



O's PLACE



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O's Place Jazz Magazine

P.O. Box 38430

Charlotte, NC 28278

O'pening Notes

This Summer, you are opening one of the largest issues of O's Place ever, with 39 pages, 130 reviews and NO advertising (other than our subscription offer)!

There is an abundance of vocalists, mostly female, followed by guitarists (including bassists) and our usual strong showing of pianists.

AI in jazz? Yes! Check out As Is using technology to really enhance their music! While there is some voice shaping, they mostly us AI in the ideation stages, retaining their creativity in production. Who knows where we go from here!

We still see the political madness with unnecessary war, renaming, re-crafting reality, and tilting wealth distribution, for selfish benefits... There are increasing levels of awareness and protests in many forms, including jazz.

Don't let the heat boil your spirits, Instead,

---> Sound advice at a nice price!

www.OsPlaceJazz.com

Opening Notes cont.

select some good music with O's recommendations, sip on your favorite beverage, lay back and enjoy the groove. You deserve it!

Once again, we appreciate your continued support as we try to keep you abreast of the best jazz. We're always open to, and appreciative of your feedback. Drop us a line!

Cheers!

O&H

"*H*" is Heide, the editor who makes the final cuts!

O'S TOP 10* SCORES

1. **JOE SYRIAN** - [A Blue Time](#)
2. **As Is** - [Crazy World](#)
3. **CHUCK BERGERON** - [Bass & Face](#)
4. **Catrin Finch** - [Notes To Self](#)
5. **RICH DeROSA** - [Wisdom](#)
5. **Champion Fulton** - [Flying High](#)
5. **Steve Wilson** - [Enduring Sonance](#)
8. **REBECCA RAFLA** - [Fundamentally Unfinished](#)
8. **BOBBY SANABRIA** - [Arsenio and Beyond](#)

** This quarter we list the Top 9 vs. the standard Top 10 with 6 reviews tied in the 10th position!*

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

O's Rating Scale (X)

0 65 80 95

Pass

Contemplate

Buy

Strong Buy

www.OsPlaceJazz.com

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

ARTIST Title <i>Label Perf/Sound</i>	<u>Top Traditional Picks</u> O's Notes
CONVERGENCE T^N <u>Reckless Meter</u> <i>Capri</i> 81	O's Notes: Pianist, composer Terry Waldo presents Treasury Volume 3, a swinging ragtime session. He leads the Gotham City Band including Jay Lepley (d, vocals), Mike Davis (t, vocals), Jerron Paxton (banjo, vocals), Brian Nalepka (b), Ricky Alexander (cl). Eva Arntzen (cl), Colin Hancock (t), Nick Russo (banjo), and Arni Arntzen (banjo). The banjos are dancing on "Take Me Back" before they slow it down on "Louisiana Fairy Tale". It is a must have for lovers of early ragtime jazz.
PLAINS PEAK <u>Someone to</u> <u>Someone</u> T^A <i>Illinois Arts</i> <i>Council</i> 80	O's Notes: German harmonica player Hendrick Meurkens leads his trio including Misha Tsiganov (keyboards), Eduardo Belo (b) and Portinho (d). The program has upbeat sambas and soothing ballads with Meurkens breathing magical melodies into all of it. Guests Justus Heher adds trombone on seven songs, notably "Herb's Samba", and Laura Dreyer plays flute on four selections, shining on "Chorinho For Nico". The entire ensemble plays on "Surf Board" & "Chelsea Nocturne". Samba Tonto is a rich experience.
TIERNEY SUTTON & TAMIR HANDELMAN T^b <u>Spring</u> 78 <i>BFM Jazz</i>	<u>Spring</u> brings freshness, hope and a breath of creativity. This is exactly what you can expect when bathed in the beauty of the vocal tones from Tierney Sutton backed by pianist Tamir Handelman. Both musicians are world class performers, and you will not be disappointed with their seamless collaboration. They perform a dozen songs, each containing elements of the rebirth season. Highlights include "'S Wonderful", "Double Rainbow", and "You Must Believe in Spring". This is contemporary jazz at its best.
CHRISTINE FAWSON T^b <u>It Could Happen</u> <u>to You</u> 76 <i>Christine Fawson</i>	Jazz vocalist, trumpeter Christine Fawson has a unique, well-articulated style in front of her quartet including Tim Ray (p), Dave Zinno (b), and Casey Scheuerell (d). They perform eleven, freshly arranged classics. Among the best are "You Don't Know What Love Is", "You've Changed", "Lazybones", and "It's Alright With Me".
THE JOYMAKERS T^D <u>Texas-Sized</u> <u>Band</u> 75 <i>Turtle Bay</i>	With A <u>Texas-Sized Band</u> The Joymakers give us a view of 1920s, southwestern jazz, a swinging combination of blues and ragtime. The large ensemble is led by producer, arranger Colin Hancock (cornet, sax, mellophone, kazoo, vocals). Additional vocals come from arranger Lauryn Gould (sax). We liked the lazy swag of "Honey Child", "Bye Bye Baby", "Dreaming 'Bout My Man", and "Daniel's Blues". We also enjoyed Colin's romp on "Stomp Off, Let's Go!"

O's Place Features

Hendrik Meurkens

79
Cellar Music
Modern
2026

Samba Tonto

German harmonica player Hendrik Meurkens leads his trio including Misha Tsiganov (keyboards), Eduardo Belo (b) and Portinho (d). The program has upbeat sambas and soothing ballads with Meurkens breathing magical melodies into all of it. Guests Justus Heher adds trombone on seven songs, notably “Herb’s Samba”, and Laura Dreyer plays flute on four selections, shining on “Chorinho For Nico”. The entire ensemble plays on “Surf Board” & “Chelsea Nocturne”. Samba Tonto is a rich experience.

Photo: Hendrik Meurkens



Rich Siegel

76 Ballads
Rich Siegel 2026

It's Always Been You

Crooner, pianist Rich Siegel sings in front of a bouncy trio on It's Always Been You. Cameron Brown plays bass with Tony Jefferson on drums. The program includes a dozen classics including four originals sung in multiple languages. Highlights are “The Best Things Happen While You Dance”, swinging on “I Think of You”, easy blues on “This Song Ain’t About Nothing”, and ballads like “Les Feuilles”.

Tumbao Bravo

Joy of the Mambo

Tumbao Bravo is a sextet established in 2003 by saxophonist Paul Vornhagen and conguero Alberto Nacif. The current sextet features Vornhagen with Dave Rajewski (t), Armando Vega (congas), Olman Piedra (timbales), Kurt Schreitmueller (p), and Patrick Prout (b). Joy of the Mambo is a Cuban extravaganza with tastes of Mambo, Cha Cha, Rhumba, and Bolero leading to a rich, percussive experience. Highlights are the relaxed pace of “Chan’s Song” & “On A Misty Night”, the energetic “Theme For Pvh”, “Tres Hermanas”, and “Hey Pops”.

