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O'pening Notes

The media swirl focuses on the hysteria and sensationalism surrounding us, musical artists are centered on what feels right to them, unveiling the fog of disinformation and highlighting facts. They are increasingly bringing awareness to the masses and expressing the associated emotions through music to call us to action, to make a difference.

This quarter's new music seems to be packed with messages, just in time for the upcoming elections. Get informed, get motivated, and vote!

I had a couple of readers ask me what does it mean when you say the music swings?" Well, when the music is swinging, the musicians are in sync, your foot starts to pat, your head is bobbing, you start to snap you fingers, and you just feel good! That's what it means when the music is swinging.

O's Place Jazz Magazine

P.O. Box 38430
Charlotte, NC 28278

---> Sound advice at a nice price!

www.OsPlaceJazz.com

O'pening Notes cont.

We're in our 30th year and see more jazz artists performing into their 70's, 80's and even 90's. Check out Betty Bryant at 94! And these cats aren't just making an appearance, they are still swinging!

As always, we'd love to hear from you, any time.

Enjoy the music!

O

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THE TOP TEN SCORES

1. **JENNIFER WHARTON** - [Grit & Grace](#)
2. **JOHN CHEN** - [Sun of Music](#)
2. **MARKUS HOWELL** - [Chosen Path](#)
2. **LES McCANN** - [Never A Dull Moment](#)
2. **RUSS SPIEGEL** - [Caribbean Blue](#)
6. **BRIAN BROMBERG** - [LaFaro](#)
6. **HAZELRIGG BROTHERS** - [Synchronicity](#)
6. **NITAI HERSHKOVITS** - [Call On The Old Wise](#)
6. **JELENA JOVOVIC** - [NIGHT BIRD](#)
10. **AHMAD JAMAL** - [Emerald City Nights](#)

Click on the "ARTIST'S NAME" to go directly to the review

O's primary listening is done with a Sony XA777ESS ACD player, Ayre C5-xe^{MP} 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.

O's Rating Scale (X)

0 65 80 95



Unbiased Sound Advice from O's Place Jazz

Top Traditional Picks

O's Notes

ARTIST Title Label Perf/Sound	
DAVE LIEBMAN / JEFF WILLIAMS <u>In Duo</u> T ^B <i>Whirlwind</i> 83	This is an atypical pairing featuring drummer Jeff Williams with saxophonist David Liebman <u>In Duo</u> . They perform two extended free bop, compositions that are vibrant, melodic, and loaded with energy. It was a spontaneous session recorded at Bar Room 432 in Manhattan in 1991 and released in 2023!
SATOKO FUJII <u>Jet Black</u> T ^A <i>Libra</i> 82	Japanese free jazz pianist Satoko Fujii leads her Tokyo Trio with bassist Takashi Sugawa and drummer Ittetsu Takemura. We characterize <u>Jet Black</u> as syncopated, orderly chaos. There's a story, an intelligible story that we could follow on tunes like "Sky Reflection" and "Take A Step". We found this addition of Fujii's spontaneous improvisation to be palatable, and certainly among her best efforts.
TONY JONES & JESSICA JONES <u>Hearing Into The</u> <u>Future</u> T ^B <i>Reva</i> 76	Composer Jessica Jones plays tenor sax, piano. Her husband Tony Jones also writes and plays tenor sax. They represent half of the Jessica Jones Quartet and together they play a series of duets, sax/piano and sax/sax. We enjoyed the entangled saxy "Bird's Word", and the romantic "I Thought About You" & "Oliver's Leftovers". While there is some creative improvisation as on "Loose Talk, Part 2", the duo plays more modern jazz than the quartet on <u>Hearing Into the Future</u> .
KAZE 76 <u>Unwritten</u> T ^A <i>Libra</i>	Kaze is a free jazz quartet featuring Satoko Fujii (p) and Natsuki Tamura (t) from Japan with French trumpeter Christian Pruvost and drummer Peter Orins. They play three lengthy selections with excellent recording quality. There is a lot of air between the musicians making the improvisation more intelligible and dynamic. However intriguing, <u>Unwritten</u> may be a tad unapproachable for larger audiences.
LYNNE ARIALE <u>Being Human</u> T ^b <i>Challenge</i> 75	Pianist, composer Lynne Arriale embarks on her seventeenth recording as a leader on <u>Being Human</u> , a trio recording with Alon Near (b) and Lukasz Zyta (d). The all-original, eleven song set focuses on the finer elements of humankind. The titles, "Love", "Soul", "Courage", "Persistence", and "Passion" are inspirational in a world mired in hate and deceit. The songs are all instrumentals, yet they set a positive tone that we can build on. It certainly feels good after listening to the news!
CHARLES CHEN <u>Charles, Play!</u> T ^B <i>Cellar</i> 75	<u>Charles, Play!</u> is the debut recording for pianist Charles Chen. He is also a software engineer and a magician! He teams up with some of his legends, Ralph Moore (t-sax), Peter Washington (b), and Kenny Washington (d) forming his dream band. Chen's playing is gentle but definitive and the music swings across nine selections including four originals. We liked "Golson", "Simple Pleasure", and "Peter and the Big Bad Wolf".

O's Place Features

RAY GALLON Grand Company

77
Cellar
Modern
2023

Pianist, composer Ray Gallon leads a trio with bassist Ron Carter and drummer Lewis Nash for Grand Company. And grand company it is indeed with this for noble team! They play with precision, and passion letting the instruments speak in favor of gymnastics. And they all have solid chops as displayed on “Acting Up”. “Two Track Mind”, “Hardis”, and the swinging “Pins And Needles” are other highlights.



Photo: Ray Gallon

NoSax NoClar

2023 Bebop
Yolk 74

No Dahiss

Julien Stella (cl) and Bastien Weeger (sax, cl) present their latest collaboration No Dâhiss with Paul Weeger (trompette). We are continuously, excited and impressed by this duo who manages to impart percussion rhythms and gentle melodies across their entire repertoire. It's musical and pleasurable for enriching listening.

82
Clean Feed
Free Jazz
2023

ARUÁN ORTIZ Pastor's Paradox

Cuban-born, Brooklyn native, pianist, vocalist, Aruán Ortiz celebrates the 60th Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech with his reflective Pastor's Paradox. We've had some change, some resistance and backlash. Don Byron (cl, voice), Pheeroan Aklaflaff (d, voice), and Lester St. Louis (cello) are the primary accompaniment. The music reflects the frustration, the anger, and the pain that many of us feel. This is free jazz, with a chaotic, desperate backdrop. There is cascading improvisation throughout the session, notably on "Turning The Other Cheek No More". You can feel it!



Photo: Michal Novak

O's Place Features

DOUG MACDONALD Sextet Session



Photo: Ray Gallon

Guitarist, composer/arranger Doug MacDonald doubles the size of his last band for Sextet Session. Doug Webb (t-sax), Aaron Janik (t), Josh Nelson (p), Mike Gurrola (b), and Charles Ruggiero (d) join him for eight selections. Five are originals. MacDonald adds adventure, switching from his tired and true (50 years) hollow bodied, arch top guitar to a solid body Telecaster. He did a fine job driving his new axe! They swing on the opener “Desert Blues” followed by a crisp cover of “Whispering”, with many other cool tunes following. All the musicians catch the spotlight during this swinging set.

Xaver Hellmeier

2024 Modern
Cellar 82

X-Man in New York

German drummer, bandleader Xaver Hellmeier “X-Man”, has made many trips to New York and finally decided to document his presence with a recording X-Man In New York. He pulled some of the city’s finest musicians, and producer Joe Farnsworth at the legendary Van Gelder Studio! We liked the Latin vibe of “Book’s Bossa”, the soothing take of “The Good Life”, and swing of “A Night In Verona”, both featuring Jeremy Pelt (t) and David Hazeltine (p). Eric Alexander (t-sax) and Peter Washington (b) are the remaining stars on an unselfish team that cooks.

74

Bebop
Blue Canoe
2024

DAN BARASZU

Lone Guitar

Dan Baraszu displays his prowess and precision on Lone Guitar, a solo effort of twenty popular selections over 48 minutes. He works through complex chord melodies with ease and in a delightful way. “We Are Champions”, “Take Five”, “Blue Bossa”, and “Angela (Taxi Theme)” are some of the best in a very good set.



Photo: Parker Smith

Jazz thrives, our legacy artform!

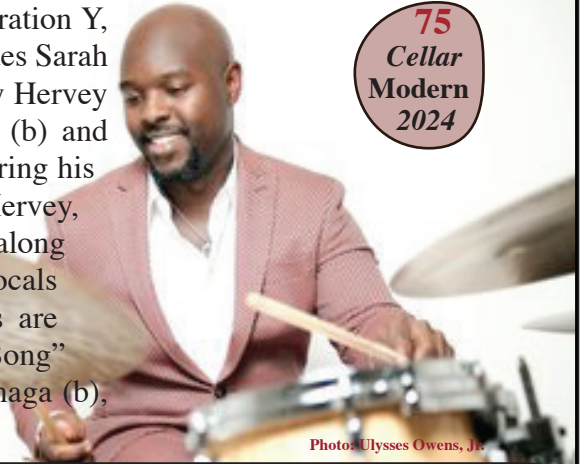
Parker Smith

O's Place Features

ULYSSES OWENS, JR.

