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O'pening Notes

We've got a new USA president and lots of change is coming, everyday. It's not all good or fully understood but it is certainly creating a lot of stress, volatility and uncertainty. Jazz artists are expressing the responding with emotional pleas and providing some solace with soothing rhythms.

There are 100 solid review here, a couple of weeks earlier than usual as "O" is taking a needed vacation to relax!

March is a month that we are celebrating women. Their contributions in jazz are invaluable and deserve celebration. The vast talent and resilience of female jazz musicians not only shape the sound of jazz in the past but play a critical role in the ongoing narrative. Four of this issue's Top Ten Scores are led by women!

We honor the legacy of women in jazz, a story of courage, creativity, and strength.

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 encourage you to acknowledge these musicians, attending live performances and supporting initiatives that are developing future generations of women in the jazz community.

Don't get overwhelmed by the politics. Seek ways to shape our future and success. Always remember to take a breath, relax and enjoy some of the beauty in life, with friends, good music (jazz), good food, and beverages.

Enjoy the music!

O

www.OsPlaceJazz.com

THE TOP TEN* SCORES

1. EVA CASSIDY - I Can Only Be Me
2. TOWNER GALAHER - Brothers
2. ELAINE DAME - Reminiscing
4. JASON YEAGER & JASON ANICK - Sanctuary
5. YOUNEE - Improvisations
5. KEITH JARRETT - The Old Country
7. DAY DREAM - Duke & Strays Live
7. DAVID CAFFEY - At The Edge of Spring
9. SARA SERPA - Encounters & Collisions
9. JIM SELF & JOHN CHIODINI - Feels So Good

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

O's primary listening is done with a Sony XA777ES SACD 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 B&W 800D speakers wired with Cardas Hex 5C speaker wire, Transparent Audio interconnects, vpi HW 40 (40th Anniv) turntable with Gimble Tonearm and E.S.P. Essence Reference Power Distribution System.

O's Rating Scale (X)

0 65 80 95

Pass

Contemplate

Buy

Strong Buy

*Unbiased Sound Advice **from** O's Place Jazz*

ARTIST
Title
Label Perf/Sound

Top Traditional Picks

O's Notes

DAY DREAM T^B
Duke & Strays
Live 84
Corner Store Jazz

Day Dream is a seasoned trio featuring pianist Steve Rudolph, bassist Drew Gress, and Phil Haynes on drums. Duke & Strays Live is centered on the works of the legendary Duke Ellington & Billy Strayhorn. The band doesn't normally perform live but this faculty recital, a 2-disc set, was recorded at The Natalie Davis-Rooke Recital Hall, Bucknell University on 9/23/2023. It is their fourth recording, and it swings, sans showboating, with an inviting groove. They embellish eleven classic compositions leaving lots of room for embellishments from each of the musicians. The results are an engaging, dynamic performance!

THE DAM JAWN T^B
Forward! 78
Cellar Music

The Dam Jawn is an international jazz quintet that currently resides in The Netherlands. Martín Díaz (a-sax) and Joan Foart (g) are from Spain, Philip Lewin (b) is from Germany, and Nitin Parree (d) & Frank Groenendijk (t-sax) are Dutch. They all met in an exchange program at Temple University. Veteran saxophonist Dick Oatts is their featured guest. The music swings with a head-bobbing groove on the title track and "Blues For Oatts". We also enjoyed "Wayne's Mind's Eye", the more relaxed vibe of "Fairmont Park", and "Doors".

MELINDA ROSE & FRENCHY T^b
ROMERO 76
I'm On My Way
M. Rose/F. Romero

Vocalist Melinda Rose and pianist Frenchy Romero are lifetime friends celebrating a dream debut recording with I'm On My Way. Vince DuPont (b) and Matt Wilson (d) are the core accompaniment with trumpeter Summer Camaro appearing on two selections notably "Don't Come Back". The program is mostly standards with several originals penned by Rose. Neither headliner is bashful and they both shine on "Once Upon A Summertime" with Spanish and English lyrics. We also enjoyed "It Could Happen To You" and "You Can Have Him".

CALEB WHEELER 74
CURTIS
The True Story of The Bears and the Invention of the Battery T^B
Imani

O's Notes: The True Story of Bears and the Invention of the Battery is a double album by Caleb Wheeler Curtis playing hard bop with two different trios. The first disc, *Bears and the Invention...* features Wheeler Curtis on sax and trumpet with bassist Sean Conly and Michael Sarin on drums. All these songs are originals. Highlights here are "Stellar Ray, See?", "Empires", and "Odessa", a solo sax effort. The second disc, *Raise Four: Monk the Minimalist* features Wheeler Curtis (t, sax), Eric Revis (b) and Justin Faulkner (d). This was more easily embraceable as we identified with the Monk compositions, notably "Introspection", "Reflections", and "Jackie-ing". We couldn't make sense of the title, but we enjoyed the contrasting discs and abundance of creativity.

www.OsPlaceJazz.com

O's Place Features

DAVE STRYKER

Goes To The Movies

Guitarist Dave Stryker Goes To The Movies with a wealth of guest artists and a string orchestra. Sara Caswell is the lead violinist on “In Your Eyes” & “Low Key Lightly”, saxophonist Greg Ward leads “Taxi Driver” and is joined by trumpeter Mark Buselli soloing on “Flirtbird”. We also enjoyed “Theme From Shaft”, and the laid back “Moonglow” featuring trombonist Jim Pugh. Styker is present on all of these with excellent guitar work.

82
Strikezone
Bebop
2024

Photo: Chris Drukker

United States Air Force Band

78 Big Band
Aim High 2024

Airmen of Note

Colonel Dan Schofield is the Commander and Conductor of The Air Force Band's Airmen of Note performing with guest artists/composers Gordon Goodwin (sax), Rodney Whitaker (b), and Jon Faddis (t) in a live session. The guest artists are featured on three selections each. The servicemen are also exemplary musicians performing in a well-orchestrated program. Our favorites are: “Second Chances” featuring MSgt Logan Keese (flugelhorn), “A Mother's Cry” featuring MSgt Kristian Baarsvik (s-sax), SMSgt Geoff Recker (g), SMSgt Grant Langford (t-sax), & MUC Kevin McDonald (d), and “Things To Come” featuring MSgt Kevin Cerovich (tb) and MSgt Todd Baker (t-sax).

JIM SELF & JOHN CHIODINI

Feels So Good

A love of great music and performing it bring tuba player Jim Self and guitarist John Chiodini together again on Feels So Good. It's their latest in a continuous stream of very good recordings as a duo. They include several guest artists on this encounter as well! Phil Feather plays alto sax on “Isfahan”, Steve Marsh (t-sax) joins on “Fanciful Dream”, trombonist Bill Booth steps in on “Polkadots and Moonbeams”, and Kris Bergh (t) plays “Riddle of the Mode” as a duet with Chiodini. They all come together as a sextet on “Blues Connotation” to punctuate the set.

83
Basset Hound
Bebop
2024



Photo: Bandcamp

O's Place Features

77
Ballads
Dash Hoffman
2024

DNA Continuum

DNA is the Mon David (vocals), Josh Nelson (keyboards) Agreement. On Continuum, they expand beyond the original duo to a trio including guitarist Larry Koonse on 4 of the 11 selections. These are heartfelt, well-articulated vocal tracks with improvisational scatting, and instrumental mirroring of the effects as best heard on “Four”. The are two originals in the sea of classics, notably “Murky” a dedicated to Mark Murphy.



