "My Romance", "The Bar Suite" and the title track.



Photo: Judy Wexler

77  
Ballads  
Jewel City  
2021

## Judy Wexler *Back To The Garden*

This is a collection of freshly arranged, classic, 1960s pop songs that are ushered into 2021 by vocalist, Judy Wexler. This is not just another throwback album. The relevance is uncanny as we face many similar issues amidst the pandemic. Wexler engages producer, arranger and keyboardist Jeff Colella with Larry Koonse (g) and many other talented musicians to provide catchy instrumental accompaniment with rich, harmonized background vocals. Highlights are "Get Together", "Big Yellow Taxi", "For What It's Worth" and "Everybody's Talkin'" with Hendrik Meurkens adding harmonica.

# O's Vocal Features

## Hilary Kole

## Sophisticated Lady

Vocalist Hilary Kole has always pushed the envelope as a performer and sometimes lost gigs as a result of it. But she's matured gracefully and knows how to delight her audience. The band is John Hart (g), Adam Birnbaum (p), Paul Gill (b), Aaron Kimmel (d), Tom Beckham (vibes) and arranger Chris Byars (woodwinds). Kole's voice is intoxicating on "Love Dance", "Let's Face The Music And Dance", and "The Sweetest Sounds". Her dynamics and phrasing are spot on, leading to an enjoyable session of standards.



**79**  
**Ballads**  
**H. Kole**  
**2021**

Photo: Bill Westmoreland

## Mary LaRose

**2021 Ballads**

## Out Here

Vocalist Mary LaRose is a master **79 Little Music** of jazz vocalese and free bop. She stretches the boundaries mixing free jazz, traditional ballads, spoken word and original themes for Out Here, interpreting the music of Eric Dolphy. She includes more traditional takes like the Latin-infused "Music Matador". "Serene" "245" and "Warm Canto" are the best of the blended genres. There is excellent work on clarinet by Jeff Lederer, cellist Tomeka Reid, bassist Nick Dunston and drummer Matt Wilson with guest Patricia Brennan adding vibes on "GW", our favorite track. Hats off to Mary for this creative and ambitious endeavor!

## Le Perez

## Live at Savanna



**76**  
**Blues**  
**Savanna Jazz**  
**2021**

Le puts her deep mellow voice on the classics and blues with her own blend of soul, jazz and R&B. She shines on "Angel Eyes", "Aged and Mellow" and "I Gotta Feeling". Perez has fine accompaniment including saxophonist Noel Jewkes, pianist Kelly Park, bassist Buca Necak and Akira Tana on drums. Perez makes a compelling plea on "Meet Me With Your Black Drawers On". Based in San Francisco now, she's looking to hop onto the Chicago scene. She should blend right into the jazz/blues scene on Rush Street!

Photo: Le Perez

# O's Trumpet Features

Photo: Marques Carrol

81  
Modern  
Jmarq  
2021

## Marques Carrol The Ancestors Call

Marques Carroll is looking to be the best trumpeter in Chicago! He takes a step in that direction with his solo debut The Ancestors' Call. He leads a tight band including Amr Fahmy (p), Christian Dillingham (b) and Greg Artry (d). Vocalist Sharon Irving breathes a change of pace into "Aires Goddess". We liked the Latin-infused "Urgency", the warmth of "Resolution For Us", and "The Ancestors Final Words".

## Natsuki Tamura

This is a solo effort from the renowned, Natsuki Tamura. He starts off with a percussion (pots) and chants on a new, tribal sound. He displays warm tone on "Kawau", a very melodic, ballad, like "Bora", a piano solo. And the recording would not be complete without Natsuki extracting obscene sounds from his horn on "Sagi". Tamura-san displays the complete range of his prowess on Koki, a recording that is varied enough for a jazz-fusion classification! Tamura is having a ball and it spills into our enjoyment.