A New Beat

Drummer Ulysses Owens, Jr. plays with Generation Y, a quintet, for A New Beat. The core band includes Sarah Hanahan (a-sax), Benny Benack III or Anthony Hervey on trumpet, Luther Allison (p), Philip Norris (b) and Owens. These are musicians that Owens is sharing his experience with as they develop their careers. Hervey, Benack, and Allison contribute originals to go along with six standards. Milton Suggs adds soulful vocals on "Heart Full of Rhythm". Other highlights are "Sticks", "Bird Lives", the mellow "Helen's Song" with Erena Terakubo (a-sax) and Ryoma Takenaga (b), and the swinging "Chicken An' Dumplins".



75
Cellar
Modern
2024

Photo: Ulysses Owens, Jr.

Mike Jones

2023 Swing
Capri 74

You Three Guys

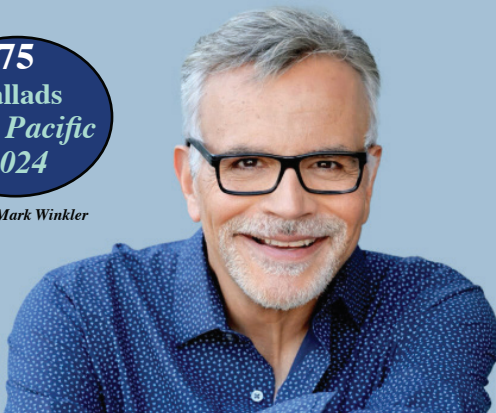
Veteran pianist Mike Jones leads a trio with bassist Penn Jillette and drummer Jeff Hamilton. Yes, the bassist is the same Penn as the magician, 1/2 of Penn and Teller! Mike Jones accompanies Jillette as the magician's opening act. Anyway, the trio is a formidable group playing eleven standards that swing! "What A Difference A Day Makes", "Watch What Happens", and "Gone With The Wind" are among the best.

Mark Winkler

The Rules Don't Apply

75
Ballads
Cafe Pacific
2024

Photo: Mark Winkler



Vocalist Mark Winkler has a laid back, relaxed style that is easily approachable. He invites a large cast of musicians to work with him including polished veterans like Bob Sheppard (sax, cl), Grant Geissman (g), Kevin Winard (perc), and John Beasley (p). He also works with young lions like Danny Janklow (sax, fl) and Errol Rhoden (tuba)! He plays in five different configurations from a trio to big band. We liked "Sunday In LA", "In Love In New York", and "Here's To Jazz". Mark stretches out with varied approaches and The Rules Don't Apply.

Big Band Picks

O's Notes

ARTIST Title Label Rating	
HARRY ALLEN <u>With Roses</u> T^N <i>Triangle 7</i> 88	Producer, arranger, tenor saxophonist Harry Allen assembles an all-star big band that includes John Allred (tb), John Di Martino (p), Freddie Hendrix (t), and Grant Stewart (t-sax). Lucy Yeghiazaryan sings on nine of the ten selections. The music was written all or in part by Roger Frankham. The songs are soft and inviting, never overpowering, <u>With Roses</u> .
DANNY JONOKUCHI <u>Voices</u> T^N <i>Outside In</i> 78	Trumpeter Danny Jonokuchi leads a big band featuring eleven different vocalists out front. They soften the attack of the powerful large ensemble and add lots of variety to the mix. Sirintip sounds wonderful on “So Many Stars”, as does Tahira Clayton “All Of Me”, and Brianna Thomas on “Summertime”, while Martina DaSilva soars on “All Or Nothing At All”. Charles Turner is the lone male vocalist singing “Blame It On My Youth”. Brass reigns supreme with strong harmonies, precision, and excellent tone.
PALLE MIKKELBORG, MARILYN MAZUR & JAKOB BRO <u>Strands</u> T^N <i>ECM</i> 78	The band is a Danish trio featuring trumpeter Palle Mikkelborg, percussionist Marilyn Mazur and guitarist Jakob Bro. The venue is the Danish Radio Concert Hall in Copenhagen. The program is all original music mostly by Bro but redefined during this live performance. This is quiet music, the type that draws listeners into the musician’s world. This is best evidenced by the enthusiastic audience response on “ <u>Strands</u> ” and “Youth”.
NIKOS T^N CHATZITSAKOS <u>Tiny Big Band 2</u> <i>Pathways</i> 76	Bassist Nikos Chatzitsakos just released a new edition of his <u>Tiny Big Band 2</u> . Tiny is by no means a description of the number of band members (a core nonet+ several guests), but perhaps more related to the relative obscurity of some of the musicians. But rest assured that they do a fine job illustrating fresh takes of the American songbook. We get two vocalists for this edition, Alexandria DeWalt, and Eleni Ermina Soufou, softening the attack with two songs each, notably “The Windmills of Your Mind” (Soufou) and “I Didn’t Know What Time It Was” (DeWalt). Elsewhere the are plentiful instrumental solos, especially on “Fly Little Bird Fly”.
HOT HOUSE WEST 74 <u>Patron Saint</u> <u>Django</u> T^N <i>Hot House West</i>	The Hot House West Swing Orchestra is a tribute to the pioneers of jazz and swing, most notably <u>Patron Saint Django</u> , the legendary Django Reinhardt, considered the Patron Saint of guitar. They also include the rhythm of Jimmie Lunceford and the Texas swing of Bob Wills. We enjoyed “Bei Mist Du Shon” with vocals by Hayley Kirkland, “Artillerie Lourde”, and “I’m An Old Cowhand”. The orchestra shines on “Blue Drag” featuring David Baker (b) and the trumpeters.

Traditional Selections

ARTIST	Title	Label	X	T
MARK LEWIS	<u>Sunlight Shines In</u>	<i>Audio Daddio</i>	73	T ^B
GREG LEWIS	<u>Organ Monk Going Home</u>	<i>Sunnyside</i>	72	T ^B
JUDY WHITMORE	<u>Come Fly With Me</u>	<i>Arden House</i>	72	T ^b
AURALLAURA	<u>Exetastes</u>	<i>Aurallaura</i>	71	T ^b
GEOFFREY DEAN	<u>Foundations</u>	<i>Amp Music</i>	71	T ^B
TED FALCON	<u>To Chegando (Almost There)</u>	<i>Falcon Music</i>	71	T ^L
ANDY PRATT	<u>Trio</u>	<i>Thrift Girl</i>	71	T ^B
MICHAEL RAGONESE	<u>Stracci</u>	<i>Rags Records</i>	71	T ^B
JENNIFER SARAN	<u>Rescue My Heart</u>	<i>Jennifer Saran</i>	71	T ^b
JOSH SINTON	<u>Couloir & Book of Practitioners</u>	<i>FIP</i>	71	T ^A
LUIS GIRALDO	<u>Ready, Willing & Able</u>	<i>Cellar Music</i>	64	T ^b
PALOMAR TRIO	<u>The Song In Our Soul</u>	<i>Turtle Bay</i>	64	T ^S
JULIÁN SOLARZ	<u>Resonancia</u>	<i>Microscopi</i>	63	T ^L

George & Geoff Hazelrigg *Synchronicity*

**2023 Modern
Outer Marker 86**

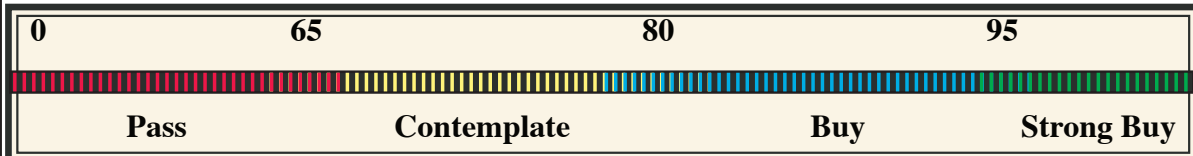
Pianist George Hazelrigg and bassist Geoff Hazelrigg have roots in rock that they transitioned into jazz as their musical palettes matured. The brothers give you their jazzy interpretation of Synchronicity (1983), an album by the famous British rock band The Police. Both versions of the title track are noteworthy. We also enjoyed “Wrapped Around Your Finger” and “Murder By Numbers”. They transform the once edgy notes into a mellow, peaceful groove. Drummer John O’Reilly rounds out the trio.

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



O's Latin Features

Antonio Gavrila

Tango Suite
Buenos Aires



Antonio Gavrila

Argentine pianist Antonio Gavrila salutes Astor Piazzolla on Tango Suite Buenos Aires. He gets support from three tango veterans, Walther Castro on bandoneon, guitarist Quique Sinesi, and Horacio “Mono” Hurtado on bass. Together they capture the full essence of tango. We liked the four-part “Tango Suite” that was packed with bounce and emotion, the racy “Michelangelo 70”, and “Intrduccion Al Angel” in a very compelling performance.