Photo: Bandcamp

Scott / Grant 5

Modern 2024
Cellar Jazz 75

Horizon Song

Andrew Scott and trombonist Kelley Grant are the leaders of a straight-ahead quintet including Amanda Tosoff (keyboards), Neil Swainson (b) and Terry Clarke (d). They play nine originals, mostly by Scott, that have history behind them with no gimmicks. They in close a taste of bossa nova on “Beautiful Shira”, and a wealth of swing on “The Tamarind Tree”, “The Problems Of Your Future” and “Horizon Song”.

LATIN CROSSROADS

82
Ballads
Ovation
2024

Latin Crossroads is a collection of mixed vocals baked by an orchestra with mild Latin undertones. This is the brainchild of pianist, arranger, orchestrator and co-producer Gino Amato. We liked “Shower The People”, “Green Flower Street”, “Blackbird”, “Bad Things”, “On The Street Where You Live”, and a cool instrumental arrangement of “Round Midnight”. Janis Siegel (vocals), Kevin Osborn (vocals), co-producer Oscar Hernandez (p), Ruben Rodriguez (b), Vince Cherico (d), Lew Soloff (t), and Pablo Nunez (perc) are a small sample of the extensive roster of musicians. The mix of vocalists and instrumentation make this an enjoyable session start to finish!

Photo: Gino Amato



| ARTIST Title <i>Label</i> Rating | <u>Big Band Picks</u> O's Notes |
|---|---|
| DAVID CAFFEY <u>At The Edge Of</u> Spring T^N HDC 84 | <p>Composer, arranger, conductor, and producer David Caffey presents a program of optimistic music with <u>At The Edge Of Spring</u>. David's Orchestra is contemporary in nature, pleasing to listen to, precise, vibrant, and explosive where they need to be! "Starlight", "Brazilian Dances For Brooklyn", and "The Brothers" are a few of the highlights.</p> |
| PONY BOY ALL-STAR BIG BAND <u>This Is Now</u> T^N Pony Boy 81 | <p>The Pony Boy All-Star Big Band is a collection of the best musicians in Seattle under the direction of drummer Greg Williamson. They recorded <u>This Is Now- Live at Boxley's</u> May 17, 2024, where they are a monthly mainstay. There are ten selections for over seventy minutes of passionate, orchestrated music. We enjoyed "Mr. X", "21st Century" with a rousing drum solo, "I Fall In Love Too Easily" featuring Connor Eisenmenger (tb), and "Geo Rose" featuring John Hansen (p). There is also a bonus disc with two additional tracks and a cool video with cameos of the entire band!</p> |
| MARK MASTERS <u>Sui Generis</u> T^N Capri 80 | <p>Composer, producer, arranger Mark Masters creates another breathtaking album with <u>Sui Generis</u> featuring trumpeter Tim Hagens. All the music was composed with Tim in mind and goes beyond Masters' imagination with edgy, courageous solos! Hagens is not the only strong musician in this octet. Drummer Kendall Kay has several strong solos notably on "Interlude". Our favorites were the swingers: "The Stoic", "Waxing and Waning", and "Meet Me At Sal's & Angie's" with solos by Jeff Colella (p), Chris Colangelo (b) and of course Hagens.</p> |
| OMAR THOMAS <u>Griot Songs</u> T^N Omar Thomas 79 | <p>Composer Omar Thomas spent over 16 years writing the music for <u>Griot Songs</u>, a collection of seven lengthy selections over two discs. The music is dynamic, yet relaxing. We liked "Nothing There", "Sail To The Moon" and "Episode d'Azor" best. The liner notes were detailed but 2 font was out of my range, worse than a finance PowerPoint slide! I suspect the vinyl is a better bet.</p> |
| VISIONS JAZZ ENSEMBLE T^N <u>Across The Field</u> Patois 75 | <p>Visions Jazz Ensemble (VJE) is a septet with Sam Butler (t), Garrett Fasig (t-sax), Nick Recktenwald (t), Jeff Parker (tb, b-t), Dan Ventura (p), Jacob Smith (b), and Francis Bassett-Dilley (d). VJE reimagined thirteen college fight songs with cool, jazzy arrangements making some almost unrecognizable, but certainly enjoyable to jazz fans. Among the best are "Anchors Aweigh", "Glory Glory", "Fight On", and "Rocky Top". Guest artist Wycliffe Gordon (tb) is featured on "Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight", his alma mater Florida A&M's fight song. Surprisingly, they sound much better than anticipated, way more than we hear from the marching bands.</p> |

Traditional Selections

| ARTIST | Title | Label | X | T |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----|----------------|
| KEVIN SUN | <u>Quartets</u> | <i>Endectomorph</i> | 73 | T ^A |
| GONZALO RUBALCABA DONGFENG LIU | <u>China Afro Cuba</u> | <i>Zoho</i> | 72 | T ^L |
| YUKA MITO | <u>How Deep Is The Ocean</u> | <i>Nana Notes</i> | 71 | T ^b |
| PAUL KENDALL | <u>Live At Vics Loft</u> | <i>Zoho</i> | 69 | T ^B |
| INGRID MICHAELSON | <u>For The Dreamers</u> | <i>Cabin 24</i> | 66 | T ^b |
| DIANA PANTON | <u>Soft Winds And Roses</u> | <i>Diana Panton</i> | 66 | T ^b |
| DOUG FERONY | <u>All Right Okay You Win</u> | <i>Ferony Enterprises</i> | 65 | T ^b |

Michale Simon

Venezuelan trumpeter, composer, arranger Michael Simon now resides in The Netherlands, but the world is his canvas on East, West & Beyond, his latest release. Simon's affinity for Asian music led him to form Asian Connection, a sextet with Minyen Hsieh (sax, fl) & Hauyi Tsai (pipa), both from Taiwan, Indonesian pianist Sri Hanuraga, Japanese bassist Ikeda Kinya, and Hong Kong-based drummer Tzu Yu Huang. The music has elements of several Asian cultures blended with Latin and jazz improvisation resulting in a beautiful quilt of fresh, modern jazz. Dunayevsky steps up on "Dinette" & "Insensiblement". We enjoyed the crisp vocal arrangement of "Caravan", and the funky take of "Lady Be Good".

Photo: Michael Simon



75
Modern
Pramisi
2024

East West & Beyond

Joymakers

75 Dixie 2024
Turtle Bay

The Joymakers are an octet led by Colin Hancock (cornet, sax, tb, vocals). David Jellema (cl, Sax, cornet, vocals), Lauryn Gould (sax, vocals), Dylan Blackthorn (p, accordion), Westin Borghesi (banjo), Shane Dickens (p), Ryan Gould (b), and Ryan Neubauer (d). They present their debut, Down Where The Bluebonnets Grow. The music is early jazz-swing that was common in Texas during the 1920s-30s. Most of the tunes are swinging instrumentals but Gould sings the blues on couple of tunes notably "I'm A Thousand Miles From Home". Hancock and Jellema also sing a couple of songs. We enjoyed the raspy lyrics on "That's A Serious Thing".

O's Bass Features

THOMAS FONNESBAEK

In Rome

78

Storyville
Pop+Jazz
2024

Danish bassist, Thomas Fønnesbæk assembles a trio with pianist Enrico Pieranunzi and Roberto Gatto on drums. Rosario Giuliani plays soprano sax on two selections notably “Orphant In Rome”. Valentina Ranalli sings on two selections as well to add a different dimension to In Rome. Each of the musicians had a hand in composing the music, mostly Pieranunzi. Fønnesbæk plays on the edge and makes a positive statement on songs like “Satie’s Mood” and “Il Giardino Di Anne”.