77  
Fusion  
Libra  
2021

## Koki Solo

70-year-old, Japanese, free jazz trumpeter blazing pace on "Sikirei" then combining "Karugamo" and "Kamoni", presenting a new, tribal sound. He displays warm tone on "Kawau", a very melodic, ballad, like "Bora", a piano solo. And the recording would not be complete without Natsuki extracting obscene sounds from his horn on "Sagi". Tamura-san displays the complete range of his prowess on Koki, a recording that is varied enough for a jazz-fusion classification! Tamura is having a ball and it spills into our enjoyment.

## Alex Sipiagin

81  
Positone  
Fusion  
2021

## Upstream

Upstream is an upbeat modern jazz set featuring Russian trumpeter Alex Sipiagin with pianist Art Hirahara, bassist Boris Kozlov and Rudy Royston on drums. They perform a balanced set with strength at all tempos. The music is mostly originals composed by the band members. Highlights are "Echo Canyon", "Shura", "Sight", Miyako" - the lone cover, and the title track.

Photo: Alex Sipiagin



# O's Guitar Features

## Alex Wintz

81  
Fusion  
Outside In  
2020

## Live To Tape



Photo: Orestis Tsonopoulos

bassist

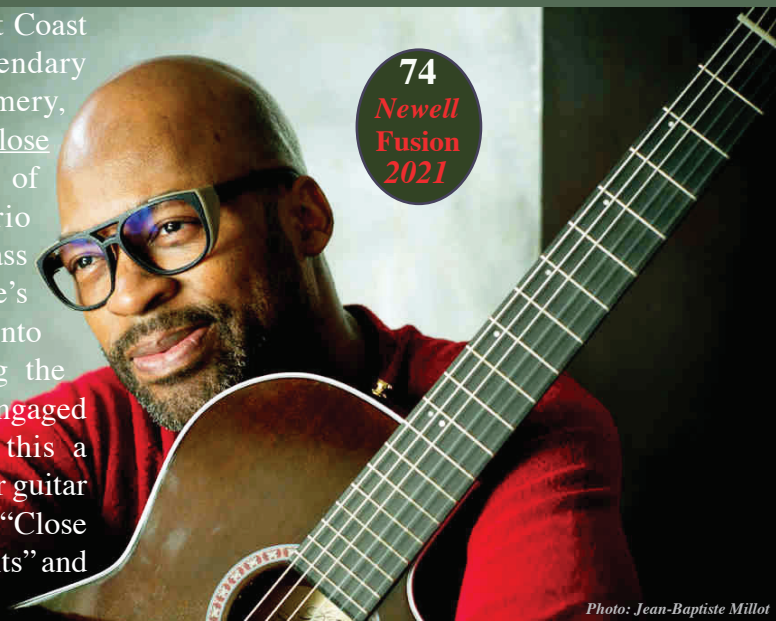
Guitarist Alex Wintz forms a trio with Dave Baron and drummer Jimmy MacBride for Live To Tape, a live studio recording with no overdubs (like the old days)! The trio met while they were students at Juilliard and have been performing together in New York for over five years. They come out cooking on “Idris” for the late drummer Idris Muhammad, swinging on “Textures”, and relaxing on “What Me Worry”. Wintz and his band sound good regardless of the tempo leading to a satisfying session.

*O's primary listening is done with a Sony XA777ES SACD player, Ayre C5-xe<sup>MP</sup> CD player, Jeff Rowland Consonance preamp, two Jeff Rowland Model 1 amplifiers (balanced mono mode), Classe CA-200 amplifier, Mirage M1 speakers and BeLW 800D speakers wired with Cardas Hex 5C speaker wire, Transparent Audio interconnects, Pro-ject Debut turntable with Sumilo Blue Point No. 2 Cartridge and E.S.P. Essence Reference Power Distribution System.*

## Close Your Eyes

Guitarist, vocalist Lionel Loueke was born in Benin on the West Coast of Africa influenced by legendary jazz guitarists Wes Montgomery, George Benson and Joe Pass. Close Your Eyes is his first album of standards, presented in a trio format with Reuben Rogers on bass and Eric Harland on drums. Loueke's reimagined melodies morph into integrated solos personalizing the work. Rogers and Harland are engaged participants that help make this a winning session, particularly for guitar lovers. Highlights of this set are “Close Your Eyes”, “Naima”, “Footprints” and “It Might As Well Be Spring”.