82

Zoho
Latin
2024

with
Walter Castro
Quique Sinesi
Horacio Hurtado

Eva Verde & Danilo Tarso

Latin 2024

Chrysalis

Spanish vocalist Eva Verde teams up with Italian pianist Danilo Tarso as a romantic duo on Chrysalis. Lyrics are in both English and Spanish. We preferred her more expressive native tongue. “Espiru”, “Bella Ci Dormi”, “Nunca Es Como Parece”, “Luiza”, and “Ancestor” are among the best selections.

Microscopi 74

Italian pianist Danilo Tarso

as a romantic duo on Chrysalis. Lyrics are in both English and Spanish. We preferred her more expressive native tongue. “Espiru”, “Bella Ci Dormi”, “Nunca Es Como Parece”, “Luiza”, and “Ancestor” are among the best selections.

Gabriel Espinosa *Bossas and Boleros*

Mexican bassist, vocalist, composer Gabriel Espinosa celebrates the styles he grew up with on Bossas and Boleros, a strong Latin session. Kim Nazarian spreads her warm tones over soothing rhythms as the primary vocalist. She sings gloriously on “Amelia”, and presents her voice as an instrument, harmonizing with the horns on “Mi Jarana”. Pianist Misha Tsiganov makes his presence felt throughout the session with guest Fred Hersch sitting in on two selections notably “No Me Platiques Mas” including vocals from Espinosa. Gerardo Flores sings on “Nosotros” and The New York Voices shine on “Sing”.

79

Latin
Zoho
2023



Photo: Gabriel Espinosa

O's Latin Features

Felipe Salles

Home Is Here

81
Fusion
Jazz Road
2023

Brazilian Jazz saxophonist, composer, conductor Felipe Salles leads his Interconnections Ensemble in a session focused on immigration and its impact on the international jazz community. The brass stands out on this symphony, especially on tunes like “Two Worlds Together” featuring vocalist Magos Herrera. Sofia Rey adds vocals to soften tunes like “Meridian 63”. Guitarist Chico Pinheiro leads the melody on “The Promise of Happiness”. We also enjoyed “World Citizen” featuring Yosvany Terry (a-sax). Home Is Here showcases the powerhouse orchestra with the dexterity of a vibrant jazz ensemble.



Photo: Felipe Salles

Juan Carlos Quintero

2023 Latin
Moondo 78

Desserts

Guitarist, producer Juan Carlos Quintero leads a quintet with Eddie Resto (b), Joe Rotondi (p), Joey DeLeon (perc), and Aaron Serfaty (d). Each of the musicians participated in arranging the music. The program is collection of popular songs starting with “Tangerine”, and heavily infused with Latin rhythms as on “Estampa Cubana” and “Watching The Girls Go By”. There are also warm ballads like “Nature Boy”. Quintero’s scratching melds with the percussion seamlessly notably on “Along Came Betty”. His overall performance is excellent making Desserts... a tasty treat.

Gabriella

Photo: Miguel Espinoza

78

M. Espinoza
Latin 2023

Miguel Espinoza

Guitarist Miguel Espinoza leads a band with harmonica player Howard Levy, violinist David Balakrishnan, and David Hagedorn on vibraphone for Gabriella. Priya Hariharan adds carnatic violin on “Joy” and Levy shines on “Howard’s Tune”. We also enjoyed “Whistlin’ Down the Street”, “Hudson Avenue”, the peaceful sway of “La Lluvia”, and the funky “Barrio Latino”.



O's Piano Features



Photo: Lauren Desberg

88
Swing
2023
Jinsy

John Chen Sun of Music

Asian American pianist John Chin leads a polished trio for Sun of Music, a live recording at Smalls Jazz Club in NYC on August 5, 2020. They take their time putting soul and dynamics into the music. Drummer Jaimeo Brown and bassist Sean Conley shine on “Speak No Evil”. We also liked the fresh, open arrangements of “Pure Imagination”, and “Countdown” with a rousing solo by Brown. Chin’s work is solid throughout the set. He and his team represent the true essence of club jazz in New York.

R Grunwald

Ballads 2020
R Grunwald 75

Oma

Canadian pianist R Grunwald has played countless sessions as a side man, but Oma is his first solo effort, playing original music. It is dedicated to his grandmother (Oma), who was a major influence in inspiring him to continue studying piano after quitting at an early age. These eight selections are inspirational to listeners, a variety of moods, tempo, and reflections. It is embellished by some electronic effects that enhance the mood leading to a fulfilling session.

Donald Vega

As I Travel

Pianist Donald Vega leads a quartet with Lewis Nash, Bassist John Patitucci, and Luisito Quintero. Vega’s fleeting work on the keys is punctuated by the rhythm of his team on the opener “Baila! Dance Like No Ones Watching” and “Disturbios”. It’s not all breakneck pace though with several mid-tempo ballads notably “Isabel: The Enchanting Nature Of You”. We also enjoyed “Tomorrow II”, “Dear Mayra”, and “Alegria”.

81
Latin
Imagery
2023



Photo: Donald Vega

O's Piano Features

Photo: Jewish Festival

Nitai Hershkovits

Call On The Old Wise

Israeli jazz pianist and composer. Nitai Hershkovits just released Call On The Old Wise, an 18-song session lasting 50 minutes. This is beautiful solo piano, and an enjoyable session. The sounds are cleansing, refreshing, and suitable for meditation or other mindfulness activities. All original music except covers of “Dream Your Dreams” and “Single Petal Of A Rose”.

86
ECM
Ballads
2023



Francesco Crosara

2023 OA2
Modern 77

Circular Motion

Pianist, composer Francesco Crosara assembles a fine team of musicians for Circular Motion. There are three distinct trios The first includes Farkeo Dosumov (b) and D’Vonne Lewis (d) on four selections. Clipper Anderson (b) and Mark Ivester (d) join Crosara on four songs, and Osama Afifi (b) and Xavier Lecouturier (d) play on two selections. We enjoyed “Julia’s Tango” with this first trio and Crosara on synthesizer for the introductory opening. Anderson shines on “Gynopedie No. 4” with a fine solo while Afifi stars on “Kurama. There’s a fusion bent on “One Day Honey, One Day Onions” that continues with a touch of Latin on “Savara”.

You And The Night

NYC-based jazz pianist Steve Ash has over 40 years of professional experience and it shows with his poise. His preferred grouping is a trio which allows for individual expression and interaction. This is a polished unit including bassist Harvie S and Alvester Garnett on drums. They play eight classic jazz pieces starting with “You And The Night And The Music”. “Una Noche Con Francis”, and “Dream Dancing” are other highlights.

Steve Ash

78
Cellar
Modern
2024



Photo: Gale Gettinger

O's Piano Features

Ben Winkelman

Australian pianist Ben Winkelman has been on the New York Jazz scene for several years. He

Heartbeat

leads a trio with bassist Matt Penman and drummer Obed Calvaire. They expand

to a quartet with guitarist Gilad Hekselman on 5 of the 9 selections, all Winkelman originals. "The Plague", "Cliches", and the upbeat "Heartbeat" are among the best. Penman shines on "The Wonky Waltz", as does Hekselman on "Heartbeat" and "Machine". Winkelman takes control on "Chilches" asserting his prowess along with his bandmates.

83

Modern
OA2
2023



Photo: Ben Winkelman

Bill Anschell

Fusion 2024

Improbable Solutions

Pianist, composer Bill Anschell

74 Origin

lights it up on Improbable Solutions, with

Chris Symer (b), Brian Monroney (g), and Jose Martinez (d). We liked the cool, syncopated sounds of "Nimbus", "Abandoned", the mysterious vibe on "Naked Truth", all featuring percussionist Jeff Busch. We also enjoyed the relaxed "Hidden Nobility". They conclude with the rock-infused "Outburst". This set was originated during the pandemic and modified a couple of times to arrive at this finished product.

Photo: Orrin Evans

Orrin Evans

Pianist Orrin Evans leads a core rhythm section with bassist Robert Hurst and Marvin "Smitty" Smith on drums. It's his first endeavor outside of The Bad Plus and he's taken on a rich new life! Guest vocalists Jazzmeia Horn sings on "Big Small", Sy Smith takes the mic for "Amazing Grace", and Alita Moses sings "They Won't Go When I Go", to add beautiful color to the otherwise instrumental session.

Bassist Buster Williams plays on two selections notably "The Good Life" featuring Larry McKenna (t-sax).

Nicolas Payton (t) also appears on two tracks "Weezy" with Gary Thomas (fl), and "Feed The Fire" with Thomas on tenor sax.