75
Global Pulse
Latin 2026



Photo: Tumbao Bravo

ARTIST Title <i>Label</i> Rating	<u>Big Band Picks</u> O's Notes
RICH DEROSA <u>Wisdom</u> T^N <i>University of North Texas</i> 89	Rich DeRosa is the legendary director of composition and arranging at The University of North Texas. On <u>Wisdom</u> he celebrates many of his favorite compositions and arrangements. The musicians are from his One O'clock Lab Bands 2017-2025. The arrangements are crisp, precise and well recorded. It is easy to appreciate the musicians individually and collectively, a characteristic of DeRosa's work! "Lines and Spaces", "The Man I Love" featuring vocalist Georgia Barge & Brenin Coin (p), and "Birds of a Feather" are notable.
VANCOUVER JAZZ ORCHESTRA T^N <u>Meets Brian</u> <u>Charette</u> <i>Cellar Music</i> 79	The 17-piece Vancouver Jazz Orchestra gets a little spice with the addition of Brian Charette on the Hammond organ. He's up front as they burst out of the gate on "Equestrian Interlude", providing glue and accents elsewhere. We liked Jack Duncan's (percussion) & Michael Kim's (t) work on "Lado a Lado", "Color Contrast", "Honeymoon Phase" featuring Dave Sikula (g), and "The Same Old You with the Same Old Blues". This is a large ensemble experiment that works well.
PAUL KELLER ORCHESTRA T^N <u>Thank You Notes</u> <i>Cold Plunge</i> 78	The 15-piece PKO is based in Michigan, but they travel, bringing large, orchestral sound to many appreciative audiences. Bassist, composer, Professor Paul Keller is the leader. There's a lot to enjoy among the fifteen <u>Thank You Notes</u>, compositions by Gregg Hill. Paul's orchestra plays with a precision that goes well beyond most large ensembles. "Cadillac Club", "Summer Nights", and the title track are among the many fine selections.
SCHAPIRO 17 T^N <u>Best Laid Plans</u> <i>Summit</i> 77	Composer John Schapiro directs Schapiro 17 for his third release, <u>Best Laid Plans</u>. There are six transformative arrangements of classics notably Hancock's "Chameleon" featuring Eddie Allen (t) & Paul Carlton (sax), and Horace Silver's "Quicksilver". There are also three new originals highlighted by "Ugly Chic", and the title track featuring Deborah Weisz on trombone.
WAYNE ALPERN T^N <u>Varieties &</u> <u>Extravaganzas</u> <i>Henri Elkan</i> 76	In what seems like more of a Shakespearean musical accompaniment than a jazz concert, composer, arranger Wayne Alpern presents <u>Varieties & Extravaganzas</u>. He partners with the Times Square Brass Quintet featuring Alana Yee (French horn) and Robert Garrison (t). This is one of the better examples marrying Baroque classical music with jazz in a seamless presentation. Our favorites are the sleepy melodies of "I Don't Want to Set the World On Fire" and "Serenade".

Sound Advice at a Nice Price

Traditional Selections

ARTIST	Title	Label	X	T
ALBERTO PIBIRI	<u>A New World</u>	<i>Alberto Pibiri</i>	73	T ^B
DAN CRISCI	<u>Scenes Along The Way</u>	<i>Booshkaboo</i>	73	T ^B
YVONNE ROGERS	<u>The Button Jar</u>	<i>Pyroclastic</i>	73	T ^C
AIRTO MOREIRA & RICARDO BACELAR	<u>Maracanos</u>	<i>Jasmin</i>	72	T ^L
NED ROTHENBERG	<u>Looms & Legends</u>	<i>Pyroclastic</i>	72	T ^A
DAN WEST	<u>Big Band</u>	<i>Wayside</i>	71	T ^N
PAUL KAHN	<u>Willingness</u>	<i>CarlCat</i>	67	T ^b
MATT WHITE	<u>Dolly</u>	<i>Adhyaropa</i>	66	T ^B

Jed Levy & Phil Robson

The Unpredictability of the Sea

74 *Livia*
Modern 2026

The Unpredictability Of The Sea features Jed Levy (t-sax) and Phil Robson (g) in a quartet with Mark Hodgson (b), and Roberto Gatto (d). Each of the leaders contribute five original compositions to the set, resulting in a fine blend of modern jazz. The musicians are not in a race to see who can play the fastest, instead playing more deliberate, consumable melodies. “Calder”, “Now”, “3 Chord Trick”, and warm ballads like “Love Loss”.

Vance Thompson

Lost and Found

Vibraphonist, composer Vance Thompson makes his debut with Lost and Found, in a quintet with Taber Gable (p), Steve Kovalcheck (g), Tommy Sauter (b), and Marcus Finnie (d). The program includes fresh original music along with classic covers spanning the jazz spectrum.

We liked the bossa nova beats of “The Thread of All Sorrows”, the bluesy “Sleight of Hand”, “Tell It Like It Is”, and “Mixed Feelings”.

82
Knox Jazz
Swing
2026

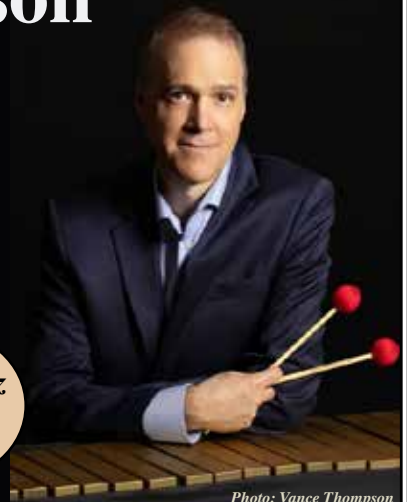


Photo: Vance Thompson

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O's Latin Features

Patricia Moreno

Volver

81
Ballads
Audiophile
Society
2026



Photo: Chérie Hansson

Austrian, Venezuelan, jazz vocalist Patricia Moreno is a budding virtuoso, not to be missed on the Latin jazz scene. She has minimal accompaniment with guitarists Arnoldo Moreno and Ignacio Giovanetti. Moreno soars on “El Dia Que Mi Quereras”, bouncing along on “Soho Waltz”, and “Park Avenue”. Whether she’s scatting, phrasing or truly vocalizing lyrics, Patricia is incredibly melodic. She sings from her soul making Volver an intimate experience.

ROBERTO MONTERO

Photo: Maria Brunner-Ventura

Todos Os Tempos means
All Times and All Eras.

Todos Os Tempos

77
Vaicomtudo
Latin
2026

It is the debut solo recording by Roberto Montero. While guitar is his primary instrument, he also sings, plays bass, percussion and cavaco. He was born in Brazil but has spent most of his life in the US. All ten selections were composed and produced by Montero. He plays a variety of styles, but it is all peaceful and fresh. There are many featured artists including vocalist Catina De Luna and pianist Otmaro Ruiz on “Bom Balaio”; Munyungo Jackson (udu, perc), Philip Bynoe (b) and Osmar Shulze Peninha (d); and a team of vocalists on “De Duas, Uma”. We also enjoyed the freshness “Vou Mas Fico” with Oscar Schulze “Peninha” (d) and Rique Pantoja (p).



79

Seda
Latin
2026

Sergio Pereira

Colors of Time



Photo: Ron Rieder

Brazilian guitarist Sergio Pereira leads a band with many talented Brazilians on Colors of Time, a beautiful recording that includes an environmental message. We liked the warmth on “Dreams” featuring vocalist Kim Nazarian, “Up The Hill”, “Keep Shining” featuring Mark Egan (b), the gentle bossa nova on the title track, “Rain Fall”, and “So They Sleep”.