## Lionel Loueke



74  
Newell  
Fusion  
2021

Photo: Jean-Baptiste Millot

# O's Guitar Features

## Pete Alderton

### Mystery Lady

Mystery Lady is the fifth blues album by guitarist, singer and composer Pete Alderton with producer, singer Carsten Mentzel (g, b, d). Pete's laid-back raspy tone defines the character and feel of the set. The stories are engaging and perfect for an entertaining outing. Our favorites are "Cocaine Lil", "Hellbound Train", "The House of the Rising Sun" and the title track.

76  
Blues  
Songways  
2021

Photo: HighRes Audio



## Andre Ferreri Quintero

Guitarist Andre Ferreri Quintero assembles a Kobe Watkins (d), Anna Stadlman (b) and Brad Stallings, Phillip Howe and Sean musicians live on the Charlotte jazz scene and are thrilled to hear them on this recording! They open swinging happily on "Mighty Fine" followed by "Seasons, with rich solos from Rabie and Ferreri. Stallings adds the B3 on "Uptown Swing" while Ziad shines again on "Good Bones" this time supplemented with fine solos from Howe and Watkins. Andre and Ziad take the melody in unison for "On The Move" before ending with a "Love Letter To Mary" capping the very inclusive session.

82  
Fusion  
Laser  
2021

### Numero Uno

fine team with Ziad Rabie (t-sax), Wilcox (t). Piano duty was split Higgins. We've seen most of these

## Serendipity

## John Stein

Photo: John Stein

Guitarist John Stein reflects on the dark light cast on the arts over the past two years with a set that invites hope. Serendipity opens with a blues feeling on "Alfie's Theme", then a dash of calypso "On Green Dolphin Street" before bouncing around through the rest of the session. While Stein dominates on guitar, bassist Ed Lucie anchors the trio and drummer Mike Connors trades riffs with him on "Labor Of Love". It's a cool recording arising from the wrath of the pandemic.

76  
Whaling City  
Fusion  
2021





# O's Bass Features

## Nicki Parrott

### If You Could Read My Mind

**82**  
**Arbors**  
**Ballads**  
**2021**

Nicki Parrott sings about romance from her heart. Her voice is soft and tender, very inviting over these dozen contemporary ballads. She also does a fine job on bass. David Blenkhorn (g), Larry Fuller (p) and Lewis Nash (d) round out the rhythm section. There are great covers of “Lean On Me”, “We’ve Only Just Begun”, “Jolene” and “This Girl’s In Love With You” featuring Parrott (b, vocals) and tenor saxophonist Harry Allen. We also enjoyed the swinging groove of “You Belong To Me.”



Photo: Brian Wittman

## O's Place Jazz Ruler™

### Traditional

### Contemporary

1900

1920

1940

1960

1970

1980

2000

Ragtime T<sup>R</sup>  
Dixie T<sup>D</sup>

Blues&Ballads T<sup>b</sup>  
Swing T<sup>S</sup>

Bebop T<sup>B</sup>  
Big Band T<sup>N</sup>

Latin T<sup>L</sup>  
Free T<sup>A</sup>

Fusion C<sup>F</sup>  
R&B+Jazz C<sup>R</sup>

Funk C<sup>f</sup>  
Pop+Jazz C<sup>P</sup>

Acid C<sup>A</sup>

Photo: Samuel Prather

## Esperanza Spalding

### Songwrights Apothecary Lab

Esperanza continues to expand her genius with vocals and vocalizations on top of her bass work. Pitch and tone are exacting with her soft, wispy voice. The “Formwela” series includes Spaulding’s use of sampling to complement her music. She collaborates with Corey King on “Formwela 4-6”. This series expands her audience to the contemporary side but it retains a level of sophistication to appease the straight-ahead crew. These tracks were reviewed as singles upon release and will be included in an upcoming album Songwrights Apothecary Lab with 12 selections in total.