Photo: Brigitte Soffner

ELAM FRIEDLANDER

Sound Elements

75

Cellar Jazz
Modern
2024



Photo: Elam Friedlander

Israeli bassist, composer Elam Friedlander leads a quartet with Abraham Burton (t-sax), Eric McPherson (d) and Luis Perdomo (p) for his latest release Sound Elements. Burton opens “Fire” like an inferno, the first of five unique original tracks. He relaxes

a bit yet remains intense on “Air”. Our favorite is “Water” with fine work by McPherson opening on the cymbals followed by Perdomo’s soothing piano.

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

Caribbean Christmas Mixtape,

Joy Lapps

Vol. 1

Female, steel drummer Joy Lapps spreads the Holiday cheer on Caribbean Christmas Mixtape, Vol. 1. The journey begins with “Soca Sleigh Ride” and includes classics like “O Little Town Of Bethlehem”, “Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas”, and “Little Drummer Boy”, one of a few vocal tracks featuring Subria Lapps. And we especially enjoyed the reggae beats on “Carol Of The Bells”!

Photo: Joy Lapps



78
Latin
Summit
2024



Livio Almeida Brasilia Sessions

This is tenor saxophonist, Livio Almeida's debut recording on the Zoho label. He leads a Brazilian quartet with Misael Silvestre (keyboards), Dan Castro (b), and Pedro Almeida (d). Brasilia Sessions was recorded in the capital of Brazil in a program with six Almeida originals and two local standards. Livio is sizzling on the New York jazz scene pre-pandemic, and he is a definitive force to embrace. This is a rich combination of Modern jazz and samba that begs your attention!

Photo on Left: Livio Almeida

Latin 2024
Zoho 82

Gonzalo del Val Lamentos Mestizos

Photo: Gonzalo del Val

Spanish drummer, bandleader Gonzalo del Val features Mexican singer Valentina Marentes on his latest recording Lamentos Mestizos based on his interpretations of the Mexican songbook. Benjamín García (b), Luis Giménez (g), Paquito Cruz (p) flesh out the band. The lyrics are all in Spanish, but the warmth of the program is easily appreciated, as is the percussion. Highlights are “La Martiniana”, the racy “Prenda Del Alma” featuring Giménez, and “Deja Que Saiga La Luna”.



77
Microscopi
Latin
2024

O's Trombone Features

Michael Pallas *Gateway*

Composer, trombonist Michael Pallas is a versatile musician who cuts across many genres. He's played alongside many artists over the last 15 years and steps into the spotlight on his debut as a leader on *Gateway*. Pallas

mixes straight-ahead jazz with Latin, hip hop and fusion to deliver his message. He gets support from Lomar Brown (sax), Yeisson Villamar (p), John Benitez (b), Jonathan Barber (d), and Nelson Mathew Gonzalez (perc). Rapper Ghazi Omair takes the mic on "Counterfeit Blues" and the urban beat continues on "The Verdict" & "Beyond". They swing on "El Boli", there is a pumping, club beat on "Next Exit" contrasting the relaxed Latin groove of "Disu's Dream". All told, this is a very good album.

79
R&B+Jazz
Truth Revolution
2024



Photo: Michael Pallas

Shatter The Glass Sanctuary

Naomi Moon Siegel

Trombonist, composer, and band leader Naomi Moon Siegel's latest release serves two purposes. First the acclamation to western Montana after living in metropolitan USA. Secondly *Shatter The Glass Sanctuary* serves as an expression of emotions based on reality. The band is a sextet including Ray Larsen (t) and Andy COE (g). The chaotic "Sabotage" and "The Adventures of Violet & Pilot" stand out on Side A. We preferred the provocative title suite (Side B), especially "Breathe In" featuring bassist Kelsey Mines, "Tethered" and "Shatter It".

76
Break Open
Fusion
2024



Photo: Rio Chantel

O's Piano Features

Younee

South Korean pianist Younee started out playing classical music but migrated to progressive rock and ultimately jazz as a medium to express her feelings. Younee plays what she feels, incorporating the audience, the specific piano, and her mood. She now resides in Germany where she became a citizen. Improvisations Live In Germany captures Younee in prime form (all solo piano) on different pianos, in different venues, across Germany. The constant is the beauty of the music, easily embraceable, with excellent technique, these 20 improvised originals are noteworthy.

Photo: Na Young Lee

85
Modern
Fulminant
2024

Improvisations



Arturo O'Farrill

Pianist, composer and band leader,

Bebop 2024
Cellar Live 75

Arturo O'Farrill and his Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra celebrate the late Carla Bley, O'Farrill's mentor and a true musical inspiration. Mundoagua is a musical statement supported by liner notes that are highly informative discussing water, our precious resource, Bley, and the Aztec people. The program consists of three sections, two composed by Arturo surrounding Bley's final composition "Blue Palestine", commissioned by O'Farrill. We liked "Blue Palestine Part Four", and "Glacial", the first movement to the title track.

Mundoagua

Benjie Porecki is an established keyboardist who was inspired by Herbie Hancock and Ray Charles. He plays a genre busting contemporary jazz that is palatable to a wide audience on All That Matters, a warm set of contemporary jazz tunes centered around the piano. Mark Prince plays drums, and Michael Bowle plays bass to round out the Trio. We liked "Intermezzo" with Benji playing the B3 and piano, "She's Gone", and "Home At Last". We also liked the ballads like "Bring It On Home" and the title track.

Photo: Benji Porecki

79
Pop+Jazz
Funklove
2024

Benjie Porecki

All That Matters



O's Piano Features



82
Libra
Avant Garde
2024

Satoko Fujii

Dog Days of Summer

Japanese free jazz pianist Satoko Fujii and her husband, trumpeter, producer Natsuki Tamura return to their explosive, Vulcan quartet for Dog Days of Summer. Hayakawa Takeharu (b) and Tatsuya Yoshida (d) join them. While they maintain the chaotic momentum that they've established on their free jazz productions, this is one of the more melodic and embraceable encounters that we've listened to. "A Parcel For You" has a fusion bent featuring Takeharu. We enjoyed the percussion on "Circle Dance" & "Haru Wo Matsu", and the chase on "Metropolitan Expressway" featuring Tamura.

Photo: Satoko Fujii

Cedric Hanriot

2024 AAM
Latin 75

Time Is Color

French jazz pianist, composer, arranger, producer Cedric Hanriot assembles a trio with bassist Bertrand Beruard and Antonio Violot on drums. They add several guest artists to liven the performance as Hanriot focuses on voice to extend his futuristic instrumentals. Tony Moreau sings "A Luminous World Part 2", Soweto Kinch raps on "Ego Chase", JSWISS takes the mic on "Spirit In Motion", Moreau and Charles X join the trio on "Whispers Of Absence", and "LA Source" features Arthur H and Moreau.

Brenda Earle-Stokes

Motherhood

74
Brenda Earle
Ballads
2024

Singer, pianist, composer Brenda Earle-Stokes adds Motherhood to her lists of talents and follows with ten songs associated with that experience. Evan Gregor (b), Ross Pederson (d), and Ingrid Jensen (t) support her with Melissa Stylianou & Nicole Zuraitis providing backing vocals. These are songs that any mother can relate to with experiences from birth to the numerous challenges during childhood.

Photo: Brenda Earle-Stokes

O's Piano Features

Cookin' In The Couve

Ben Paterson

82
Cellar Jazz
Bebop
2024

Pianist Ben Paterson leads a trio with bassist Neal Miner and Aaron Selber on drums. They open with Cookin In The Couve, and they live up to the title! They rehearsed the early takes during performances at Frankie's Jazz Club in Vancouver before hitting the studio at full speed. These guys swing hard without gimmickry. We like the bubbly swag of "Chicken 'N Dumplings", "This Here", "North Pond Stroll", and "Up The Exchange". Ben is almost giddy with his bubbly exchanges on the keyboard and the trio is lock-in-step with him making this a winner.