79

Smoke Session
Modern 2023

The Red Door



O's Piano Reviews

Temp Bom

Marta Karassawa

Brazilian pianist Marta Karassawa leads a quintet with Teco Cardoso (fl, t-sax), Sidmar Vieta (t, flugelhorn), Frank Herzberg (b), and Eduardo Nazário (d). There are several guest artists as well, like baritone saxophonist Chico Macedo on “When I’m 58”. We liked the opener “Cama de Gato”, and “Mantra” with vocalizations by Cindy Borgani and Stephanie Borgani. We also enjoyed “Good Vibes” with excellent horn harmonies, the Latin vibe on “Vento Sul”, and “Simple As That” featuring Herzberg.



Photo: Marta Karassawa

77
Modern
M Karassawa
2024

Mike LeDonne

Wonderful!

B3 master, Mike LeDonne marries his Groover Quartet with a gospel choir for a cool blend of grooving contemporary jazz. The quartet is a polished unit with Eric Alexander (t-sax), Peter Bernstein (g), and Joe Farnsworth (d). There are eight selections centered on Mike’s life and his Wonderful daughter Mary, focused on the power of love. They open with “Let Us Go” featuring the choir, Vincent Herring (a-sax), and Daniel Sadownick (perc). This is a unique combination with fresh arrangements as on “Ain’t Nothing Like The Real Thing” and “Put It Back”.

77
Cellar
R&B+Jazz
2024



Photo: MasterWing Creative

O's Sax Features

Markus Howell

Chosen Path

Alto saxophonist Markus Howell has performed with the Count Basie Orchestra singer Michael Bubl , but he takes the lead on Chosen Path, his latest release on Posi-tone. The band is a quartet with Art Hirahara (p), Boris Koslov (b), and Rudy Royston (d). Howell's warm tone resonates on the opener "First Summer", the cool vibe of "Street Strut", with a sense of urgency on "Trials By Fire", and cooking on "The Path". You can't miss with this one!

Photo: Markus Howell



88
Modern
Posi-Tone
2024

Chris Potter

Tenor saxophonist Chris Potter teams up with Brad Mehldau (p), John Patitucci (b), and Brian Blade (d) forming an all-star quartet for Eagle's Point. They open with the engaging "Dream of Home", swing hard on the title track, then relax on "Other Plans", and the mysterious "Malaga Moon". It's a pleasant set of modern jazz. This a quartet that we hope to see more of!

2024 Modern
Concord 77

Eagle's Point

Oran Etkin

Open Arms

Open Arms unites musicians from around the world in a harmonious session led by clarinetist Oran Etkin. "Chigwaya - Song For The Mermaid Spirit" has an exotic African feel imparted by the kalimba as does "Protection Song" and the more relaxed "Pavlink's Dream". There are excellent warm ballads like "Djelem Djelem" and "E Doce Morrer No Mar Live". Our favorite is the swinging "Caymmi".

Photo: Oran Etkin



77
Pop+Jazz
Groundup
2024

O's Sax Features

Branford Marsalis

Romare Bearden Revealed

This effort spans a variety of jazz styles and textures. It is a “jam session in which Romare Bearden’s paintings play a vibrant part”! “Stepping’ On The Blues” is throwback swinger with Branford on soprano sax. “Jungle Blues” is a 1920s swinging cover of Jelly Rolls’ classic featuring the Marsalis family: Branford (s-sax), Wynton (t), Ellis (p), Delfeayo (tb), and Jason (d), with Reginal Veal on bass! There’s straight up bebop on “Laughin’ & Talkin’” featuring Wynton, Jeff “Tain” Watts (d), and Eric Revis (b). Harry Connick, Jr. (p) leads “Carolina Shout” with a ragtime flair. We also enjoyed the cool, relaxing “Seabreeze”, and “J Mood” again featuring Wynton. Branford brings the talent together for a fine tribute, Romare Bearden Revealed.

Photo: Branford Marsalis



84
Swing
Marsalis
2024

Shawn Maxwell

J Town Suite

77
R&B+Jazz
Shawn Maxwell
2024

Saxophonist and composer Shawn Maxwell pays homage to his hometown, Joliet, IL on J Town Suite. Joliet is the 3rd largest city in IL and form home of a large penitentiary. It has seen the ups and downs of a large midwestern city. Maxwell leads a quartet with Michael Barton (b), Collin Clauson (keyboards), and Greg Essig (d). They open with the mysterious sounds of “Steelman March “. A lot of the music sounds ominous but it’s all a part of Shawn’s love and pride coming out in an accurate musical story. “Jerry”, the heavily syncopated “Hickory Street”, and the haunting finale “Ghost Mall on Jefferson” are highlights.



Photo: Shawn Maxwell

O's Sax Features

John Wojciechowski Swing of the Pendulum

81
Fusion
Afar
2024

Photo: John Wojciechowski



Saxophonist John Wojciechowski leads a quartet with Xavier Davis (p), Clark Sommers (b), and Dana Hall (d) on a Swing of the Pendulum. The music is all original's mostly by Wojciechowski with a few from Sommers, notably "Bass Intro" and "The Greater the Distance". "Peripheral Vision", "Minds Eye", and the title track are other highlights in an engaging set.

Kevin Sun

2023 Free Jazz
Endectomorph 75

The Depths of Memory

Chinese saxophonist, composer, and producer Kevin Sun leads a 4 to 5-piece band with Dana Saul (p), Simon Willson (b) and Matt Honor (d) for the 1st Movement. Dayeon Soek plays drums on the 2nd Movement where Adam O'Farrill (t) joins the band. Walter Stinson (b) replaces Willson for the 3rd Movement. If you can follow those personnel changes, you're ready to unlock the beauty of The Depths of Memory, a program of abstract jazz, with dark, melancholic tones. Sun tries to coax listeners into the moment, inviting them into the trance created by the musicians. It is a 2-Disc set that is divided into three movements. From All This Stillness has 7 parts, leading to three stages of Eponymous Cycle, and concluding with 9 songs in The Depths in Slow Motion. We found the third movement to be more melodic and enjoyable though still dark.

Cory Weeds

2024
Modern
Cellar
78

Home Cookin'



Photo: Lion James

Tenor saxophonist Cory Weeds is perhaps the greatest ambassador for Canadian jazz musicians, surfacing what seems like an endless stream of good talent on his Cellar Music label. He takes the leads on Home Cookin' with a strong team that includes Brad Turner (t), Chris Gestrin (p), and eight other musicians. Cory's sax was stolen just before they began a 3-day stint and recording session at Frankie's in Vancouver. Weeds garnered a replacement sax, and the show went on! They open with a bluesy groove on "Corner Kisses" before they start swinging on "Metamorphosis", and the title track. We also enjoyed the drum work on "Corner Kisses", and the warm "Lullaby of the Leaves".

O's Drummer Features



Reid Hoyson

80
Modern
R. Hoyson
Project
2024

On A Misty Night

Drummer, Reid Hoyson assembles a fine quartet including Hendrick Meurkens on vibraphone and harmonica, bassist Rufus Reid, and pianist Billy Test. Reid adds a nice bass solo on the soft “Dream Gliding“. We enjoyed both takes of the title track, and “A Tear For Toots” featuring Meurkens on harmonica. These are examples of the fine music On A Misty Night.

Photo: Stevie Murin

Adonis Rose

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Storyville 2024

For All We Know

Drummer Adonis Rose leads a trio with Ryan Hanseller (p) and Lex Washawsky (b), featuring vocalist Gabrielle Cavassa out front. Her voice is soft and seductive on tunes like “I’ve Grown Accustomed To His Face”, “So Many Stars”, “You Go To My Head”, and “You Taught My Heart To Sing”. Romance is in the air on For All We Know, also including fine work from the band with well-crafted solos along the way.

Drummer, arranger Richard Baratta has a sizzling band with David Kikoski (p), John Patitucci (b), Jerry Bergonzi (t-sax), and Paul Rossman (perc). Off The Charts focuses on tunes that somehow faded into obscurity, now cast in a fresh light. We liked Kikoski’s dazzling work on “Herzog” opening a spirited session that is tempered by warm ballads like “Blackberry Winter” featuring Bergonzi. We also enjoyed “Afro-Centric” with Patitucci anchoring the groove on electric bass. He returns to double bass opening “Sombrero”. They wrap the session with “Out of This World”.

Richard Baratta

Off The Charts



Paul Rossman, John Patitucci, Jerry Bergonzi, Richard Baratta, David Kikoski

O's Vocal Features

Jelena Jovovic

Night Bird

Serbian jazz vocalist Jelena Jovović has studied and performed around the world and integrates rich cultures into her performance on Night Bird. We enjoyed the adventurous “Rastko”, rich with vocal harmonies and vibrant beats.

Jelena stretches out on the title track featuring Steve Fishwick on trumpet, and on “Let’s Leave The Dance Floor” with fine work by pianist Bojan Zulfikarpasic. We also enjoyed Jovovic scatting on “Last Sings The Blues” with a fine bass solo by Ameen Saleem.