**83**  
**Modern**  
**Concord**  
**2021**



<b>ARTIST</b> <b>Title</b> <i>Label</i> <b>Rating</b>	<b><u>Top Contemporary Picks</u></b> <b>O's Notes</b>
<b>RALE MICIC</b> <b><u>ONLY LOVE WILL</u></b> <b>STAY</b> <b>82</b> <i>Whaling City</i> <b>C<sup>F</sup></b>	Serbian guitarist Rale Micic leads most melodies with a relaxing groove that feels just right. Jared Gold complements him on the B3 with drumming duties split between Johnathan Blake and Geoff Clapp. The pandemic forced Micic to slow down, reflect, and try new things, as illustrated on <u>Only Love Will Stay</u> . Highlights are “How Deep Is The Ocean”, “Riverdale”, “Lipe Cvatu” and “Better Days Ahead”.
<b><u>COLLECTIVE</u></b> <b>THINKING</b> <b>C<sup>F</sup></b> <i>Secret Light</i> <b>81</b>	<u>Collective Thinking</u> is a project featuring Johnnie Valentino (g), Jimmy Haslip (b), Clayton Cameron (d) and Alan Pasqua (p). Will Atrope Jr. starts the motion with a precise trumpet solo on “Advent”. Mick Rossi (p) and Ken Burgomaster (p) also appear with vocalist Elissa Lala adding a soft touch in the background We particularly enjoyed Valentino’s work on “Hard Times”, many vibrant bass solos by Haslip, and the funky groove on “I Hear Ya”.
<b>LUNAR OCTET</b> <b>C<sup>F</sup></b> <b><u>CONVERGENCE</u></b> <i>Summit</i> <b>80</b>	The Lunar Octet was born just west of Detroit in Ann Arbor, MI over 36 years ago. They pride themselves on providing a contemporary, relevant sound that cuts across several genres. <u>Convergence</u> is mostly Afro Caribbean Latino sounds but occasionally they throw in a dose of Mediterranean flair as on “Samba Over Easy”, and taste of calypso on “Subway Tension”. We also enjoyed “Flugel Tune” and “Until I Find The Words”. The band members have changed and are scattered across the US but they still come together to produce memorable moments, rekindling the fire with both old and new tunes.
<b>DIANE DELIN</b> <b>C<sup>P</sup></b> <b><u>CHICAGO</u></b> <b><u>STANDARD TIME</u></b> <i>BluJazz</i> <b>76</b>	Violinist, composer and educator Diane Delin leads a quartet featuring pianist Jodie Christian with bassist Kelly Sill and Steve Davis on drums. <u>Chicago Standard Time</u> consists of 4 standards and “For The Moment”, a Delin original. Delin leads most melodies through each of the rhythm section weighs in on solos notably on “Simone”, our favorite of the relatively brief (~28 min) encounter.
<b>DR. MIKE</b> <b>BOGLE</b> <b>C<sup>F</sup></b> <b><u>LET THERE BE</u></b> <b><u>LIGHT</u></b> <b>74</b> <i>MBP/Groove!</i>	Trombonist, pianist, vocalist and composer Dr. Mike Bogle, a University of North Texas alum injects a dose of funk into <u>Let There Be Light</u> , his latest release. That groove is most notable on “Eat Your Vitamins” featuring bassist Buddy Mohamed, drummer Harrell Bosarge, Andy Barrus on steel pans, Dana Sudborough, vibraphone, and Bogle on trombone. Mohamed stands out with a rousing solo on the opener, “Voyager’s Dream” and the quintet comes together nicely on the title track.

[www.OsPlaceJazz.com](http://www.OsPlaceJazz.com)

# O's Place Features

Photo: Uassyn

## Zacharya

## UASSYN

UASSYN is a Swiss trio featuring Tapiwa Svosve (a-sax, bells), Silvan Jeger (b, bells) and Vicent Glanzmann (d, bells). They've evolved over several years to arrive at Zacharya, their debut recording of all-original music. They refer to the genre as skater music, inspired by skateboarders. For us, it's free fusion. We liked Glanzmann's percussive work on "Dji-Ut", our favorite of the six selections. He also adds a cool drum solo on "Kheretem". The music is free flowing but not too far gone in a brief but impactful 32 minutes.