Photo: Ben Paterson

Forq

2024 *Ground Up*
PopJazz 74

Big Party

Forq (pronounced fork) is a funky, jazz fusion band created in 2012 with some Snarky Puppy DNA. They've evolved over the years to several quartet configurations, all featuring founding member, composer, producer, keyboardist Henry Hey. Cofounder, drummer JT Thomas plays on 6 of the 9 selections. Bass duty is handled by 4 musicians. Three guitarists split duty on Big Party. The music is syncopated with many catchy riffs. "Bump", "Dirt Cake", "Kick The Curb", and "Song for Jim" and among the best selections.

Eric Bell Vulnerability

81
E. Bell
Fusion
2024

Pianist Eric Bell is dancing across the keys on Vulnerability, his latest endeavor with bassist Cole Sainburg, and drummer Nico Vasquez forming the primary trio. Guest guitarist Deen Anbar adds texture in a few spots. We liked "Witch Hunt", "The Way You Look Tonight", the Latin beats of "Hans", and the title track featuring saxophonist Eric Hershorn. We also enjoyed the swinging "Beautiful Love" where Bell punctuates his debut!

Photo: Eric Bell

O's Sax Reviews

Adrian Cunningham



Photo: Adrian Cunningham

82
Modern
Arbors
2024

It's About Time

Australian composer, producer Adrian Cunningham (t-sax, cl, fl) leads a quartet with David Kikoski (p), Yasushi Nakamura (b), and Clarence Penn (d). For his latest release *It's About Time*. Guest trombonist Wycliffe Gordon stands out on "Battle Hymn Of The Republic" and "Song For Wycliffe". We also enjoyed "Summertime", "Julia" featuring Nakamura, "Pamela", and "Fake News".

JD Allen

The Dark, the Light, The Grey and The Colorful

74 Hard Bop
Savant 2024

Tenor saxophonist, composer, producer JD Allen forms a new trio with drummer Nic Cacioppo and either Gregg August or Ian Kenselaar on bass for The Dark, The Light, The Grey and The Colorful. The dozen compositions hit all those moods. While JD is in his prime at 52, he takes on the appearance of a young man from the late 1950s-early 1960s for the CD photos. The music parallels that level of insight into his craft. The program starts on the darkest notes and then eventually morphs into an abstract mode as things warm up.

T. K. Blue

The Tide Of Love

77
Fusion
Arkadia
2024

Saxophonist, composer T. K. Blue assembles a band with Stephon Harris (vibes, marimba), James Weidman (p), Gavin Fallow (b), Lenny Robinson (d), and Ron Jackson (g). They play nine selections including three originals, all centered on romance, cutting across genres. The tunes are mellow, accentuating Blu's warm, gentle approach. We sampled the 180-gram vinyl version that only added to the relaxed mood.



Photo: T. K. Blue

O's Sax Features

Willie Morris

Photo: The Julliard School



81
Modern
Posi-Tone
2024

Unbound Inner

New York based saxophonist Willie Morris brings an element of the blues from his native St. Louis to Unbound Inner, his latest release. He assembles a band with Behn Gillece (vibes), Jon Davis (p), Boris Kozlov (b), and Rudy Royston (d). Nine of the ten selections are originals by Morris (7) and Davis (2). There's a cool funky vibe on "The Folks Who Live Down The Hill" and "Into Somewhere".

There are also warm ballads like "Charade", and the cover of "Tell Me. A Bedtime Story". We also enjoyed the mid-tempo "Comfort Zone" with Jason Tiemann subbing for Royston on drums.

Jeff Lederer

2025 Free Jazz
Little Music 76

Guilty!!!

Saxophonist Jeff Lederer leads his Swing n' Dix band with Matt Wilson (d), Kirk Knuffke (cornet), Bob Stewart (tuba), Curtis Hasselbring (tb), and Mary LaRose (voice) on Guilty!!!. The highly improvised music is enhanced with the inclusion of excerpts from the news. It mirrors the chaos of our society, more specifically the crazy political scene of 2024. The titles alone are expressions of Lederer's thoughts: "Cheapening the Process", "Deportation Operation", and "Truth Is Marching In" are a few examples. Buckle up, this is now the reality of the USA.

Jim Snidero

Bird Feathers

Saxophonist Jim Snidero leads a straight-ahead band, his first time playing in a saxophone trio format on Bird Feathers. He is joined by bassist Peter Washington and drummer Joe Farnsworth. The program consists of tunes composed of performed by Charlie Parker. "Scrapple From The Apple", "These Foolish Things" and "Lover Man" are some of the high notes in Snidero's tribute to his idol.



77
Bebop
Savant
2024

Photo: Jim Snidero

O's Sax Features

Ken Peplowski

Live at Mezzrow

79
Big Band
Cellar Music
2024

Veteran jazz saxophonist Ken Peplowski was hit hard during the pandemic, caught COVID, lost his dog and was diagnosed with blood cancer. He persevered, got a new puppy and is recovering well. He started a weekly streaming show with pianist Ted Rosenthal, bassist Martin Wind, and drummer Willie Jones III. You can hear them on Ken's latest recording *Live at Mezzrow*. Peplowski plays clarinet and tenor sax over ten warm classics. They play ballads like "All The Things You Are" & "The Shadow Of Your Smile", and up tempo treats "Like Young" with a cool solo by Wind & "Bright Mississippi". With all of Ken's tribulations, he's still on top of his game, breathing passionate warmth into each song.



Photo: Ken Peplowski

Boyce Justice Griffith

Modern 2024
Outside In 76

The Point

New York-based saxophonist Boyce Justice Griffith makes his debut leading a quintet with Anthony Hervey (t), Isaiah J. Thompson (p), Marty Jaffa (b), and John Sturino (d). It is an interesting endeavor centered around a recurring theme, *The Point*, with many different moods. They swing hard on "Something To Prove", Hervey & Griffith shine on "The Walk", and Jaffa stands tall on "Balrog". The four-part title track is also notable, leaving us anticipating the next release.

Dann Zinn

78
Fusion
Ridgeway
2024

Two Roads

We all face challenges in life that bring us choices. When saxophonist Danny Zinn encounters these forks in the road, he selects the path of music, following his passion, resulting in rich music for his listeners. On *Two Roads*, Zinn teams up with Rachel Z (p), Jeff Denson (b, vocals) and Omar Hakin (d). The music is all original highlighted by "Yaryak", "Pros and Cons", "East Bay Punk", "Streams of Dreams" featuring percussion by Brian Rice, and the spirited title track with vocalizations by Denson and accents from Rice.

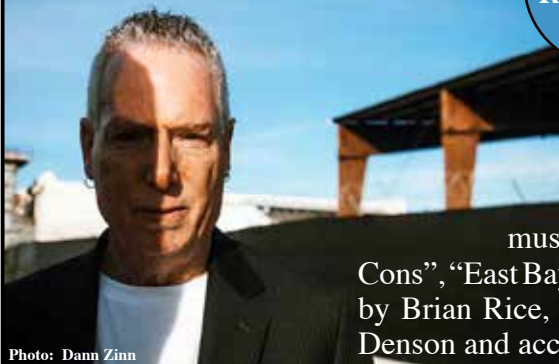


Photo: Dann Zinn

O's Drummer Features

Photo: Jazz Music Archives

Towner Galaher Brothers



89
funky jazz
Rhythm Royale
2024

Drummer Towner Galaher leads a band with Jimmy Sanders (B-3, keyboards), Randy Monroe (b), Marvin Horne (g), and Craig Handy (t-sax). The Brothers came together in Portland and coalesced musically and as friends during the early 1980s. Jimmy and his late brother, to whom this album is dedicated, were a part of many different configurations. The groove is funky and engaging all the way through starting with “Brothers”. Handy leads most of the melodies and the rhythm section is sick! They slow down a notch with the mellow “The Diamond Chalice”, balancing a set of strong original music.