86

R&B+Jazz
Alessa
2023



Photo: Dalibor Danilović

Sylvia Brooks

75 Rhombus
2023 Ballads

Live

Sylvia Brooks Live is a warm set of ballads backed by musical director, pianist Christian Jacob and his band. The place is Herb Albert’s Vibrato Jazz Grill in Los Angeles. Sylvia’s soft vocals and rich tones are perfect for these blues-based ballads with very intriguing stories. Among the best are “Blues In the Night” - an instrumental, “The Red Pig Flew Up the Hill” with sweet horn harmonies, and “Tender Trap” with Jacobs dazzling solo. This is a fine showcase of the headliner’s songwriting and musical talents.

Allan Harris

Live at Blue Llama

Love Productions
2023 Ballads 78

Allan is romancing us with his silky baritone on this collection of bluesy ballads. He’s backed by Arcoiris Sandoval (p), Marty Kenney (b), Irwin Hall (sax, fl), and Norman Edwards Jr. (d). The place is the Blue Llama Jazz Club in Ann Arbor, MI. It was deemed a perfect spot to re-emerge post pandemic. They are all on their games, fueled by the enthusiasm of an audience that’s also happy to be out! Harris is a passionate storyteller and Hall coaxes even more from him on songs like “Jeannine” and “Spain”. Sandoval sets the mood for “The Very Thought of You” before they swing hard on “So What”. This one made us wish we were there for the live experience!

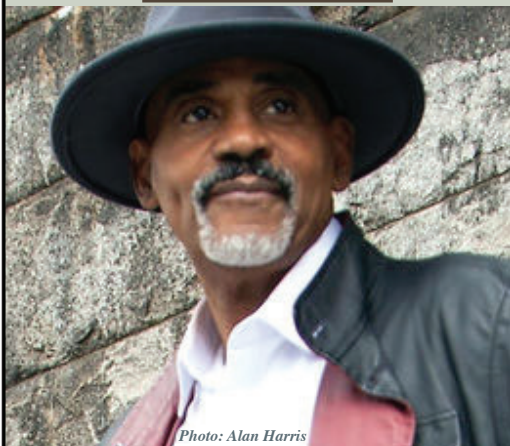


Photo: Alan Harris

O's Vocal Features

Photo: Nina Galicheva

The Hot Toddies Jazz Band



81
Ballads
Prohibition
2023

These are blues stories told by mixed vocalists over a jovial party band. Guitarist Justin Poindexter sings “St. Louis Blues”, Hannah Gill sings “When I Get Low I Get High”, “Kansas City”, “Mean To Me”, and “Love Me Or Leave Me”. The reed work by Danny Lipsitz is notable as is Ron Wilkins work on trombone. The Hot Toddies Jazz Band is a great representation

of the swinging blues and jovial Big Band circuit in New Orleans early in the 20th century.

Sarah McKenzie

Australian singer, pianist, composer, a trip to Rio de Janeiro to perform 2017. She fell in love with the sights, local musicians. Without You is dedicated to the Brazilians who embraced her! Romero Lubambo (g), Peter Erskine (d), Rogerio Boccato (perc), and Bob Sheppard (fl, sax) are among the talented musicians appearing here. The music is rich and relaxing throughout, as on “Corcovado”, “Dindi”, “The Girl From Ipanema”, “Wave”, and “Quoi, Quoi, Quoi”. Gentle Brazilian rhythms and Sarah’s soft vocals make this easily embraceable. Most of the lyrics are in English but McKenzie weaves in some Brazilian Portuguese as well.

74
Normandy Lane
2023
Ballads

Without You

and arranger Sarah McKenzie made at the opening of the Blue Note in the views, the warm vibe, and the



76
Ballads
Concord
2024

Melissa Errico Sondheim In The City

Melissa is a cabaret-style singer and Broadway actress with a wonderful voice. She sings in front of a large ensemble with strings and horns or in intimate conversations with pianist Teddy Firth as on “It Wasn’t Meant to Happen” and the entertaining stories like “Little Things You Do Together” and “Can That Boy Foxtrot”. Lewis Nash (d) and David Finck (b) round out the rhythm section in a refreshing session.

Photo: Melissa Errico

O's Vocal Features

Alyse Korn & Robert Kyle

Photo: ARM Music

Ballads 2023 81
Dark Delicious

Pianist, vocalist Alyse Korn and saxophonist, flautist Robert Kyle are the headliners on Tuesday's Child, a warm set of nine original selections, 3 composed by Korn and 6 by Kyle. Kevin Winard plays drums and percussion. We liked Korn's wispy vocalizations on "What If", and Kyle's warm sax on "You Light" and "Blue Jack". Guest Leonice Shinneman add tabla on "Ruby's Dream" to close out a balanced session.

Tuesday's Child

Annie Chen

75 Ballads 2023
Shanghai A&V

Guardians

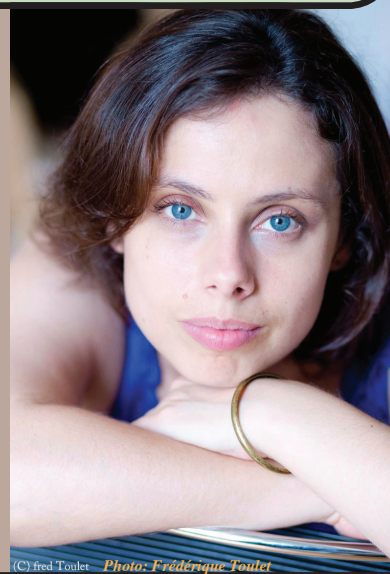
Chinese vocal impressionist, Annie Chen is not bashful. She's pushing the envelope on Guardians, her latest release. She sings, scats, grunts, and speaks poetic muse in concert with her six-piece band that includes Alex LoRe (a-sax, fl, b-cl), Fung Chern Hwei (violin, viola), Matthew Muntz (b), and Vitor Gonçalves (accordion, p). We encourage your patience with the session as these songs evolve to meaningful, enjoyable music as on "Rozpacz". She creates her own genre, contemporary, free ballads centered on the interactions between man, animals, and the environment on the 4-part "Guardians Suite".

Margot Sergent

Douce France

78
Ballads
Zoho
2023

Sweet France (Douce France) is a combination of gentle cafe tunes illustrated by Sergent on her harp and with pleasant vocals. Patrick Brennen (g) and Alec Safy (b) are her primary accompaniment. Lyrics are in English and French with more character arising from the latter on tunes like the swinging title track featuring clarinetist Linus Wyrsh. We also enjoyed the happy go-lucky bounce of "The Apartment Next Door" and "La Bohème" featuring Vitor Goncalves (accordion). This is a delightful session.



(C) fred Toulet Photo: Frédérique Toulet

O's Trumpet Features

Jun Iida

Evergreen

Japanese American trumpeter Jun Iida was born in St. Louis and raised in Pittsburgh. His tone is rich on “Goey Butter Cake” paired with Vocalist Aubrey Johnson’s scatting. She adds warm vocals that complement Iida along with guitarist Masami Kuroki, bassist Jonathan Richards and drummer Xavier Lecouturier. Of note are “Evergreen”, the contemporary “Shiki No Uta”, “My Anguish In Solidarity”, “Forgotten Memories”, and peaceful ballads like “Song For Luke”.

79
Modern
2024
OA2



Photo: Jun Iida

Jim Rotondi

78 *Cellar*
2024 **Big Band**

Finesse

Trumpeter Jim Rotondi has a storied **2024 Big Band** history playing jazz for a score in New York City before moving to Austria, performing, recording, and teaching at the University in Graz. He generally plays in small ensembles but plays with Notes and Tones Jazz Orchestra for *Finesse*, his latest album. Danny Grissett (keyboards), Karol Hondas (b) and Mario Gonzi (d) anchor the rhythm section while arranger, conductor Jakob Helling brings it all together. The music is dynamic but never blaring, as the power is well-modulated across 13 selections, 12 by Rotondi and “One Before Curtis” by Helling. Other highlights are “Ladybug”, “Falset”, and “For Curtis”. The music is soothing end to end.

Foreverland

Keyon Harrold is not your ordinary trumpeter! He dances across traditional and contemporary jazz genres while infusing doses of hip hop along the way. They open with “Find Your Peace” featuring Common, Robert Glasper and Jean Baylor. There is spoken word on top of airy pop rhythms on “Beautiful Day” featuring PJ Morton on the mic. Harrold shines (with his trumpet) on “Well Walk Now”, Laura Mvula sings on three takes of the title track alongside Keyon on the mic. They chill on the final two alternate takes of “Find Your Peace”.

Keyon Harrold

74
R&B+Jazz
Concord
2024



Photo: Kwafu-Alston

O's Guitar Features

Russ Spiegel

Caribbean Blue

Guitarist Russ Spiegel plays mostly blues accompanied by a strong band including Jim Gasior (organ) Lucas Apostoleris (d). Tim Armacost (sax, fl), Brian Lynch (t), Javier Nero (tb), Hendrik Meurkens (harmonica), and Ron Beal (vocals) also make contributions on Caribbean Blue. There is a touch of reggae on “Island Song” and they swing on “The Streets of Milan”. We enjoyed the horn harmonies on “Slippery Slope”, the peaceful “Inquietude” featuring Beal, the rich, mid-tempo groove of “Retribution Blues” with cool organ and guitar solos, and “Smooth Move” featuring Armacost. The passion continued to build throughout this session leaving us satisfied.