O's Clarinet/Flute Features

Fundamentally Unfinished

Photo: Facebook

REBECCA RAFLA

87

Rebecca Rafla
Ballads
2026

Fundamentally Unfinished is the strong debut recording by Rebecca Rafla from Indianapolis. Her voice is rich and warm, backed by a polished band, with harmonized background vocals. The title reflects her thoughts that life is fundamentally unfinished meaning we never know what's really gonna happen. But for sure, this recording is happening! Producer, saxophonist Rob Dixon leads the band with Steve Allee (p), Kenny Phelps (d), Jesse Wittman (b), John Raymond (t), Patrick Wright (g) and others. There are six fresh originals along with classics like "The Very Thought of You". Other highlights are "Without You", "I Love You, I Do", and "Little Boat".



Seth Kibel

2026 Pop+Jazz
Azalea City 76

Clarinet, Without A Net

Seth Kibel is one the premier reeds musicians in the DC area. Clarinet Without A Net is an illustration of his career to date. He uses two different bands. Odd numbered tracks feature Maximilian Jacobs (violin), Erin Murphy Snedecor (cello), Ahren Buchheister (dobro, g, mandolin), Tom Holtz (tuba), and Rowan Corbett (perc). Even numbered songs feature Marcel Penzes (tb), Simone Baron (accordion), Tara Linhardt (mandolin), Eliot Seppa (b), and Haroon Alam (tablas). They span many genres including early American jazz on "Key to the Highway", and the western feel of "Wild Horses". Kibel expands well beyond klezmer music.

Open Space

79

Relative Pitch
Fusion
2026

FIE SCHOUTEN

Fie Schouten (cl) leads a quartet with Vincent Courtois (violoncello), Sofia Borges (d), and Pierre Baux (spoken word). Open Space is an accurate description of this poetic, musical performance that is inspired by Georges Perec's *Espèces d'espaces*. The stage is open and spacious, allowing the instruments to bloom in the landscape. Lyrics are in French, spanning both soft and hardened character to describe how we interact in different spaces. "The Country", "The City", "The Neighborhood", "The Apartment", and "The Bed & The Room", each convey different feelings.



Photo: Bandcamp

O's Piano Features

Julian Davis Reid

Vocation

86
Modern
J.D. Reid
2026

Julian Davis Reid is a pianist, composer, speaker and theologian with a lot of inspirational thoughts. While he has collaborated with many popular artists, Vocation is his first recording as a leader, focusing on the many roles he's played in life. The band includes Lenard Simpson (a-sax), Micah Collier (b), James Russell Sims (d), and vocalist Tramaine Parker. There are many familiar titles that are refreshed and reimagined as Reid sees them. Guest artist Narykcin joins Parker singing "Moan" with a 7-piece choir behind them. We also enjoyed "Hush", "What A Wonderful World", "My Parents Greatest Gift To Me", and "Nevertheless Hope".

Photo: David Perrett

Jason Miles

Fusion 2026
Jason Miles 74

100 Miles for Miles Davis

Jason Miles was the man programming the synthesizers on Miles Davis's Tutu, Amandala, and Siesta. He was inspired by the legend and celebrates his 100th birthday with 100 Miles For Miles Davis. Jason assembles a bounty of talented musicians for the effort. We liked "The Girl With The Purple Hair" featuring Ada Rovatti (a-sax), the lazy vibe of "Malibu Midnight Blue" with Jeff Coffin (s-sax) & Vinnie Coliauta (d), "Jeanne Moreau" featuring Patches Stewart (t) & Jay Rodriguez (t-sax), and "Miles To Miles - 1994 Bonus Track" with guitarists Dean Brown & Bill Washer.

Darren Litzie

On My Own Time

75
Pop+Jazz
Summit
2026

This is a fine trio featuring leader, pianist, composer Darren Litzie, bassist Chris DeAngelis, and John Riley on drums. Most of the tunes are originals by Litzie. He infuses a straight ahead feel to these approachable modern jazz songs. They are swinging hard on both interludes "Brief Distraction" and "Last-Minute Thought". They also play fresh arrangements of classics like "In Walked Bud".

Photo: Alex Torres



O's Piano Features

83
Intakt
Fusion
2026

Sylvie Courvoisier *Eclats - Live In Europe*

Swiss composer/pianist Sylvie Courvoisier forms a trio with bassist Drew Gress and drummer Kenny Wollesen on *Eclats*, an energy packed live session recorded during her European tour (Essen, Munich and Paris are represented). The music is balanced with lots of air, allowing each musician to explode yet remain melodic in this free jazz endeavor. We liked it a lot. “Just Twisted”, “Imprint Double”, “Downward Dog”, and “Big Steps Towards Silence” are some of the best.



Photo: Sylvie Courvoisier

Ted Rosenthal

2026 Classic
TMR Music 75

The Good Old Days

The Good Old Days is the 4th Act from pianist, composer Ted Rosenthal's Trio in 4 Acts recorded Summer 2024 with his two working trios. Bass duty is split equally between Martin Wind and Norika Ueda. Tim Horner plays drums on eight selections with Quincy Davis playing on the other two. Special guest clarinetist Ken Peplowski jumps right in on “Hot Sauce” and again on “Sunny Side Up”. We also liked the ragtime classics “Maple Leaf Rag” & “Schmatta Rag”, and “Autumn In New York”.

The Longest Way Round

Ben Rosenblum

Pianist, accordionist and composer Ben

Rosenblum defies classification as his music spans across genres and is accessible to many audiences. We liked his work on the accordion for the opener and the mysterious “Circulo” that had the feel of a tango. “Sheridan’s Reel” sounds more like a polka and out of place in this set before they get back in sync on “Scene Frozen In Time”. We particularly enjoyed “Berlin” featuring Wayne Ticker (t), and “Onslaught” featuring Rafael Rosa (g). We also enjoyed “Albatross” featuring Jasper Dutz (reeds). Nothing”, and ballads like “Les Feuilles”.

76
One Trick
Dog
Pop+Jazz
2026



Photo: Rui Caria

O's Piano Features

Terry Waldo Treasury, Volume 3

Pianist, composer Terry Waldo presents Treasury, Volume 3, a swinging ragtime session. He leads the Gotham City Band including Jay Lepley (d, vocals), Mike Davis (t, vocals), Jerron Paxton (banjo, vocals), Brian Nalepka (b), Ricky Alexander (cl), Eva Arntzen (cl), Colin Hancock (t), Nick Russo (banjo), and Arni Arntzen (banjo). The banjos are dancing on “Take Me Back” before they slow it down on “Louisiana Fairy Tale”. It is a must have for lovers of early ragtime jazz.