Steve Smith

2024 Fusion 75
Drum Legacy

New Perspective

Drummer Steve Smith and his band, Vital Information with pianist Manuel Valera and bassist Janek Gwizdala, present New Perspective(s) of old tunes including several jazz-fusion adaptations of Journey songs! The new arrangements are transformational. There’s also a cover of Michael Brecker’s “Sumo”, the syncopated “Eight + Five”, and two Valera original songs notably “Three Of A Kind”.

Zach Adelman

We Make: Stories For A New Day

Drummer, composer, educator Zach Adelman assembles a fine team for his latest release, *We Make: Stories For A New Day*. The core quintet is Austin Ford (t), Steve Davis (tb), Luther Allison (p), Jared Beckstead-Craan, with Zach (d). Sarah Hahahan (a-sax) plays on seven selections and Steve Wilson (fl, a-sax) plays on the other four, notably “Song For Wedgewood” donning flute. All eleven selections



77
Modern
Cellar
2024

O's Drummer Features

Richard Baratta

Looking Back

Drummer Richard Baratta is a bit nostalgic on Looking Back, focusing on popular hits from the 60s and 70s! He leads a fine band with arranger Bill O'Connell (p), Vincent Herring (sax), Paul Bollenback (g), Michael Goetz (b), and Paul Rossman (perc). There are warm Latin flavors on "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds". That vibe continues in an extremely mellow mode throughout the set. Special guest vocalist Carol Scott adds vocals on "Feeling Good" and "Hey Jude" with Janine Schwarz. Bollenback shines on "Purple Haze". We also enjoyed "Whole Lotta Love", and "Respect".

Photo: Anna Yatskevich

79
Latin
Savant
2025



Carl Allen

Drummer Chris Allen leads a trio with bassist Christian McBride and saxophonist Chris Potter on Tippin'. They open with the blues based "Parker's Mood", before turning up the heat on "Happy Times" with each member serving up spirited solos. "Hidden Agenda" is like a playground for band as they clearly enjoy themselves. Other highlights include "Alter Ego" and the relaxing finale, "They Say

2025 Ballads

Cellar Jazz 75

Tippin'

Photo: Carl Allen

Brandon Sanders

The Tables Will Turn

Brandon Sanders is a persistent musician with his second release as a leader at 53, The Tables Will Turn is at least as good as his highly regarded debut. His band mates are Warren Wolf (vibes), Keith Brown (p), David Wong (b), and Chris Lewis (sax). Christie Dashiell softens the attack with 2 vocals, "Human Nature" and "Prelude To A Kiss". The instrumentals cook, notably "Moose the Mooshe", "Central and El Segundo", and the title track, in a balanced session.

2024
Modern
Savant
77

Photo: Brandon Sanders



O's Vocal Features

Elaine Dame *Reminiscing*



Photo: Elaine Dame

89
Ballads
E. Dame
2025

Elaine Dame has a strong voice with a passionate style that is enticing. She is backed by a fine band including co-arranger Chris Madsen (sax), Tom Vaitas (keyboards), Sam Peters (b), and Jon Deitemyer (d). *Reminiscing* is a collection of classic pop tunes cast in a fresh jazzy mode. Dame's arrangements are unique, retaining the gusto of the originals while charting new territory. "Tell Me Something Good" features Victor Garcia (t), Madsen stands tall on "Sing Child" with Alyssa Allgood & Christy Bennett adding harmonizing vocals. We also enjoyed "Use Me", "Midnight At The Oasis", and "Last Dance". Dame's energy is contagious. We'd love to hear her live!

Suzanne Grzanna

74 Ballads
Diva 2024

The Cat's Meow, Anniv. Album

Songwriter, saxophonist, vocalist, arranger, producer Suzanne Grzanna takes a retro look with an *Anniversary Album* release of 1994's *Cat's Meow*. Personnel includes David Hazeltine (p), Ugonna Okegwo (b), Gerald Cannon (b), Mark Johnson (d), and Randy Baugher (d). Grzanna has a gentle voice on the mic and a full-bodied sound on sax! Her style is early 1900s, jazz vocals and she brings it into the 21st century without skipping a beat. "Cedar Lodge", "Kiss", "By The Fireside", and "Eunni" are highlights.

Tania Grubbs

The Sound of Love

Pittsburgh native Tania Grubbs sings with her quintet including David Budway (p), Ron Affif (g), James Johnson III (d) and her husband Jeff Grubbs (b). We make note that the fifth member of the quintet is Tania, and her vocals are well integrated into the music. She does a fine job with her seductive take on "Slow Hot Wind". The instrumentation is well balanced with each musician adding just enough spark to support Grubs when she's not on the mic. Notable examples are "Sound Of Love", "Four", and "I Can Tell You Are Always There". The Sound of Love, leaves us in a good place, combining contemporary and traditional approaches over fourteen jazzy ballads.

76
Ballads
Travelin'
2024



Photo: Tania Grubbs

O's Vocal Features

Dave Damiani

Heart to Heart

Dave Damiani is a contemporary crooner cast in the shadows of the Rat Pack but with his own signature. He's backed by The No Vacancy Orchestra, singing jazzy arrangements of popular tunes like "50 Ways (to leave your lover)", "Give Me The Night", "Rich Girl", and "Never Too Much". Mia Damiani joins him on a fine cover of "Always". These timeless tunes are always worth revisiting.



Photo: Dave Damiani

77
Ballads
Hard Knocks
2024

The Crew

The Crew is a retro bebop band that includes vocals by Bryan J. Hughes and spirited instrumentation from the band. They open with an inviting take of "Duke's Place", then swing hard on "Love You Madly" with nice work by pianist John O'Leary III and trumpeter James Suggs. They also play a few contemporary jazz tunes like the Latin flavored "Tangerine" and unique arrangements of "I Want You Back" & "Me and Mrs. Jones". Guest saxophonist Jeff Coffin shines on "Feel Like Making Love" anchored by bassist Alejandro Arenas.

Ballads 2024 74
Crew Publishing

The Crew

includes vocals by Bryan J. Hughes and spirited instrumentation from the band. They open with an inviting take of "Duke's Place", then swing hard on "Love You Madly" with nice work by pianist John O'Leary III and trumpeter James Suggs. They also play a few contemporary jazz tunes like the Latin flavored "Tangerine" and unique arrangements of "I Want You Back" & "Me and Mrs. Jones". Guest saxophonist Jeff Coffin shines on "Feel Like Making Love" anchored by bassist Alejandro Arenas.

It's Getting Late

Mark Grandfield

74
Ballads
M Grandfield
2024

Crooner Mark Grandfield sings nine classic songs including one of his own on It's Getting Late. John "Scrapper" Sneider shadows him on trumpet along with a strong rhythm section including "Adam Birnbaum (p), Neal Miner (b), and Aaron Kimmel (d). "Every Time We Say Goodbye", "Smile" and "Nature Boy" were among the best.