88
Fusion
Ruzztone
2023



Photo: Russ Spiegel

Ed Johnson

Guitarist, vocalist Ed Johnson on For Every Living Thing with Scott (vocals, keyboards), Jeff

74
Pop+Jazz
Cumulus
2024

For Every Living Thing

leans towards the fresh sounds of Brazil his band Novo Tempo including Jennifer Cressman (tb), and Mark Ivester (d). They play ten songs including seven originals. Among the best are “Where Or When” featuring Scott singing, and “Out Of Time”. The music is refreshing, pop-based, vocal contemporary jazz that flows in the spirit of samba.

As I Sing

Radha Thomas



Photo: Radha Thomas

74
Subcontinental
Blues 2024

For As I Sing, Indian vocalist Radha Thomas performs in a series of duets with several different guitarists. The names speak for themselves. Reg Schwager, Pete McCann, Paul Meyers, and Tom Dempsey are prolific masters of their guitars, highlighting the session. The program is straight from the American songbooks with songs like “Social Call”, “Summertime”, “Jitterbug Waltz”, and “I Remember Clifford”. It’s fine background, coffee shop music with excellent guitar work.

O's Guitar Features

Photos: Kristen Bromley



Kristen Bromley *Muagsician*

Dr. Kristen R. Bromley is a professor at BYU, a composer, and musician that can also perform! She displays fine work on guitar with swinging vocals to match on Muagsician, 25 mostly original tunes spread across two discs. You can get a kick on “Route 66” or enjoy the fine instrumentals like “All Blues”, “The Girl From Ipanema”, and “Cantaloupe Island”. Kristen is someone we would enjoy hearing at the local coffee shop and enjoy it! With over two hours of material, you’ll stay fresh for at least a few sets!

75
Blues
K Bromley
2023

Dave Stryker

Guitarist/composer Dave Stryker Jared Gold on the B3, drummer Mintzer for Groove Street. They and Mintzer leads the charge on “Straight Ahead”. Stryker is on point on “Code Blue” and does a fine job engaging his cohorts. These polished musicians bring a solid performance on Groove Street!

74
Bebop
Strikezone
2023

Groove Street

expands to his trio to a quartet with McClenty Hunter, and saxophonist Bob burn on “Summit”, swing on “Cold Duck”, and Mintzer leads the charge on “Straight Ahead”. Stryker is on point on “Code Blue” and does a fine job engaging his cohorts. These polished musicians bring a solid performance on Groove Street!

Neal Caine

Skip To My Lou

Bassist Neal Caine leads a trio with pianist Andrew Fisher, and Henry Connerway III on drums. Caine’s tone is deep and earthy especially on the funky title track. The program is a mix of standards and originals, all centered around St. Louis, Caine’s hometown. Neal shares the lead lines with Fisher but there is never a doubt who’s leading the charge! Skip To My Lou is crafted in Caine’s image.

74
Neal 'Sugar' Cain
Fusion 2024



Photo: Neal Caine

O's Bass Features

86
Fusion
Be Squared
2024



Photo: Brian Bromberg

Brian Bromberg LaFaro

Brian Bromberg is a prolific bassist on both contemporary and traditional jazz genres. LaFaro is tilted towards modern jazz, dedicated to the late, great bassist Scott LaFaro. Bromberg teams up with pianist Tom Zink and drummer Charles Ruggiero in his 28th album as a leader. Brian splits the melodies with Zink, and they glimmer in the lights on tunes like “Waltz For Debbie”. We enjoyed the ballads, notably “Blue In Green”, again featuring Zink, and classics like “Milestones” with solos all around. It’s a worthy dedication to LaFaro!

Mark Egan

Bassist Mark Egan leads a trio with and Mitchel Forman on keyboards mid-tempo, pop fusion. Highlights & “Sand Castles”, the punchy laid back “Sunflower”, and the funky

76
Pop+Jazz
Wavetone
2024

Cross Currents
drummer Danny Gottlieb, guitarist, for Cross Currents. The music is include the peaceful “Big Sky” “Ponchatrain”, “Homebrew”, the title track.

Andrew Binder Conspiracy Diliracy

Bassist and composer Andrew Binder puts together a mix of contemporary and modern jazz that is delightfully rich for Conspiracy Diliracy. The music is engaging with lots of brass and percussion. Binder’s bass work is strong on “Moonwalk”, the funky “Katy Is ALizard”, and “Beyoncé Is The Illuminati” with solos from trombonist Frank Niemeyer and trumpeter Justin Dyar. Kurt Reeder (p) and Max Oshawa (d) shine on “Mandela Effect”. Guitarist Jose Gobbo joins the party on “Dark Side Of The Mattress Firm” to round out a fine session.

80
A. Binder
Modern
2024



Photo: Andrew Binder

O's Trombone Features

Photo: Jennifer Wharton

Jennifer Wharton

This is a trombone bonanza, enough

Grit & Grace

to give you a *Bonegasm!* Bass trombonist, vocalist Jennifer Wharton leads the way accompanied by fellow trombonists John Fedchock, Nate Mayland and Alan Ferber. They explode on top of a rock-solid rhythm section including Michael Eckroth (p), Evan Gregor (b), Samuel

Torres (perc), and Don Peretz (d). We were never overwhelmed by the bones and warmed by their passionate spirit. We enjoyed the lazy mood of “La Bruja”, the vocals on “Coop’s Condiments”, and the harmonies on “Be Normal” & “Norhala”, and “Mana’s Alright”.

89
*Sunnyside
Modern
2023*



Brian Scarborough

Trombonist, composer Brian Scarborough presents We Need The Wind, his second album as a leader. His band is a quintet with Matt Otto (t-sax), Roger Wilder (keyboards), Jeff Harshbarger(b), and Brian Steever (d). The rhythm section swings throughout the session regardless of the tempo. There are rich horn harmonies on “Broken”, and warm ballads like “The Long Road Back” featuring Harshbarger. We also enjoyed “Strange Bird”, an example of Brian engaging his entire team!

75
*Modern
Outside In
2024*

We Need The Wind

Scarborough presents We Need The Wind, his second album as a leader. His band is a quintet with Matt Otto (t-sax), Roger Wilder (keyboards), Jeff Harshbarger(b), and Brian Steever (d).

The rhythm section swings throughout the session regardless of the tempo. There are rich horn harmonies on “Broken”, and warm ballads like “The Long Road Back” featuring Harshbarger. We also enjoyed “Strange Bird”, an example of Brian engaging his entire team!

David Gibson

Fellowship

Trombonist David Gibson leads a band with bassist Joseph Lepore, drummer Kush Abadey and pianist Davis Whitfield. Gibson sets the stage for a very melodic session on the opener “Disquietude”. Lepore stands out on “Meek’s Wrath” & “Beyond Breath”, while Whitfield shines on “Waiting For Patience”. Gibson is a name you’ll hear again!

Photo: David Gibson



78
*Modern
Imani
2024*

ARTIST Title <i>Label</i> Rating	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Top Contemporary Picks</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">O's Notes</h3>
BOB HOLZ C^F <u>COLLABORATIVE</u> <i>Holz</i> 78	<p>Drummer and bandleader Bob Holz teams up with producer vocalist Rob Stathis and a long list of guest musicians for the <u>Holz-Stathis Collaborative</u>. Randy Brecker (t), Dean Brown (g) and Ric Fierabracci (b) star on “The Tunnel”. Elliott Yasmin, Diana Moreira and Stathis sing on “Back To You” with a strong solo by Brown. Brandon Fields (fl, sax) softens “Wondering”, “You Can Get It” & “Better Try”. We also enjoyed “Side Scratch” with Brown, Brecker, and Ada Rovatti (sax). Those are of the highlights in a strong fusion set.</p>
HOUSE OF WATERS <u>ON BECOMING</u> C^P <i>Ground Up</i> 78	<p>The core of House of Waters is Max ZT (hammered dulcimer) and Moto Fukushima (6-string bass). They’ve been together for over 16 years integrating the sounds of India, Senegal, Japan, and the Americas. They from a trio with drummer Antonio Sanchez for <u>On Becoming</u>. The music is open, airy, and relaxing, centered around Max. Fukushima steps up on “Tsumamiori”. Guest artists Mike Stern (g) and Priya Darshini (vocals) appear on “Hang In The Air” and “The Wall” respectively. They’ve created a unique, appreciable sound!</p>
KEVIN FLOURNOY C^R <u>VERS*A*TILITY</u> <i>K-Flow</i> 78 <i>Entertainment</i>	<p>Kevin Flournoy is a masterful writer, producer and pianist who has worked with some of the best contemporary jazz and R&B artists since 1994! But now he takes the helm as a leader on <u>Vers*a*tility</u>, a reimagined collection of some his best. We sampled the first couple of songs and can say it’s likely a must have! “Tell Me if You Still Care” featuring vocalists Phil Perry and Shannon Pearson, and “Smooth It Over” featuring Ronnie Laws justify the purchase alone! There are enticing music videos available online.</p>
BOWMANVILLE <u>BOWMANVILLE</u> C^F <i>Stoneagle</i> 77	<p><u>Bowmanville</u>, not the town, the Chicago-based contemporary jazz band, plays entertaining music with accessible blues and pop themes. Graham Nelson’s vocals are spot on “Georgia” and “Saint James Infirmary”. He also plays harmonica and teams up with Adelsman on “Boiano Campobosso”. Mason Jiller (g), Oliver Horton (b), Ethan Adelsman (Violin), and Noah Plotkin (d) are the other featured musicians. We also dig the blues on “Weapons of Mass Distraction”.</p>
DAVID K MATTHEWS C^R <u>The Fantasy Vocal Sessions, Vol. 3</u> <i>Effendi</i> 75	<p>Keyboardist and bandleader David K. Matthews releases the 3rd Volume of <u>The Fantasy Vocal Sessions</u>, and it is another winning set. There are down home blues like “Hard Times”, “I’ve Got A Woman” featuring Glenn Walters (vocals), “I’m Your Iceman” featuring Tony Lindsay (vocals), and “Mary Ann” featuring guitarist Chris Cain. Matthews does a fine job of highlighting some of the lesser known, but very talented artists, and listeners will enjoy the soulful music.</p>