77  
Free Fusion  
Double Moon  
2021

## Ches Smith

Drummer and composer Ches Smith a masterful collection of African with mixed vocal lyrics in Haitian liner notes bring the messages to life, stark realities of our neighboring country, expressed with music. Sirene Dantor Rene's voice is beautiful fluttering with the Matt Mitchell's piano on "Leaves Arrive". The natural percussive vibe comes from master drummers Daniel Brevil, Markus Schwartz and Fanfan Jean Guy Rene. We enjoyed "Women of Iron" and a taste of wilderness on "Path of Seven Colors". Miguel Zenón (a-sax) and Nick Dunston (b) round out the band for Path of Seven Colors. The package includes a bonus disc with seven percussive instrumentals featuring We All Break 2015.

80  
Pyroclastic  
World  
2021

## Path of Seven Colors

and his band *We All Break* put together rhythms, traditional Haitian vodou, and jazz Creole. Essential English translations in the

## Behn Gillece

## Still Doing Our Thing

Vibraphonist Behn Gillece lines up with a polished rhythm section including Art Hirahara (p), Boris Kozlov (b) and Rudy Royston (d). The syncopated percussion blended with piano and vibes is sizzling on "Rattles" while Royston and Kozlov set the pace on "Outnumbered". Nicole Glover adds soothing, warm sax notes on "Event Horizon". We also enjoyed the relaxing "Going On Well" and "Extraction". There are strong performances from the entire band making Still Doing Our Thing an engaging and rewarding session.

2021  
Positone  
Fusion  
89



Photo: Behn Gillece



# O's Place Features

## Lisa Hilton

76  
Pop+Jazz  
Lisa K. Hilton  
2021

Following her first pandemic release, *More Than Another Day*, pianist/composer Lisa Hilton serves up another beautiful, introspective recording. There are solo piano and trio groupings with bassist Luques Curtis and drummer Rudy Royston. We enjoyed the bouncy feel of “Fall Upon A Miracle” and “Infinite Tango” along with the peaceful “Random Journey”. Most of the original music on *Transparent Sky* blends into the landscape for a relaxed listening session, meditation or just good background, certainly appreciated as we try to re-emerge from the doldrums.

### *Transparent Sky*

Photo: Aaron Regan



## Various Artists *Changüí: The Sound of Guantánamo* 76 Latin 2021

Petaluma

**CHANGÜÍ**—*The Sound of Guantánamo* is a new 3 CD box set with an 80+ page booklet that documents the music and history from Cuba's Guantánamo region. The Changüí (a word meaning party) music originated in the early 19th century by slaves who worked at the sugar cane refineries. They played music to celebrate the weekend coming after work on Fridays. They cobbled instruments from whatever was available: bones, gourds, knives, etc. Changui is a syncopated music with call-and-response phrasing. The plentiful photographs and descriptions in the liner notes help the music extend well beyond your speakers.

## Harvie S *Going For It*

76  
2021  
Savant  
Fusion

This is a live session recorded at the 1369 Jazz Club in Cambridge, MA in 1985. Jerry Bergonzi captured the performance from the audience on cassettes with uncanny quality. The audience is very participative, in fact they scared the crap out of me when I first heard some of the comments in the background, the downside of a great listening studio. Drummer Alan Dawson keeps a spirited pace and plays a lively solo by on “*Going For It*” while the spotlight reigns mostly on guitarist Mike Stern and leader, bassist Harvie S. It's a classic mid-80s set!



Photo: Harvie S



# O's Place Features

## Long-Distance Connections

### Lukasz Pawlik

Keyboardist and composer Lukasz Pawlik assembles a fine band for his latest release Long Distance Connections. Randy Brecker (t, flugelhorn), Tom Kennedy (b), Gary Novak (d) and Dave Weckl (d) all inject their prowess along the way. The eerie underwater sounds of “Jellyfish”, the heavily syncopated “For Odds Sake”, “Indian Garden” & “A Matter Of Urgency”, the funky “Planet X”, and “Greg’s Walk” featuring guitarist Mike Stern are all memorable takes.