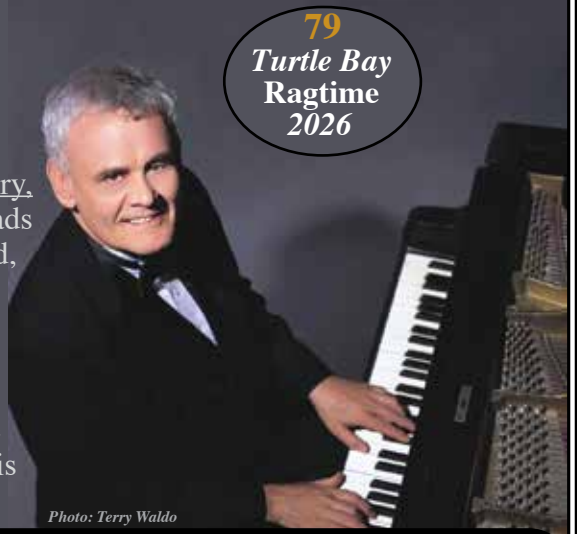


Photo: Terry Waldo

79
*Turtle Bay
Ragtime
2026*

Alejandro Falcón

Cuban pianist Alejandro Falcón is one of the leading jazz musicians and a strong architect of danzón. On Falcón In Blue he revisits more traditional Cuban music. The music is vibrant and festive on the title track and “Yuca Con Mojo” with an opening bass solo by Arnulfo Guerras, relaxing on “Bolero Para Brenda”, and “Ted In Havana” featuring saxophonist Ted Nash.

74 *Dot Time
2026 Latin*

Falcón in Blue

Bernie Senensky

77
*Cellar Music
Modern
2026*

Duos

Canadian pianist Bernie Senensky performs a session of Duos with eight different saxophonists over ten songs. Pat LaBarbera and Kirk MacDonald play two songs each notably “The Mover” and “Silver Trane” respectively. We liked the soft approach of “In My Life” featuring Campbell Ryga, and Corey Weeds on “My One & Only Love”, as well as “Lolita” with Eric Alexander.



© COSMO CONDINA

O's Piano Features

Brian Dickinson

October Songs

Canadian pianist teams up with based Penderecki for October Songs, Saxophonist Kelly Jefferson and bassist Jim Vivian round out the drummer-less band. It is a successful jazz recording illustrating the warmth of the Fall season. Highlights are "October Songs Pt. 1-3", and "Spring Sprung In".

77
Big Band
Cellar Jazz
2025

Brian Dickinson the Ontario-String Quartet his latest release.



Photo: Brian Dickinson

Scott Routenberg

Dr. Scott Routenberg is an educator, bassist Michael Santos and drummer Cassius Goens III for an Oscar Peterson Tribute performed live at Merrimans' Playhouse in South Bend, Indiana. Routenberg captures the essence of Peterson swinging through nine of the master's originals and popular arrangements.

Chroma Note
2026 Swing 76

Oscar Peterson Tribute

composer, and pianist who teams up with

John Beasley

Invisible Piano

77
Big Band
O-Tone
2025

Beasley was commissioned by Germany's renowned SWR Big Band to create this work, centered around his piano and inspired by artwork at the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart Museum, including Max Ernst's Invisible Piano! The orchestration emanated from this exploration, conducted and arranged by Beasley, seven pieces including five originals. The piano is by no means invisible on this recording evidenced by "Woman With Chariot". Other highlights are "Galaha", the adventurous title track, and a couple of tunes with contemporary flavor "You Can't Hide Love" & "Concentric".



Photo: LA Phil

O's Sax Features

Elias Haslanger

Legacy



Photo: Elias Haslanger

86
Modern
Bandstand
2026

Saxophonist, composer Elias Haslanger leads a strong band with Mike Sailors (t), Ross Margitza (p), Andy Langham (p) Ryan Hagler (b), and Daniel Dufour (d) as they create their Legacy. They opened swinging with the title track, and we were off to the races in a set that begs for your attention. The vibe continues with “Going Home”, and “Swinging at Monks”. They dial it back a notch on “Faith in Family”, “Conferring with the Flowers”, “Reflection”, and “Sweet Relief”. They live up to the promise of the title, cutting across many tempos for a fine session.

Javon Jackson

75 *Global Pulse*
Latin 2026

Jackson Plays Dylan

Tenor saxophonist Javon Jackson on Jackson Plays Dylan. It was Jackson’s vision to continue his collaboration with the late Nikki Giovanni, but fate took precedence. His rhythm section is Jeremy Manasia (keyboards), Isaac Levien (b), and Ryan Sands (d). Guest vocalists Nicole Zuraitis and Lisa Fischer sing “Forever Young” and “Gotta Serve Somebody” respectively. Other highlights are “The Times, They Are A-Changin’”, and “Make You Feel My Love”.

Ron Blake

Scratch Band

74
R&B+Jazz
7ten33
2025

Saxophonist Ron Blake is from the Virgin Islands, and he brings the Caribbean style to the forefront on Scratch Band. He plays in a trio with bassist Reuben Rogers and Jason Hatfield on drums & percussion. There are nine selections that make an entertaining session. Our favorite is “Lift Every Voice & Sing” featuring Ron’s strong sax tones.



Photo: Ron Blake

O's Sax Features

Photo: Steve Wilson



89
Swing
Smoke Sessions
2026

Steve Wilson Enduring Sonance

Saxophonist, flautist Steve Wilson reflects on his storied career for Enduring Sonance, his latest release. He is accompanied by seasoned peers Renee Rosnes (p), Joe Locke (vibes), Jay Anderson (b), and Kendrick Scott (d). Guest artist Kevin Newton adds french horn on two selections “Quiet Girl” and “Francisco”. We enjoyed the warmth of “Helen’s Song” and “Pieces of Dreams” featuring Locke and Rosnes respectively. “A Volta”, “The Eyes of Love”, and “The Surest Things Can Change” are other highlights in a set of mostly ballads that has appeal to a wide audience.

Ben Solomon

74 Acid 2026
Endectomorph

Archaeoacoustics

Saxophonist, flautist, composer, and producer Ben Solomon uses electronics and audio sampling of documentaries, orchestrations, interviews, and movies to connect the past to the future in a provocative contemporary session, Archaeoacoustics. Drummer Kush Abadey adds funky beats to “Sketches” and “Return of the Vulcan 2026”. We also enjoyed “Color Wheels”, “Mothra”, and “Dreams of the Sound Barrier” in a very creative session.

75
Cool
Booshkaboo
2026

Leigh Pilzer Keep Holding On

Baritone saxophonist, composer Leigh Pilzer plays in a trio with Paul Bratcher (B3), and Greg Holloway (d) for Keep Holding On. The program includes 9 Pilzer original compositions with one each from Bratcher and Holloway. Leigh extracts deep, warm tone from her sax on “Just Another Pretty Song”. We also enjoyed “When It’s Gone” with guest Ally Hany Albrecht (t), the funky “Zingamomma”, “East Coast Andy”, and “What’s Up, Puppy” with Kenny Rittenhouse (t).



Photo: Leigh Pilzer

O's Sax Features

Colin Sherman

Ouroborosuite

One way to ensure cohesiveness between all the musicians in a free jazz endeavor is to play all the instruments yourself, and that is exactly what Colin Sherman does. He composes and produces the album and adds lyrics on “Force Beyond Control”. Ouroborosuite stems from the ouroboros, a snake eating its own tail, analogous to the destruction of the US democracy from within. Sherman speaks out on the realities of government actions in a strong statement.