O's Place Features

The Legend of Ice T

The Legend of Ice T is not for the weak hearted. We reviewed the soundtrack of the movie, six sides of well recorded vinyl. It's rated X and the language and content easily get you there. The movie adds nudity, violence, and strong sexual content. The beats are fierce, able to sustain the bone crushing, hardcore action. There are no holds barred in these Crime Stories if you can stand a different reality.

84
Rap
Ruffnation
2024



Photo: Ice T

O's Place Jazz Ruler™

Traditional				Contemporary		
1900	1920	1940	1960	1970	1980	2000
Ragtime T ^R Dixie T ^D	Blues&Ballads T ^b Swing T ^S	Bebop T ^B Big Band T ^N	Latin T ^L Free T ^A	Fusion C ^F R&B+Jazz C ^R	Funk C ^f Pop+Jazz C ^P	Acid C ^A

Photo: Mike DiRubbo

Mike DiRubbo Inner Light

Altosaxophonist Mike DiRubbo assembles a fine band with Brian Charette (B3), Jongkuk Kim (d), and Andrew Renfroe (g). Inner Light opens with Renfroe shining on "JK In NYC" and amplifying the strong fusion groove on "The Moment Before Sunrise" as well. We also enjoyed "The Muse", "Bethune Street", the relaxing "Love The Same", and the title track, making this a winning session!

79
Truth
Revolution
Fusion
2023



O's Place Features

NOAH BECKER

New York-based Canadian painter and jazz saxophonist is in his jazz zone for Mode For Noah. He leads a quartet with Brent Jarvis (Rhodes), Kosma Busheikin (b), and Graham Villette (d). They play seven of Becker's originals opening with the swinging title track. "Open Road", "Canal Zone", and "August Moon" are other highlights. His art pieces are vibrant, colorful portraits, much like what we heard in his music!

74
Fusion
Entour
2024

Mode For Noah

Photo: TIMES COLONIST

Mike Clark

75 R&B+Jazz
Jazz Key 2023

Kosen Rufu

Drummer Mike Clark assembles a fine team for Kosen Rufu (WorldPeace), a free spirited, jazz-fusion set. The rhythms are furious with Wayne Horvitz playing piano & Rhodes, Henry "The Skipper" Franklin on bass, percussionist Bill Summers, and Clark. The syncopated horns, Skerik (sax) and Eddie Henderson (t), make it funky. "Barbecue on Austin" is a good example that brings it all together. We also enjoyed "Love Mingus", "Signature", and "Apparition".

CHRIS LEE

74
PJCE
Fusion
2023

The rhythm section is formidable by itself with bassist Dave Captein, pianist Greg Goebel, and leader drummer Chris Lee. When you add trumpeter Thomas Barber and guitarist Dan Balmer, with blended melodies, you've got a fine quintet. "Castalia", "(A Little) Travlin' Music", and "Can He Wheel Her?" are examples of the variety of tempos on Quintet Music.

Quintet Music

Photo: Chris Lee

O's Place Features

81

Pop+Jazz
Adhyaropa
2023

OLIVIA PEREZ-COLLELMIR



Photo: Zavaleta Photography

Olivia

Spanish pianist and composer Olivia Perez-Collelmir assembles a fine team of musicians for Olivia, a collection that features her favorite genres combining different singers and instruments to vary the approach. Vocalist Judith Neddermann softens the mood along with the strings on “Combat Del Somni”. We also enjoyed the strings on “Barcelona” with vocalist Loteto de Diego. Olivia makes strong contributions throughout the session notably on the six “Promenade(s)”, as well as “Le Tombeau de Couperin” featuring cellist Naseem Alatrash. Ismael Fernández adds vocalizations on the heavily syncopated “Granada” featuring bassist Fernando Huergo in a session that begs repeated listening.

Ron Blake

74 R&B+Jazz
7ten33 2024

Mistaken Identity

Polished saxophonist Ron Blake steps into the leadership role on Mistaken Identity, not his first recording, but one that places him in the spotlight, and deservedly so! He gets support from Bobby Broom (g), Kobie Watkins (d) and either Nat Reeves or Reuben Rogers on bass. They play nine selections varying tempo and mood. “Beyond Yesterday’s Tomorrows”, “Is That So?”, and the calypso-laced title track are among the best selections.

DÁNAE OLANO

Children's Corner

Pianist Dánae Olano leads a jazz trio over ten vibrant, original selections with bassist Roberto Riveron and drummer Ahmed Mitchel. Olano shines throughout the session notably on “Ausencia”, “This City”, “Mother”, and the lone cover, “Un Poco Loco”, all feature Riveron with excellent solos. We also enjoyed “Thinking about that name” with guest Horacio Hernandez (d), and ‘Danzon Para La Abuela’. Collectively we found Children’s Corner to be satisfying.

78
Lulaworld
Pop+Jazz
2024



Photo: Lulaworld

O's Place Features

77
Pop+Jazz
Afinat
2022

EUCLID QUARTET

Breve

There's a certain amount of beauty in a string quartet, whether they are playing, jazz or classical music. It just feels good, and such is the case with the Euclid Quartet. They are Jameson Cooper (violin), Aviva Hakanoglu (2nd violin), Luis Enrique Vargas (viola), and Justin Goldsmith (cello). This is popular music that could accompany cartoons or provide after dinner entertainment. We liked the dynamic "Polka From The Golden Age", "Four for Tango", and the racy "Quartetsatz, D. 703".



Photo: Euclid Quartet

Gurdjieff Ensemble

77 Pop+Jazz
ECM 2024

Zartir

The Gurdjieff Ensemble is composed of leading musicians from Armenia led by the Armenian musician, artistic director Levon Eskenian. Zartir is a collection of medieval Armenian folk and spiritual music cast in the spirit of esoteric teacher G. I. Gurdjieff. The music is relaxing and stimulates reflection. Primary vocals come from Vladimir Papikyan while the National Chamber Choir of Armenia adds ambience on "The Great Prayer". It is a page from the old-world worth listening to.

ANTHONY FUNG

Fo(U)Rth

Fo(U)Rth is the latest release from LA-based, Canadian drummer, composer Anthony Fung. He is a highly engaged drummer who is well integrated with his quartet. There are some excellent ballads here like "The Upside Down" featuring tenor saxophonist Mark Turner and pianist Michael Ragonese. Fung opens the title track and shines on "Boo Boo's Birthday" with bassist Lucas Alemanno walking with a purpose.

77
Fusion
A. Fung
2023



Photo: Anthony Fung

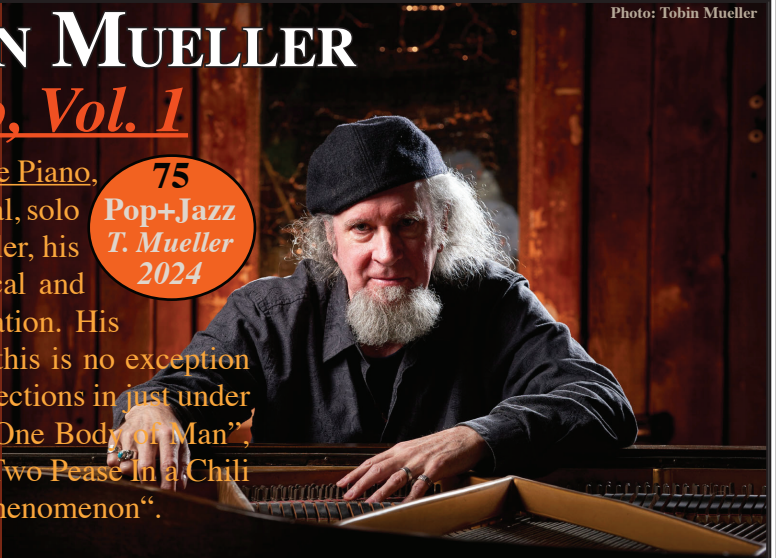
O's Place Features

TWO FROM TOBIN MUELLER *At The Piano, Vol. 1*

Photo: Tobin Mueller

This is the first volume of *At The Piano*, a two-part series of select, original, solo piano recordings by Tobin Mueller, his 41st release. He marries classical and pop with lots of jazz improvisation. His music is always energetic, and this is no exception as he takes us through eleven selections in just under one hour. He gets spiritual on “One Body of Man”, a piano duet. We also enjoyed “Two Pease In a Chili Pod” and “Time As Emergent Phenomenon”.