Photo: Mark Grandfield

O's Vocal Features

Encounters & Collisions

Sara Serpa

83
Ballads
Biophilia
2024

Portuguese vocalist, composer Sara Serpa describes her life experiences since moving to the USA on Encounters & Collisions. Her supporting band is a trio with Ingrid Laubrock (sax), Angelica Sanchez (p), and Erik Friedlander (cello). Her encounters expose the insular views and insensitivities of many Americans. Her story is enlightening yet disturbing on many fronts. The music reflects the moods and emotions she has endured. It's the life of a budding musician full of experiences: first time childbirth, an unwed mother, the unexpected loss of her father, defining herself by her music, and becoming a New Yorker, in Harlem. Over 18 years she's added many dimensions to her life yet still feels like an outsider. This is a passionate story with matching music offering a unique perspective.

Maria Shafer

Ballads 2024
77 *Marsch*

Here For You

Vocalist Maria Schafer has a fresh approach to classic jazz, presenting six new original songs along with fresh arrangements of two classics notably "More Than You Know". Behind her is a quartet with Jeremy Siskin (p), Zack Caplinger (g), David Reynoso (b), and Karo Galadjian (d). Schafer's voice is soft, romantic with good energy. She impresses us without trying to dazzle us! "Give Us A Smile" and "Get Up And Go" are highlights.

Photo: Hannah Gill

Hannah Gill Spooky Jazz Vol. 2

77
Ballads
Turtle Bay
2024

This is old school, swinging, jazzy, blue ballads featuring Hannah Gill singing Spooky Jazz Vol. 2. She's in front of a solid band including Philip Ambuel (b), Ricky Alexander (sax, cl), Gordon Webster (p, organ), Ben Zweig (d), Gabe Terracciano (violin), Mike Davis (t, tb), and Justin Poindexter (g, organ), revitalizing 11 classics. Gill is wise to let her musicians capture the spotlight as well elevating the set! We liked "My Man's An Undertaker", "Love Is A Necessary Evil", the vamp on "Oogie Boogie Song", "That Old Black Magic", and the down-home blues of "You Hurt Me".

O's Trumpet Features

Danny Jonokuchi

This is a large ensemble featuring arranger, producer, Danny Jonokuchi on trumpet. His tone is warm, rich on the instrumental version of “Skylark”. Danny also sings a couple of vocals: the bonus take of “Skylark”, and “This Can’t Be Love”. But the orchestra dominates the landscape with grand splendor. Terrell Stafford (t) shines on “Red Top”, John Beshay (t-sax) swings on “Ping Pong”, and Chris Oats (a-sax) solos on “Lady Bird”.

A Decade

81
Big Band
Bandstand
2024



Photo: Danny Jonokuchi

Thomas Marriott

74 Imani
2024 Modern

Screen Time

Trumpeter Thomas Marriott is inspired by what he sees on Screen Time. He leads a quartet with producer Orrin Evans (p), Mark Whitfield Jr. (d), and Robert Hurst III (b). They capture the intended moods: action, romance, and drama across each of the nine selections. The program opens swinging on “Summer Nights” before relaxing on “It’s Such A Good Feeling”, “Dexter’s Tune” and “You Only Live Twice”. There is suspense on “Goodbye”, and they get a little funky on “Pinball Number Count”.

Alan Chaubert

Just the Three of Us

Alan Chaubert plays piano & trumpet, produced, and leads a trio with Belden Bullock (b) and Jon Di Fiore (d) for Just The Three of Us. They play ten fresh arrangements of jazz classics by B. Evans, N. Simon, and T. Monk, and others. We liked “Peace Pipe”, “Poinciana”, “Misterioso”, and Monk’s “Well You Needn’t”. This is a relaxing session. Gill (b), and Taro Okamoto (d). The sax, sax, trumpet combination works well as they swing through freshly arranged classics like “Honeysuckle Rose”, “I Cover The Waterfront”, and “Burgundy”. This is a vibrant sextet.

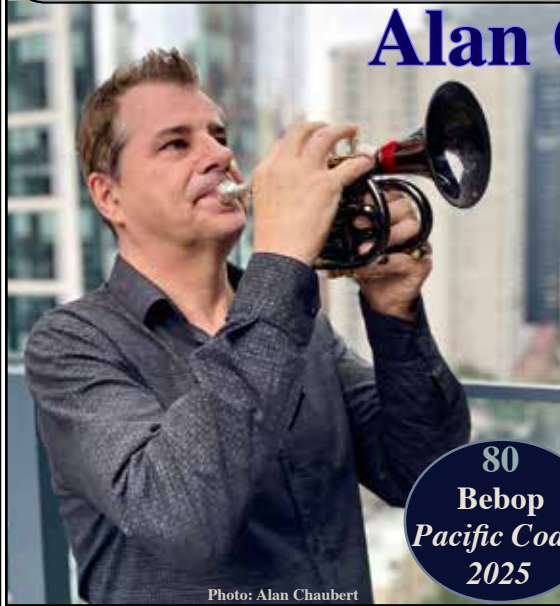


Photo: Alan Chaubert

80
Bebop
Pacific Coast
2025

O's Guitar Features

Peter Bernstein Better Angels

82
Bebop
Smoke Sessions
2024

Veteran jazz guitarist Peter Bernstein has performed with a who's-who in jazz over 35+ years. He's formed strong musical bonds that lend towards rich musical encounters. He leads the effort on Better Angels with pianist Brad Mehldau, bassist Vicente Archer, and drummer Al Foster making a polished, all-star quartet. The program is rich, a combination of classics and four new originals notably "Ditty For Dewey" and "Hazel Eyes". Other highlights are "You Go To My Head" and "No Problem".



Photo: Jimmy Katz

Jim Wetzel

75
Fusion
Joplin Sweeney
2024

Breaking Through Gently

Composer, guitarist Jim Witzel Breaking Through Gently. This from their days in Los Angeles Jason Lewis (d). The band gels over eight selections, originals by either Aaron or Witzel with a cover of "Old Friends". "The Celebration", "The Little Dragon", and the title track are highlights.

leads a quartet on his latest release, is a reunion for Jim and Phil Aaron (p) with the addition of Dan Feiszil (b), and

Jason Lewis (d). The band gels over eight selections, originals by either Aaron or Witzel with a cover of "Old Friends". "The Celebration", "The Little Dragon", and the title track are highlights.

79
BEL
R&B+Jazz
2024

Brent Laidler Hidden Gems

Guitarist Brent Laidler spent his time sampling the archives, fake books, and old song lists to come up with these "Hidden Gems". He breathes new magic into good, yet obscure titles with fresh melodies and a solid band. There's mild Calypso on "Gemani" featuring Ned Boyd (a-sax). Ned also shines on "#5 Shameday Way". Trumpeter Mark Buselli takes the lead on "Ballad for B" anchored by Jamie Newman on organ. We also enjoyed "Riffy Business", "Evening Song", and "Petite Parasol". Scott Pazara (bass) and Richard "Sleepy" Floyd (drums) anchor the rhythm section.

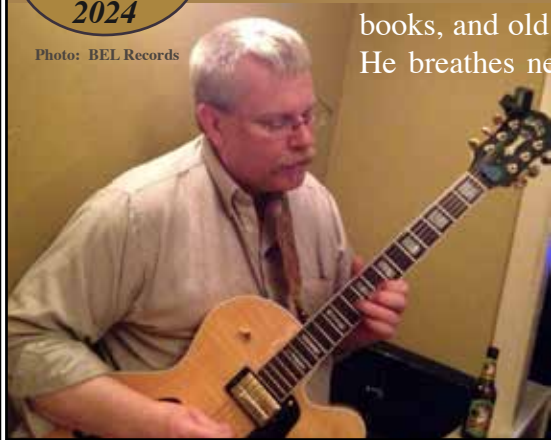


Photo: BEL Records

O's Place Features

Jason Anick / Jason Yeager

Violinist Jason Anick and pianist Jason Yeager composed, produced and arranged the music on Sanctuary. They lead an octet with Jason Palmer (t), Billy Buss (t), Edmar Colón (t-sax), Nadeem Alatrash (cello), Greg Loughman (b) and Mike Connors (d). We enjoyed the racy spirit of “AI Apocalypse”, and the solitude of the title track. The blend of violin and trumpet is excellent on songs like “Nearness of Now”, and the spirited adventure of “Persecution”. We listened to this album twice through and were never fatigued, we enjoyed the entire performance.