83
Fusion
Ex-Tol
2026



Photo: Colin Sherman

Jeff Lederer

74 *Little Music*
2026 *Avant Garde*

There's A Yearnin'

Saxophonist/clarinetist Jeff Lederer teams up with vocalist Mary LaRose and the Wildebeest Wind Quintet on There's A Yearnin': Music for Winds and Voice. The Quintet is Michel Gentile (fl), Katie Scheele (oboe), Mike McGuiness (cl), Sara Schoenbeck (bassoon), and Nathan Koci (French horn). LaRose breathes poetry into the music, a convergence of jazz and notated music that surfaces unheard works by Eric Dolphy, Ornette Coleman, and Oliver Nelson. It is yet another unique feather in Lederer's cap. Among the best selections are “Three More Seconds”, “Nocturne”, “Lem and Aide”, and the title track.

Todd Herbert

76
Modern
TH Prod.
2026

Captain Hubs

Todd Herbert is a proven tenor saxophonist on the New York jazz scene. His latest release is Captain Hubs in a quartet with David Hazeltine (p), John Weber (p), and Louis Hayes (d). They perform a mix of ten originals and standards. “Temple of Silence”, “The Mind's Eye”, “Look Into the Ayss”, and Shorter's “Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum” are a few of the best songs.



Photo: Todd Hubert

O's Sax Features

Bob Reynolds

Eddie Told Me So

Photo: Bob Reynolds



82
Pop+Jazz
NOSAHO
2026

Contemporary jazz saxophonist Bob Reynolds lights the flame on his latest release *Eddie Told Me So* remembering the insatiable groove of Eddie Harris. Andrew Renfroe (g), Mike Gurrola (b), and Charles Ruggiero (d) round out the band. Reynolds is soulful on “When Your Lover Has Gone”, swinging on “Change Partners”, funky on the title track, and grooving on “Harrisburg”. Gurrola takes a stroll on “Just Friends” before they wrap up the set with a warm expression of “You Don’t Know What Love Is”.

Michael Jackson

82 JackoJazz
2026 Pop+Jazz

The Gal From Ochi

Composer, saxophonist Michael Jackson leads a large ensemble playing a wide range of contemporary jazz on *The Gal From Ochi*. There are gentle reggae beats on the title track and “One For Junior”, a taste of hip-hop on “Blew Stew” with spoken word by Marvin Tate and funky guitar from Aaron Koppel, and a little calypso on “Pop Tart” & “Sonny the Squirrel” featuring Johnny “Showtime” Janowiak on trombone. There are notable inputs from Andrew Zallar (keyboards, vibes) and Makaya McCraven (drums).

Tia Fuller & Shamie Fuller-Royston

Dynasty Vol. 2

This is the second take of *Dynasty*, a union of sisters Tia Fuller (sax) and Shamie Fuller-Royston (p). Their interplay is exceptional and fully complimentary. They speak a common musical language that spills into the audience with lots of warmth and intimacy. We liked the swinging “Beatrice”, “Momma Said” & “In This Quiet Place” both with vocals from Tia, and their take on Freddie Hubbard’s “Dear John”.



76
Modern
Cellar Music
2026

O's Sax Features

Photo: Berklee College of Music

Just When You Think You Know



81
Fusion
Palmetto
2026

Brian Landrus

Saxophonist, flautist, composer, arranger and producer Brian Landrus lights up the stage on his latest release Just When You Think You Know. His all-star band includes Zaccai Curtis (p), Dave Stryker (g), Lonnie Plaxico (b), and Rudy Royston (d). The program is a rich set of fourteen selections. They opened with a taste of funk on “All In Time”, grooving on “One Year”, seducing on “Beyond” featuring vocals from Violet Qiu, relaxing on “Trance”, with suspense on “Under Dark”, and our favorite “Untold Story”.

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

Shawn Maxwell

Frenetic Domain



79
Modern
Booshkaboo
2026

Shawn Maxwell is a master of reeds, a composer and leader of a band including Chika Inoue (a-sax), Mark Nelson (p, Wurlitzer), Michael Barton (b), and Greg Essig (d). All 7 compositions are Maxwell originals. Shawn's inclusion of Inoue, a purely classical artist helps him achieve the desired mix of jazz and classical music. Chika does a fine job taking the lead on “Reed Tire Earth”. Nils Higdon adds percussion on “Cats Are Gods”, another highlight along with “8 Bit Sounds With A Plumber”. The sound stage was deep with excellent tonal qualities, attributable to the vinyl format.

O's Drummer Features

Joe Syrian *A Blue Time*

98
R&B+Jazz
Circle 9
2026

Drummer, arranger Joe Syrian leads his Detroit based *Motor City Jazz Octet* on *A Blue Time*, his latest release. The band is very talented, and many members shine during the session with unique arrangements of classic tunes. They serve up a taste of Brazil on "Agua De Beber" with a fine piano solo by Adam Birnbaum, followed by soulful vocals on "Teach Me Tonight" featuring Lucy Yeghiazaryan. Bassist Boris Kozlov opens "Norwegian Wood", and guitarist Paul Bollenback stars on "Black Magic Woman. We also liked "Charade" with Carl Maraghi's warm baritone sax lead. This is an enjoyable CD from start to finish!



Photo: Joe Syrian

Ulysses Owens, Jr.

2026 Modern
Cellar Music 82

Around the World with U

Drummer Ulysses Owens, Jr. presents his Generation Y on his second release *Around The World With U*. The quintet includes Erena Terabuko (a-sax), Anthony Harvey (t), Tyler Bullock (p), and Yasushi Nakamura (b). The program includes some older hard bop, some obscure tunes, and some fresh, original modern jazz. Guest Nanami Harutra (tb) joins the band for two selections, notably "Road Life". Other highlights are "Espresso", "Mo Better Blues", "The Light That Grew Amongst Us" featuring Terabuko, and "Stardust" showcasing Hervey.

Paulo Almeida

Love In Motion

77
Fusion
Dox Records
2026

Percussionist, drummer, vocalist Paulo Almeida leads a quartet with Josh Schofield (sax), Lorenzo Vitolo (p, synths), and Joan Cadina (b). The music is heavily syncopated, Latin fusion with an abundance of energy, notably on "Burning Skin". They relax on "Nenhum Talvez" with vocal shadowing by Lisette Spinnler, "Saudade" sung by Almeida, and "Um Sopro" before wrapping up with "Ipê" featuring Jorge Rossy on vibes, and "Saci" featuring Schofield.



Photo: Paulo Almeida

O's Drummer Features

Photo: Bobb Sanabria



Bobby Sanabria

Arsenio and Beyond

87
Latin
Jazzheads
2026

Drummer/musical director Bobby Sanabria pays homage to the late Arsenio Rodriguez, a pioneer of salsa, Afro-Cuban jazz, and many offshoots on Arsenio And Beyond. Sanabria celebrated the music in a live recording with his Multiverse Big Band at the Bronx Music Hall, March 15, 2025. This is a swinging Caribbean party, so put on your dancing shoes! “La Cartera”, “El Elemento Del Bronx”, and “Yo Naci En Africa/Anabacoa”

pack a punch. They slow it down and get romantic on “La Vida Es Un Sueno” to allow you to catch your breath. Those are just a few of the gems in a winning set!