75
Pop+Jazz
T. Mueller
2024



At The Piano, Vol. 2

This is the second volume of *At The Piano*, a two-part series of select, original, solo piano recordings by Tobin Mueller. This is a listening session, suitable as a relaxing, soothing backdrop. The more we listened, the more we liked it!

73
Pop+Jazz
T. Mueller
2024

www.OsPlaceJazz.com

PAKT *No Steps Left To Trace*

PAKT is bassist Percy Jones, guitarist Alex Skolnick, drummer Kenny Grohowski, and guitarist/electronics master Tim Motzer. Jones introduces us to their groove on the 2-part opener “No Steps Left To Trace”. “On the Other Side, Pt 1” is an extra-galactic trip that morphs into rock-fusion led by the guitarists. “Pt. 2” is similar but funkier. “Spontaneous Combustion” and “The Ghost Mills” are appropriately titled in this creative set. Our favorites are the chaotic “NYC III” and “NYC IV” on the second disc.

74
Fusion
Moonjune
2024



Photo: Avraham Bank

Contemporary Selections

ARTIST	Title	Label	X	T
ATLEY KING	<u>Unconditional</u>	<i>Cellar Music</i>	73	C ^F
TU-NER	<u>T-1 Contact Information</u>	<i>7D Media</i>	73	C ^P
MAREIKE WIENING	<u>Reveal</u>	<i>Initiative Musik</i>	73	C ^F
MARK WINGFIELD	<u>The Gathering</u>	<i>Moonjune</i>	73	C ^F
CHRISTIAN FABIAN	<u>Hip To The Skip</u>	<i>Spice Rack</i>	72	C ^f
DIANNE FRASER	<u>You And I</u>	<i>Blu Jazz</i>	72	C ^b
OLLER I GUERRA	<u>L'Argiment</u>	<i>Microscopi</i>	72	C ^P
AUDREY SILVER	<u>Oklahoma</u>	<i>Messy House</i>	72	C ^b
COLOMA BERTRAN	<u>Anima-l</u>	<i>Microscopi</i>	71	C ^F
ARINA FUJIWARA	<u>Neon</u>	<i>A. Fujiwara</i>	71	C ^F
NEGATIVE PRESS PROJECT	<u>The Victouious Sessions</u>	<i>Ridgeway</i>	71	C ^F
HENRY PAZ	<u>Jardineros</u>	<i>557 Records</i>	71	C ^F
NOAH FRANCHE-NOLAN	<u>Within The Stream</u>	<i>Cellar Jazz</i>	69	C ^P

SOFIA RUBINA

Photo: Sofina Rubina

I Am Soul

Estonian vocalist Sofia Rubina mixes, jazz, pop, and soul in front of a trio with Evgeny Lebedev (p), Ignat Karvtsov (d) and Anton Revnyuk (b). Main Strings (string quartet) joins them notably on “Surgery”. Sofia’s voice is full of character, delightfully so across eleven mostly original songs. “Great Life”, “Open Your Eyes You Can Fly” and “Taim” are highlights of I Am Soul.

76
Pop+Jazz
S. Rubina
2024



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O's Rating Scale (X)

0 65 80 95



Pass

Contemplate

Buy

Strong Buy

O's Place Legends

Les McCann

Never A Dull Moment

Never A Dull Moment features the late, pianist Les McCann performing live with his trio on the west coast in early 1966, and on the east coast July 16, 1967. The first two of three CDs are from the *Penthouse* in Seattle with bassist Stanley Gilbert and either Paul Humphrey or Tony Bazley on drums. The third disc features Les with Leroy Vinnegar on bass and Frank Severino on drums. McCann has a vibrant stride style that is energetic and immediately engaging. The liner notes are fabulous, truly enhancing the listening experience, one that casts McCann in great light!



Photo: Michael Baker

Betty Bryant

Lotta Livin'

77
Blues
Bry-Mar
2024

Photo: Betty Bryant

Pianist and vocalist Betty Bryant is 94 years old and dare I say she's still in her prime! Lotta Livin' is a collection of experiences that are enjoyable and entertaining. There are great stories in these blues-based ballads, for example, "Chicken Wings", with Robert Kyle on harmonica, and "Stormy Monday". Betty romances us on "Baby, Baby all The Time", bassist Richard Simon opens the swinging "Blues to Get Started", an instrumental. I hope I am as relevant at 94!



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Final Notes Jazz composer, pianist **Les McCann** died of pneumonia at the age of 88 on December 29, 2023. **Carl Gordon Grubbs**, a jazz saxophonist died on the 5th of January from pneumonia. He was 79. Jazz vocalist **Marlena Shaw** died from undisclosed causes on January 19. She was 84 years old. **On March 2, 2024, pianist Jim Beard** died at the age of 63 of complications from an unnamed sudden illness. The musical contributions of these fine jazz professionals will remain with us forever.

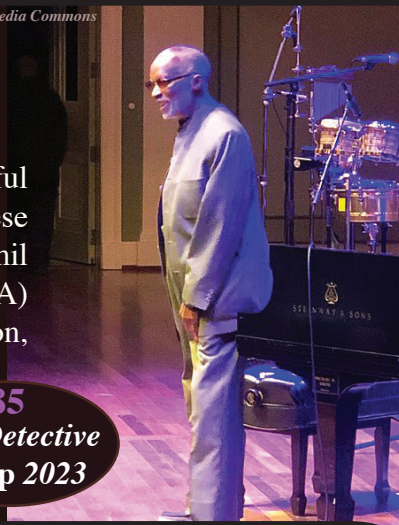
O's Place Legends

Ahmad Jamal

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Emerald City Nights

The legendary Ahmad Jamal has performed many delightful recordings and Emerald City Nights is yet another gem. These live sessions capture Ahmad in his prime along with bassist Jamil Nasser and Frank Gant on drums. The Penthouse (Seattle, WA) was a cornerstone for jazz from 1962-68 before its demolition, now a parking lot. This is a fine collection, recorded between September 1966 and April 1968. There are eleven lengthy songs over two discs showcasing the legendary maestro.



85
Jazz Detective
Bebop 2023

Gordon Lee

2023 Modern
PJCE 75

How Can It Be?

71-year-old pianist, composer, and educator, Gordon Lee leads a quartet for How Can It Be? his latest release. Drummer Gary Hobbs, bassist Dennis Caiazza, and saxophonist Renato Caranto join him over nine selections. “Angry Mother Nature”, “Shaky Assets”, “How Can It Be”, and “Deed I Did It” are among the best selections as Lee remains dexterous and full of energy throughout the entire session.

Dave Brubeck

Live From the Northwest, 1959

Photo: Getty Images



81
Derry
Bebop
2023

The time is 1959 and jazz is popping on the west coast. At the center of it is a young pianist named Dave Brubeck, taking the world by storm, and burning it up on Live From the Northwest, excerpts of live concerts recorded at the Multnomah Hotel in Portland, OR and Clark College in Vancouver, WA in early April. Dave is performing in a quartet with saxophonist Paul Desmond, bassist Eugene Wright and drummer Joe Morello. They were in their prime and displaying the prowess that made Brubeck a legend.

O's Place Features



Photo: Kelly Jefferson

75
Modern
Cellar
2023

Kelly Jefferson

Canadian Jazz saxophonist Kelly Jefferson lights a fuse on *Rituals*, his latest release. He leads a quartet with Amanda Tosoff (p), Jon Maharaj (b) and Morgan Childs (d). Each of the musicians get their share of the spotlight but it's the younger bandleader's date and he shines throughout the session. There are nine compositions, each representing a milestone for Jefferson. Those are perhaps the rituals that lead him to be an award-winning artist in his prime, his young prime. This is an enjoyable set and suggests there is more to come.

Rituals

Caroline Julia Cabading

Sugilanon is the story of the Philippine-American immigration experience in the early 1900s through today. The focal city is San Francisco, illustrated musically and with vocals and narrative by Caroline Julia Cabading. Melecio Magdaluyo (sax) compliments the story with warm solos as on "My Soul Mate", "Fits Just Fine", and "Baby Ko". There's a meaningful history illustrated across 26 selections, notably on "Baby Carolina", "Madeline and Napoleon", "Fred", and "Caroline".

Sugilanon

77
Blues
Patois
2024



Photo: Manillatown Heritage Foundation

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