Sanctuary

88
Modern
Sunnyside
2024



Photos: Jason Anick

O's Rating Scale (X)

0

65

80

95

Pass

Contemplate

Buy

Strong Buy

American jazz pianist, composer Russ Lossing goes solo on Inventions, a suite of six introspective improvisations. It is built on his life's experiences in many genres from classical to electronic to free jazz. He also experiments with the sounds from his instrument, presenting a spontaneous set that extends from the mysterious “Invention III” to the intriguing “Invention VI”. While it is free jazz, it is quite approachable, expressive, and dynamic. There is ample opportunity for listeners to engage and enjoy.

Russ Lossing Inventions

77
Blasier
Avant Garde
2024



Photo: Marie Bissétt

O's Flute Features

Yulia Musayelyan

Strange Times

81

Outside In
Pop+Jazz
2024



Russian flutist, composer Julia Musayelyan presents Strange Times, a reflection of her experiences during and in the aftermath of the pandemic. She forms a quartet with Maxim Lubarsky (p), Fernando Huergo (b), and Mark Walker (d). Huergo and Musayelyan performed together as a duo at numerous social media engagements during the pandemic seeding much of what we hear now. The music is pleasant, and full of positive energy, countering the unsettling times. “Futurism”, “Solstice”, “Carnavalito” and the title track are some of the best examples.

Photo: Yulia Musayelyan

Daniel Pardo

Ese Momento

75

Latin
D. Pardo
2024

Flautist Daniel Pardo celebrates a ten-year collaboration with pianist Sergio Pamies with Ese Momento. They play boleros, heartfelt melodies that are soothing. There are many talented musicians that appear along with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra on 4 selections. The work is fittingly dedicated to Pardo’s mother, who gave him unconditional love. We found the music incredibly relaxing.



Photo: Daniel Pardo

| ARTIST Title <i>Label</i> Rating | <u>Top Contemporary Picks</u> O's Notes |
|--|--|
| CITY OF FOUR VISTAS C^F <i>City of Four</i> 81 | <i>City of Four</i> is a quartet with Mike Caudill (t-sax, EWI), Cat Tremblay (keyboards), Eric Falter (b), and Steve Wilkinson (d). They establish a funky groove right off the bat on “Overcast” followed by the mellow “Avenue West”, more funk on “Who’s To Say”, then relaxing on “Gone By Sundown” and “See Me, Hear Me”. <u>Vistas</u> is a strong set of mixed tempo and moods. |
| DAVID LENKER & VICENTE SOLSONA VISTAS C^P <i>La Label</i> 79 | <u>A Few Remarks</u> was mastered by the late pianist David Lenker and guitarist Vicente Solsona early in 2023 shortly after we lost Lenker unexpectedly. It was released December 2024. The duo presents ten songs, nine classics and “Blue Ballad” a reflective tune composed by Lenker. This is a relaxing set, a musical elixir to stresses, and suitable for a wind down in many cases. |
| BETH HART C^b YOU STILL GOT ME <i>Provogue</i> 75 | Beth Hart serves up some rocking, blues vocals in this progressive rock, endeavor, <u>You Still Got Me</u> . Guest guitarists Slash and Eric Gales make notable appearances on “Savior With A Razor” and “Suga N My Bowl” respectively. Beth slows down the pace on “Wonderful World” and “Little Heartbreak Girl”. We also enjoyed her take on “Don’t Call The Police”. |
| BELIEVERS C^P HARD BELIEVER <i>Shifting Paradigm</i> 74 | <i>Believers</i> are a trio featuring guitarist Brad Shepik, bassist Sam Minale, and John Hadfield on drums & percussion. Their music is guitar-based free, flowing jazz fusion. One of the best examples is “Pilgrimage”. There’s a reggae beat on “Ranglin”. We also enjoyed “Racinante” and “Falling Grace”. |
| GROOVOLOGY C^F ALMOST HOME <i>Aaron Aranita</i> 74 | <i>Groovology</i> is a Honolulu-based quartet featuring Aaron Aranita (woodwinds, p), David Yamasaki (g), Ernie Provencher (b), and Scott Shafer (d). Guest vocalist Sandra Tsukiyama sings on “Manoa”. <u>Almost Home</u> is their debut recording of music composed by each of the core members. There’s plenty of variety with a Latin, fusion groove on “Mabosaki”, the playful blues of “Bubbles The Clown”, and the jovial “Brisa Tropical” with Yamasaki and Aranita playing the melody in unison. We also enjoyed the cool vibe of “Headroom” and the relaxing extended version of “The Path”. |

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O's Place Features

Jeremy Pelt

Woven

Composer/trumpeter Jeremy Pelt could be termed a Kaizen musician, continuously improving. His current band is Jalen Baker (vibraphone), Misha Mendelenko (g), Leighton Harrell (b), Jared Spears (d), and Marie-Ann Hedonia (synthesizer). Mar Vilaseca adds vocals on “Rhapsody” to soften the edges on Woven, the next chapter in Pelt’s ever-evolving experience. We liked Baker’s work on “13/14”, “Dreamcatcher”, the tranquil “Fair Weather”, and “Invention #2/ Black Conscience”.

76
Fusion
High Note
2024



Photo: Eva Kapanadze

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 |

Steve Sieck

Crazy That Way

Contemporary, veteran, singer/songwriter Steve Sieck marries variety of genres to a multitude of romantic moods on Crazy That Way. He employs world class talent to help deliver his work. Producer/arranger Dori Amarilio (g), Rene Camacho (b), and Alex Budman (winds) are among the wealth of musicians that appear. Sieck shines on “Only Human”, “That Moment”,

Photo: Steve Sieck

78
Accordant
Ballads
2024

“Temple of Soul” and the title track. Mark Winkler sings on “Paris Apartment”, Tawanda Suessbrich-Joaquim adds vocals on “You Are Everything To Me”, then shares the mic with Sidney Jacobs on “We Will Find A Way”, and Nicolas Bearde sings lead vocals on “I Still Want You So” rounding out an entertaining session.



O's Place Features

LAIRD JACKSON

Life

77
R&B+Jazz
L. Jackson
2024



Photo: Laird Jackson

Laird sings heartbreaking, blues, passionate ballads backed by minimalist accompaniment, including excellent work from producer Jeff Haynes (perc, b, vocals), and guitarists John Smith, Marvin Sewell and Brandon Ross. Jackson wrote the words and music for 10 of the 15 selections for *Life*, her first recording in 22 years! She's been present but embraced her life, the ups and downs expressed here, especially on the title track featuring Gregoire Maret (harmonica), Sean Harkness (g) and Jim Hickey (synth g).

Yuto Mitomi

Fusion 2019

YM Sounds 81

Continuation

Japanese saxophonist Yuto Mitomi resides in New York where he is an "under the radar" talent. Continuation was released in 2019, and it is still fresh! Mitomi leads a quartet with Takahiro Izumikawa (keyboards), Moto Fukushima (b), and Kazuhiro Odairi (d). We enjoyed "Joe's Twigs", the mysterious "ID", "The Song Told You", the funky "Dual", the passionate "Pure Imagination", "In Your Own Sweet Way", and "Schist City" featuring Fukushima.