Arvind Ramdas

82 Modern 2026
Cellar Music

Here We Go

Indian drummer Arvind Ramdas now resides in Vancouver where he launched his debut recording Here We Go. We found ourself bobbing our head to the beats of a solid rhythm section with Noah Franche Nolan (p), David Caballero (b), and Ramada (d). The melodies are mostly from the horns, Spencer Drody (t) and Tamas Balai (a-sax). They open sizzling with “All For None”, and the Latin tinged groove continues through most of seven selections. They take a breath on “Autumn In New York” and the mid tempo “Moon Rays” before closing the set with “Bird Lives”, another burner.

Robert Jospé

Suites and Scotches

77
R&B+Jazz
R. Jospé
2026

Photo: Jen Fariello



Drummer, percussionist, composer, and producer Robert Jospé presents his latest release The Night Sky with his quartet including co-producer Daniel Clarke (keyboards), Chris Whiteman (g), and Paul Langosch (b). The music is pleasant, and perhaps Jospé’s best to date! They are festive on “Samba Sun”, warm on “Desert Dream”, and get funky on “Flashback”. We also enjoyed “The Golden Hour” and the steel pans of “Silver Lining” closing the session.

O's Vocal Features

Kristen Mather de Andrade

74 Ansonica
Pop+Jazz 2026

Sem Fim

Kristen Mather de Andrade is a clarinetist, vocalist, producer, and educator who combines Brazilian, orchestral, and jazz into her own signature. Sem Fim is her last album featuring a 15-piece ensemble. The music is fresh and engaging. We enjoyed the vocals in both English and Portuguese. "Frevo Novo" with guest Sean Jones (t), and "Clarinete Dengoso" were also notable.

As Is

Crazy World

As Is is a Philadelphia-based contemporary jazz band led by vocalist Stacey Lynn Schulman and guitarist Alan Schulman. They use AI-integrated instrumentation with vocals, rap, and spoken word for their latest release Crazy World. Jeff "Tain" Watts (d), Dante Pope (vocals), and Corcoran Holt (b) have notable contributions. They set the stage with a unique arrangement of "From This Moment On" featuring Kokayi (spoken word). Other highlights are



Photo: As Is

"Better Than Anything", "A House Is Not A Home", and the sweet harmony on "PrAilude". This performance exceeded our expectations. Stacey's voice is rich and smooth over the wide variety of selections, many covers have been freshened up and given a new life.

O's primary listening is done with a Sony XA777ES SACD player, Ayre C5-xe^{MP} CD player, vpi H'W 40 (40th Anniv) turntable with Gimble Tonearm, Schiit Skoll F Phono Preamp, Jeff Rowland Consonance Preamp, two Jeff Rowland Model 1 amplifiers (balanced mono mode), B&L W 800D speakers, Transparent Audio interconnects, and E.S.P. Essence Reference Power Distribution System.

Our Video Theatre System uses Classe CA-200 amplifier, Mirage M1 speakers, Cardas Hex 5C speaker wire, Sony SXR D overhead projector, and 7.1 Surround.

O's Vocal Features

Sometimes we just want to sit down and relax to some peaceful and calming music. That's when we dial up Welsh harpist, arranger and composer Catrin Finch. She was the Official Harpist to the Prince of Wales from 2000 to 2004! That was Prince Charles, now King Charles! She certainly helped sooth his mind during that period. The music, eleven songs over 55 minutes, serves as excellent inspirational, relaxation, and meditation background. The accompanying booklet includes Catrin's letters to herself at 13 years old, one for each selection, adding additional depth and meaning to the music!

CATRIN FINCH

Notes To Self



91
Ballads
2026
ARC

Photo: Catrin Finch

Wild Blue Herons

Vocalist Darlene Cooper and keyboardist, producer Bill Sample are the heart of the Canadian collective, Wild Blue Herons, a funky, jazz, pop band. The rhythm section is tight with Tim Porter (g), Miles Foxx Hill (b) and Randall Stoll (d) along with crisp accents from Steve Hillman (t-sax) and Jim Hobson (tb). They get warm on "Under My Skin", and sizzle on "Whatcha Gonna Do With Your Life". We also enjoyed "Won't Let You Steal" and "Mr. Wiggly".

76 Cooper/Sample
2026 Pop+Jazz

It's All About Love

Photo: April Varner

APRIL VARNER

Ella

April Varner is a fiery, young, red-head from Toledo that is lighting up the NYC music scene. Her latest endeavor is an ambitious program celebrating the legendary Ella Fitzgerald. April captures Ella's essence while staying true to her own vocal signature resulting in a fresh set of classic covers. Her band is excellent with a tight rhythm section including pianist, arranger Emmet Cohen, Yasushi Nakamura on bass, and drummer, producer Ulysses Owens Jr. Trumpeter Brian Lynch steps in with arrangements for the larger ensemble. We enjoyed "Night And Day", "Cheek To Cheek" with a fine bass solo, and "Undecided" with piano and drum solos complementing Varner's scatting. With special guest Michael Jackson (t-sax).

77
Ballads
Cellar
Music
2026



O's Vocal Features

CHAMPIAN FULTON

Flying High

Pianist, vocalist and producer Champion Fulton leads two distinct trios on Flying High Still Soaring, her latest album of 10 selections. She partners with Charles Ruggiero (d) and Buster Williams (b) for four selections, and with Fukushi Tainaka (d) and Neal Miner (b) for five selections. Klas Lindquist (a-sax cl) joins for five songs. We liked “Good Morning Heartache” & “Swing! Brother, Swing!”, both featuring Tahira Clayton (vocals) with shadowing by Lindquist, “Lullaby of the Leaves”, and “What A Little Moonlight Can Do” featuring Carmen Bradford (vocals). We also enjoyed “It’s Been A Long, Long Time” featuring Bria Skonberg.

89
Songbook Ink
Ballads
2026

Antonio Narvaz Dupuy

Photo: By Sexybehopper - Own work, CC BY-SA

Newcomer

Emma Hendrick

Jazz vocalist Emma Hendrick released her debut Newcomer late in 2025 followed by a tour. It is all original music that she composed during her studies in The Netherlands and Miami. Her primary band is Connor Rohrer (p), Anton Kot (d), Thor Edie Johansen (b), and Shane McCandless (sax). We enjoyed “Dreamscapes” featuring a trumpet solo by David Sneider, the passionate title track with a string quartet, “Tone Poem in Greenwich Village”, “Come On Home” with Peter Eldridge (voice) and Andrew Tinch (g), and “Waste No More Days” including vocalists Amy Azzara and Faith Quashie. We can see why Hendrick has won many vocal and compositional competitions and welcome her on the jazz scene with a promising future.

82
Ballads
Pathways
2026



Photo: Emma Hendrick

O's Vocal Features

Photo: Karla Harris

The Sweetest Sounds

Isabella Isherwood

83
Ballads
Sabrina
2026

23 year old jazz vocalist, pianist, actress Isabella Isherwood makes her recording debut with The Sweetest Sounds. She is supported by

Mike Allemana (g), Joe Policastro (b), and Alejandro Salazar (d). Each of the musicians shines in the spotlight

during the set. Isherwood starts out warming our hearts with a fresh rendition of "Devil May Care" featuring Allemana who also stands out on the title track. She goes solo, playing piano and singing on "My Buddy". There are also a couple of strong duets: "Round Midnight" with Policastro, and "Till There Was You" with Salazar. This is a promising start packed with emotions.