81  
Fusion  
Summit  
2021



Photo: Lukasz Pawlik

### Artifacts Trio

76 Fusion 2021  
Astral Spirits

### ...And Then There's This

The Artifacts Trio features drummer Mike Reed, cellist Tomeka Reid and flutist Nicole Mitchell on ...and then there's this. They are all prominent, influential members in the third generation of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Music (AACM). Each of the Chicago-based musicians stretch out on this eclectic set of structured free fusion. Reed's explosive energy is contagious and Reid and Mitchell balance it with rich, improvised solos.

## Music for the Exploration of Elusive Phenomena

### Julian Gerstin

Percussionist, composer and arranger Julian Gerstin presents Music for the Exploration of Elusive Phenomena, a world jazz experience.

The combined effect of drums, congas, and a myriad of percussion instruments leads to an exotic and natural expression of communication. They open with the afro-beat groove of “American History” featuring vocalist/narrator Wanda Houston. “After the Sleep of Lies” captures post-45th President chaos illustrated by vocalist Sarah LeMieux. We also enjoyed “Long Journey Home”. This COVID-collaboration was recorded by each musician at home then assembled by Gary Henry.

75  
J. Gerstin  
Modern  
2021



Photo: Julian Gerstin

## Contemporary Selections

ARTIST	Title	Label	X	T
Utopia	<u>Imaginably</u>	<i>Utopia</i>	81	C <sup>P</sup>
Asaf Sirkis	<u>Solar Flash</u>	<i>Moonjune</i>	76	C <sup>F</sup>
DOUGLAS J. CUOMO	<u>Seven Limbs</u>	<i>Sunnyside</i>	74	C <sup>P</sup>
KARI IKONEN	<u>Impressions, Improvisations &amp; Compositions</u>	<i>Ozella</i>	74	C <sup>F</sup>
DAYNA STEPHENS	<u>Pluto Juice</u>	<i>Contagious</i>	74	C <sup>F</sup>
BOB SABELLICO	<u>Influence</u>	<i>Powderfinger</i>	71	C <sup>F</sup>
THREE-LAYER CAKE	<u>Stove Top</u>	<i>Rare Noise</i>	71	C <sup>F</sup>
JP SCHWALM & M REUTER	<u>Aufbruch</u>	<i>Rare Noise</i>	71	C <sup>P</sup>
HUGH MANWELL	<u>Hugh</u>	<i>Onza</i>	69	C <sup>R</sup>
KEVIN KASTNING	<u>The First Realm</u>	<i>Greydisc</i>	67	C <sup>F</sup>
FABRICE MARTINEZ	<u>Droles De Dames</u>	<i>BMC</i>	67	C <sup>F</sup>
HUMANBEING	<u>HumanBeing</u>	<i>Rare Noise</i>	63	C <sup>P</sup>
CHARNETT MOFFETT	<u>New Love</u>	<i>Motéma</i>	63	C <sup>F</sup>
P.KELLY / P.GRABOWSKY	<u>Please Leave Your Light On</u>	<i>Cooking Vinyl</i>	62	C <sup>b</sup>
GABOR LESKO	<u>Earthway</u>	<i>Creativity's Paradise</i>	61	C <sup>P</sup>
JAKE BREAKS	<u>Breaksy</u>	<i>Wide Hive</i>	58	C <sup>R</sup>
BOB GORRY	<u>GoBruCcio</u>	<i>NHIC</i>	53	C <sup>F</sup>

### Horizons Quartet

2021 Fusion

74 PM Records

### *Horizons Quartet*

The Horizons Quartet is a collaboration between Dan Wilkins (sax) and James Collins (p) with Gene Perla (b) and Bryon Landham (d). They play original music composed by Wilkins inspired by his passion for oil painting. Highlights are “Benediction of the Moon”, “Get The Point” and “Gala’s Blessing” with Wilkin’s warm sax. “Kindling Of The Phoenix” is a swinging finale that punctuates a fine set.