SOFIA GOODMAN

Receptive

76
Joyous
Fusion
2024



Photo: Sofia Goodman

Receptive is the third release for drummer, composer and bandleader Sofia Goodman. She leads an octet for this outing. Goodman's compositions allow her musicians to stand out! They immediately capture our attention opening with "Trust" featuring Blaise Hearn (t). Jovan Quallo (fl) follows on "Allow", Desmond Ng (tb) on "Channel", Leland Nelson (b) on "Presence", Dan Hitchcock (t-sax) on "Gratitude", before the swinging title track showcases Alex Murphy (p). Listening more carefully we hear Sofia providing the glue and all the right accents along with percussionist Jimmy Lopez in a well-balanced performance.

Contemporary Selections

| ARTIST | Title | Label | X | T |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----|----------------|
| TOBIAS MEINHART | <u>Sunset Park</u> | <i>Sonic River</i> | 73 | C ^F |
| BRANDON SEABROOK | <u>Object Of Unknown Function</u> | <i>Pyroclastic</i> | 72 | C ^F |
| ALEX COKE / CARL MICHEL | <u>Situation</u> | <i>Play On</i> | 71 | C ^P |
| ALEKSI GLICK | <u>World Traveler</u> | <i>Pinch Records</i> | 71 | C ^P |
| JAKOB BRO | <u>Taking Turns</u> | <i>ECM</i> | 70 | C ^F |
| F COUTURIER/D PIFARELY | <u>Preludes and Songs</u> | <i>ECM</i> | 69 | C ^F |
| JON IRABAGON | <u>Server Farm</u> | <i>Irabagast</i> | 66 | C ^F |
| RICHIE KAYE | <u>Witty Ditties</u> | <i>Freshen Up</i> | 63 | C ^P |

ARUN RAMAMURTHY *New Moon*



Photo: Aran Ramamurthy

79
Greenleaf
Pop+Jazz
2024

Indian violinist, composer Arun Ramamurthy now resides in Brooklyn and leads a trio with Sameer Gupta (d) and Damon Banks (b) for New Moon, his latest release. Arun was heavily influenced by his grandmother and mother, both Carnatic (southern Indian) vocalists. He has blended that music with western jazz creating his own signature. "Bangalore to Brooklyn", "Aaji", "Mirrors", "Amavasya" and "Sri Valli" are fine pieces marrying both styles in a pleasant groove.

Jacob Chung

2024 Fusion
Cellar Jazz 79

The Sage

Tenor saxophonist Jacob Chung leads a quintet with Vincent Herring (a-sax), Tyler Henderson (p), and Caleb Tobocman (b), and Joe Farnsworth (d) on his latest release, The Sage. This band is a blend of three young lions with two proven, polished vets! They open swinging on "My Aspiration" and don't let up aside from on "Embraceable You". "Jeannine", "Vincent's Place", and the title track are notable.

O's Rating Scale (X)

0 65 80 95

Pass

Contemplate

Buy

Strong Buy

O's Place Legends

Eva Cassidy

I Can Only Be Me

The late vocalist Eva Cassidy soars in front of the London Symphony Orchestra on I Can Only Be Me. They are a complementary unit, especially on “Autumn Leaves” with the lush strings. They shift to a country bent on “People Get Ready” before resuming the jazzy program. We also enjoyed the warm, crisp arrangements of “Ain’t No Sunshine” and “You’ve Changed”. There’s no debating the beauty and power of Cassidy’s voice, no matter what she’s singing.

Photo: Courtesy Cassidy Family Archives

97
Fusion
Blix Street
2024



Coleman Mellett

Sing You A Brand New Song

Jazz guitarist, composer, singer Coleman Mellett was a complete musician who left us at 34 after a plane crash in 2009. He’d

Pop Ballads 2024
C. Mellett 80

been working on an album as a singer-songwriter at the time. Producer Barry Miles combed through his computer for the files and solicited the help of many musicians that Mellett had worked with to release Sing You A Brand New Song. The effort was first presented as a documentary in 2019. The supporting artists include his wife, Jeanie Bryson who adds vocals on three selections notably “You Got Me Too”. Will Lee (b), Steve Gadd (d), Larry Goldings (organ), and Chuck Mangione (flugelhorn) are a sample of the talented cast. The music has the timeless vibe of Michael Franks/Steely Dan circa 1970s. There was a lot there!



Photos: Coleman Mellett & Jeanie Bryson

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Final Notes

Jazz bassist **Mark Izu** died from colon cancer on January 12, 2025. He was 70. Pedal steel guitarist **Susan Alcorn** died on January 31, 2025 at 71 years of age. No cause of death was given. Jazz and popular R&B singer **Roberta Flack** succumbed to ALS disease on February 24, 2025. She was 88 years old. Contemporary jazz vibraphonist **Roy Ayers** died from prostate cancer on March 4, 2025. He was 84 years old. The musical contributions of these fine jazz professionals will remain with us forever.

O's Living Legends

KEITH JARRETT

The Old Country



Photo: Keith Jarrett

85
Fusion
ECM
2024

Pianist Keith Jarrett assembled an all-star trio with bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Paul Motian for The Old Country, the only recording these musicians made as a unit. It was recorded at the Deer Head Inn commemorating the second-generation ownership transition in 1992. It was recorded back then and some of the music was released in 1994, but Jarrett and ECM's Manfred Eicher are compelled to share more with this release in late 2024. And we are glad they did! "All Of You", "Someday My Prince Will Come", and "Everything I Love" are among the best of eight selections.

Dwayne Clemons

Copenhagen based, veteran Jazz releases Center of Gravity, the 10th release of Smalls Live, Living Masters Series. Clemons has a long-time relationship with Smalls in New York with many great performances. He plays with Amanda Sedgwick (a-sax), Aaron Johnson (t-sax), Jinjoo Yoo (p), Paul Gill (b), and Taro Okamoto (d). The sax, sax, trumpet combination works well as they swing through freshly arranged classics like "Honeysuckle Rose", "I Cover The Waterfront", and "Burgundy". This is a vibrant sextet.

Modern 2024

Cellar Music 76

Center of Gravity

trumpeter Dwayne Clemons

TERRY GIBBS

Vol. 7: The Lost Tapes



Photo: Concord Records

80
Whaling City
Big Band
2024

Vibraphonist Terry Gibbs' latest recording is Vol 7. The Lost Tapes, 1959, made at two different venues in Hollywood, CA. It was released to coincide with his 100th birthday last October 13, 2024! It is a swinging large ensemble and Gibbs is dazzling us in his youth. The first six volumes of Terry's Dream Band were released in the 1980s-90s. This late edition was discovered recently by Terry's son, drummer Gerry Gibbs. Volume 7 is certainly on par with the earlier releases, a vibrant, precise recording with many head-bobbers, notably "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise".

O's Living Legend

Charles Tolliver

Live at the Captain's Cabin

79
Reel to Real
Bebop
2024

Trumpeter, composer and pioneering record label owner Charles Tolliver is a living legend. Live at the Captain's Cabin (Alberta, Canada, June 24, 1973), finds him at the top of his game, reflecting the mood of the times in the Black Community: pride, protest, passion, and fury. This all came out in the music, mostly Tolliver originals with John Hicks (p), Clint Houston (b), and Cliff Barbaro (d) rounding out the quartet. The solos are well developed and lengthy notably the work of Houston and Hicks on "Stretch". The program evolves over two CDs supported by excellent liner notes, a winner that is packed with energy.

Photo: Jimmy Katz

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