Jennifer Lee

77 Ballads 2026
SBE Records

Glimpse

Glimpse is the fourth album led by singer, pianist, songwriter Jennifer Lee. She employs a strong team including Peter Sprague (g), Adam Shulman (keyboards), Gunnar Biggs (b), Duncan Moore (drums) and many other fine musicians. There are eleven selections including nine originals with heartening messages. We liked their arrangement on "If I Only Had A Brain", "Warrior, Drop Your Sword", "Here You Are", and "Strange and Beautiful".

82
Ballads
Matterhorn
2026

Stella Heath

For Billie

Stella is a well-traveled actress and singer who now focuses on singing in bands of many configurations. Pianist Neil Angelo Fontano leads her accompaniment on For Billie, her debut recording emanating from The Billie Holiday Project. Daniel Fabricant (b), Vic Wong (g), Riley Baker (d), Clint Baker (t), Johnny Bones (sax), and Robby Elfman (sax, cl) round out a strong band. The music is a combination of swing and classic 1930s jazz all cast with a focus on Holiday and her courageous lyrics that surfaced emotional and political realities at a time when many stayed silent.



Photo: Stella Heath

O's Vocal Features

Lauren Scales

Many Rivers

81
Ballads
Truth
Revolution
2025

Vocalist Lauren Scales makes her debut on Many Rivers sharing billing with co-producers, pianist Chris Grasso and alto saxophonist Mike Flanagan. They all shine brightly on this encounter. Luques Curtis (b), and either drummer Richie Barshay or Charles Haynes round out fine accompaniment, and Steve Davis adds trombone on “You Know Who”. “Star Eyes”, “Spanish Joint”, and “But Beautiful” are examples of Scales’ versatility. We hope this headlining trio stays engaged for a while!



Photo: Chérie Hansson

Jaana Narsipur

The Re-Collection

76 Ballads 2026
The Pocket Jazz

Indian American jazz vocalist Jaana Narsipur switches from straight-ahead to more of a contemporary vibe on her sophomore recording, The Re-Collection. She refers to it as a “mixtape... of ‘80s pop classics” from her college years. She is surrounded by fine musicians including Wayne Tucker (t), Marco Panascia (b), producer Nicki Adams (p), and Joe Abba (d, perc). She does a fine job jazzing up “In Your Eyes”, “Time and Tide”, “Breakout”, and “Holding Back The Years”.



Photo: Jaana Narsipur

Meltem Ege

Solitude

77
Ballads
Meltem Ege
2026

Turkish vocalist Meltem Ege splits time between Los Angeles and Istanbul. Solitude is her latest release with four songs from each location. The musicians are locals except flautist Saroyan Özçağatay who plays on one song is each location. “Anlayana”, “We Must Not Say Yes” featuring vocalist Theo Blackman, the swinging “Aklinda Kalmasin” with solos across the band, and “Seninle Dans” are favorites.



Photo: voyagela.com

O's Vocal Features

Little Black Book

Leslie Vincent



Photo: Leslie Vincent

78
*Jazz Is
Cool
Ballads
2026*

Minneapolis based singer songwriter Leslie Vincent's Little Black Book explores all the nuances of romance including dating, marriage, and heartaches. Guest vocalist Jeremy Messersmith joins her on "What Humans Do" including fine accompaniment from Mitch Van Laar (t), Blake Foster (g), and Ben Ehrlich (perc). Bassist Matt McIntyre and pianist Patrick Adkins round out the rhythm section. Leslie's voice is inviting and the love songs spark memories (both good and bad) for many. "You & I", the bluesy "Swinging Tattooed Queen", "Harriet the Spy", and "Till They Do" are highlights. We reviewed vinyl and CD formats, both had good audio quality with the red vinyl displaying more depth vs the convenient, clean (no pops) CD.

Alfie Jackson

77 *JackoJazz
Ballads 2026*

The Peacocks

Young vocalist Alfie Jackson bounces between New York and Chicago, gathering influences and education in both places. She makes her debut recording The Peacocks leading a sextet. The songs are mostly freshened classics that give Jackson a chance to display her unique, natural talent. She engages her accompaniment well with Wayne Williams (vibes) shining on "Nature Boy", Leo Milano (t-sax) soloing on "My One and Only Love", Chase Wilkins (d) opening "Ugetsu". Our favorite is the bluesy, seductive "Do I Move You?" With special guest Michael Jackson (t-sax).

Danny Sinoff

Make Someone Happy

South Florida based crooner, pianist Danny Sinoff makes his debut singing Make Someone Happy and ten other classic, romance, and blues tunes. He has his own laid back style that is relaxing. Sinoff is surrounded by a polished band including producer Ulysses Owens Jr. (d), Ben Wolfe (b), Dan Wilson (g), Jerry Weldon (t-sax), Joe Magnarelli (t), Benny Benack III (t, vocal), and Tyler Henderson (p). We enjoyed "All I Need Is That Girl" featuring Benack III, the swing of "I Won't Dance", "Charade", and "Three Little Words". This is a solid set all around.

77
*Cellar Music
Ballads
2026*



Photo: Danny Sinoff

O's Vocal Features

Dr. John

Live at Rockpalast

This is vintage Dr. John in full effect at a live performance, bringing us his raspy, deep baritone, and the grooves that made him a legend. Live at Rockpalast adds the energy of the audience in St. Goarshausen, Germany, July 9, 1999. The band included Bobby Broom (g), David Barard (b), Herman "Roscoe Ernest III" (d), and Dr. John (p, vocals). "Right Place, Wrong Time", "Such A Night", "Mama Roux", and "Big Chief" are a few highlights from the funky set from the legend himself.

83
R&B+Jazz
Rockpalast
2026



Photo: Wikipedia

Michael Moody

74 Ballads 2026

The Ecstasy of Love

Moody is a romantic crooner with Michael Moody minimal accompaniment coming from guitarist Paul Bollenback and/or bassist Neal "Sugar" Caine. Moody's style is more oratory than melodic, but it comes to life on "The Nearness Of You". We also liked "Body And Soul", "I'm Gonna Lock My Heart", and "Ghost Of A Chance" in the set of a dozen popular classics spanning 36 minutes.

Marcus Goldhaber

The Promise of You

77
Ballads
Fallen Apple
2026

Marcus delivers a soft, cuddly, mostly original set on The Promise of You. He is backed by a core quartet of Art Hirahara (p), Michael O'Brien (b), Jay Rattman (sax, cl), and Alvester Garnett (d) with several guests sprinkled in along the way. There are swinging fresh arrangements of "Skylark", and "The Best Is Yet To Come". Keita Ogawa (perc) is featured on "Let's Get Lost" with Paul Bollenback (g). We also enjoyed "I'll Build A Stairway to Paradise", "There's A Small Hotel", and "Two At A Time" featuring Rattman.



Photo: Marcus Goldhaber

O's Bass Features

86
Modern
Cellar Music
2026

Alexander Claffy Alive In Philadelphia

Photo: Alexander Claffy



Jazz bassist Alexander Claffy leads a quintet with Jaleel Shaw (a-sax), Seamus Blake (t-sax), Kevin Hayes (p) and Bill Stewart (d) for Alive In Philadelphia Vol. 1. The music was recorded live at Chris' Jazz Cafe in Philadelphia, March 2025. This is a fine set that invites repeated listening. They open swinging on "She", then chop it up on "7.5", and slow things down on "Hard Times Killing Floor Blues" preceded with a strong bass solo by Claffy. Pianist Kevin Hayes softens things on the introduction to "Oriental Folk Song" before they wrap up swinging with Coltrane's "Just For The Love".