[www.OsPlaceJazz.com](http://www.OsPlaceJazz.com)

### O's Rating Scale (X)

0                      65                      80                      95



Pass

Contemplate

Buy

Strong Buy

# O's Place Legends

## Bill Evans

**Resonance**  
**2021 Bebop 84**

## Live At Ronnie Scott's

Legendary pianist Bill Evans in In prime form on this live session scored at Ronnie Scott's in London over a 4-week engagement. Evans performs in a trio including two other legendary musicians, bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Jack DeJohnette. Each man performs masterfully alongside the genius of Bill Evans notably on "Embraceable You" and "Someday My Prince Will Come". Those are just a few of the twenty selections presented on two discs. The recording is mono but the performance is remarkable, complemented by an extensive booklet of liner notes with photos and interviews.

## Roy Hargrove & Mulgrew Miller

### *In Harmony*



**93**  
**Resonance**  
**Ballads**  
**2021**

This is an excellent recording revisiting two legends, the late trumpeter Roy Hargrove and late pianist Mulgrew Miller. This live recording was captured from two sessions, on January 15, 2006 at the Kaufman Music Center, NY and on November 9, 2007 at Lafayette College, PA. Miller displays incredible 2-handed prowess on "What Is This Thing Called Love" and Hargrove is right there with him in a spirited exchange. That just the first of thirteen selections on two discs including the encore for nearly 2 hours of entertainment. Roy exhibits rich mellow tone on the ballads to warm your soul. Just sit back and enjoy while browsing through 68 pages of liner notes, photos and interviews. They are truly In Harmony.

## Judson Green

On Gratitude, composer and pianist Daniel Jordan (woodwinds), Walt Jordan's melodies are warm and "Q" for Quincy Jones. Other highlights are "He's Missing His Pants" and "Gentle Rain". The late pianist was also an esteemed executive at Disney and a trustee at DePauw University. Gratitude was recorded in 2017 before Green died in August 2020 at 68.

**2021**  
**Judson Green**  
**Pop+Jazz**  
**77**

### Gratitude

Judson Green leads a quartet with Hubbard (d) and Ron Jenkins (b). catchy as on "It's Coming Back" and

**Final Notes** Brazilian trombonist **Raul De Souza** died at age 86 in France on 13 June 2021 from throat cancer. Bassist **Rick Laird** died on the 4th of July from lung cancer. He was 80. Drummer **Jerry Granelli** died from internal bleeding on July 20. He was 80. Pianist **Larry Harlow** died on August 20th from heart failure. He was 82. Bassist **Baron Browne**, died on September 2 of brain cancer at 61. Prolific jazz bassist **George Mraz** died on September 16 from undisclosed causes. He was 77. The musical contributions of these fine jazz professionals will remain with us forever.



# O's Place Features



Photo: Emmanuelle Nemoz

78  
Latin  
*BluJazz*  
2021

## Raul De Souza Plenitude

The late Brazilian trombonist Raul De Souza “Raulzinho” had a glorious career spanning six decades! His last album *Plenitude*, recorded with his young Generations Band, mixes funk, jazz and samba. We enjoyed “Naña”, packed with invigorating solos around the horn, De Souza’s fine trombone work on “Nethina Aura”, and the funky vibe on fresh arrangements of “Daisy Mae” and “Sweet Lucy”.

## Brian Bromberg A Little Driving Music

Brian Bromberg is one of the most fluid bassists on the contemporary jazz scene, leading the melodies as well as anchoring funky rhythms. He invites an all-star cast to join him for *A Little Driving Music*. Ray Fuller (g) Lenny Castro (perc), Tom Zink (keyboards) and Tony Moore (d) are the primary rhythm section with Andrew Neu (sax), Michael Steven (t) and Nick Lane (tb) serving as the core horn section. Everette Harp (t-sax), Dave Koz (a-sax) and Marion Meadows (s-sax) are among the plentiful guest list. Bromberg touches several genres within the contemporary jazz sector across 13 originals that will keep your heart pumping.

79  
Mack Ave  
Pop+Jazz  
2021



Photo: Brian Bromberg

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