Christian Dillingham As It Relates To Now

Shifting Paradigm
2026 Modern 78

Bassist Christian Dillingham leads a trio with Greg Ward (a-sax) and Jeremy Cunningham (d) on As It Relates To Now. This modern jazz set features Ward on the title track and Cunningham on "Delusional Grandeur". But Dillingham asserts his presence throughout the session especially on "Wooden Lawns" and "Obsolescence", taking ownership with pride.

Chuck Bergeron Bass & Face

93
Ballads
Summit
2026



Photo: University of Miami

Bassist Chuck Bergeron teams up with ten different vocalists for a set of thirteen duets (mostly) that are soft, sweet and wonderful. There's nowhere to hide in this format, so we get an up-close view on the tone and timbre of the artists. Chuck invites George Rabbai (t, vocals) for "I Thought About You". Kevin Mahogany sings on two selections notably "Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West" featuring guests Charles Pillow (sax), Phil Strange (p), and John Riley (d). Chuck uses the bow on "Do You Know What It Means", with Strange. Janis Siegel sings "When I Drink". Nicole Yarling sings and chops it up on violin for "Audubon Zoo/Iko-Iko". John Hart (g) accentuates "Fair Weather" with Sheila Jordan. Roseanna Vitro brings a touch of humor on "Take The Wrinkles Out Your Birthday Suit", and "Analog" features vocalist Deborah Silver.

O's Bass Features

John Pachnos

75

**Modern
Avgonyma
2026**

25 year old jazz bassist released his self-titled seven original songs. He quintet Carter Vames (sax, fl), Caleb Heinze (g), Frankie Midnight (p), and Justin Vedovelli (d). We liked the hard bop groove of “Gettin’ Outta Dodge”, the mellow “Floridian Winter”, and “No Funks To Give”.



Photo: John Pachnos

Thommy Andersson

**78 Avant Garde
Steeplechase 2026**

Shimmering Blue

Swedish bassist, composer Thommy Andersson leads a drummerless trio with Kirk Knuffke (cornet) and Jose Davila (helicon, tuba, didgeridoo, euphorium, and bass flute). Shimmering Blue, is Andersson’s debut as a leader on SteepleChase, a unique and interesting configuration that is impressive and approachable. We liked “Tundra Song”, “Invisible Suite”, “Chicken Run”, “Rumbeling”, and the title track in a set with varied moods and tempos.

75

**Modern
The Side Door
2026**

Nat Reeves **Now In Time**

Veteran bassist, Professor Nat Reeves draws on over 50 years of experience for his latest album Now In Time. He assembles a fine team for support with Eric Alexander (t-sax), Steve Davis (tb), Eddie Henderson (t), Orrin Evans (p), and Jeff “Tain” Watts (d). Reeves connects his lifetime musical journey on this recording including three originals. “Appointment In Ghana”, “Portrait of Jennie”, “The Creator Has A Master Plan”, a cool cover of “On Green Dolphin Street”, and “Samba D’Blue” are some of the best tracks.

Photo: Nat Reeves

O's Trumpet Features

Let's Take A Chance Together

Joe Gransden

Trumpeter, vocalist Joe Gransden leads a quintet with producer Kenny Banks (p), Trey Wright (g), Tommy Sauter (b), and Larry Wilson (d). Whether playing his horn or crooning, Gransden is pouring his heart into the music. Among the best selections are “When Your Lover Has Gone”, and fresh arrangements of “Close Your Eyes”, “Where Or When”, & “The Way You Look Tonight”.

79
Ballads
J Gransden
2026



Photo: Joe Gransden

Jeremy Pelt

Our Community Will Not Be Erased

The title Our Community Will Not Be Erased suggests, provocative, perhaps militant statements. Instead, Pelt hits us with a calming sense of love and community, a LOVE record. He leads a quintet with Orrin Evans (p), Buster Williams (b), Lasse Carson (keyboards), and Lenny White (d). The mode is soothing modern jazz across nine original selections. It's a wonderful and needed elixir for today's madness, especially “Fathers and Daughters”, “Sandman”, and “Brothas On the Corner”.

75
Modern
High Note
2026



Photo: Eva Kapanadze

O's Trumpet Features

Photo: John Abbott

77
Classic
Cellar Music
2026

Bria Skonberg Brass



Trumpeter and vocalist Bria Skonberg focuses most of her attention on Brass for this release in a band with Luther Allison (p, B3), Eric Wheeler (b), and Darrian Douglas (d perc). Kellin Hanas plays trumpet on “Brotherhood of Man”. The program has a variety of styles making this a fresh set with plentiful solos around the band. We enjoyed the warmth of “Somewhere Out There”, the calypso beats of “Markham Sunrise”, “Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea”, and “So It Goes”.

Ella Grace

74 Pop+Jazz 2026
Shifting Paradigm

Figments

Trumpeter Ella Grace makes her debut as a leader on Figments featuring all original music. Her band is a quintet with Garrett Munz (sax), Aval Stanley (p), Marion Mallard (b), and Jayden Richardson (d). Julia Danielle sings on “Cherry Blossoms in the Rain”, the lone lyrical track. We also enjoyed “Dandelion”, “The Alchemist” featuring Mallard, and “Echo”.

Dave Douglas

Transcend

Veteran trumpeter, composer Dave Douglas shows no signs of fading at 63 years old on his new release Transcend. He performs with his Gifts Quintet including Tomeka Reid (cello), James Brandon Lewis (t-sax), Rafiq Bhatia (g), and Ian Chang (d). This is an ambitious, endeavor morphing Ellington’s Sacred Concert material into a unique statement of modern jazz including a dose of electronics. It is a thought provoking, courageous effort. “Argle Bargle”, “Come Sunday”, and “Oclupaca” are our favorites of the set.



O's Guitar Features

Adam De Lucia

The Man Who Would Be King

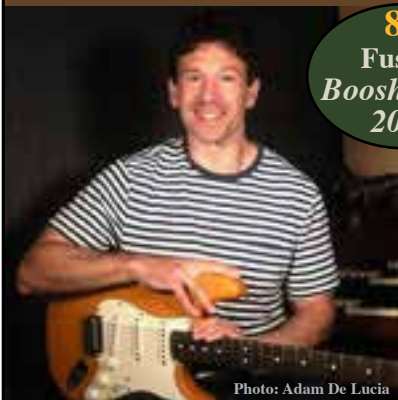


Photo: Adam De Lucia

86
Fusion
Booshkaboo
2026

Guitarist, producer Adam De Lucia composed all the music for The Man Who Would Be King, his latest jazz-fusion release. The set opens with rich strings before guitarist Oz Noy lights it up with the pulsating beats from Cody McCorry (b) and Jordan Perlson (d), then taking it down a notch on “Gorilla”. They get funky on “Store On The Corner” anchored by Tim Lefebvre on bass with Michael Ghegan’s sax on top. We also liked “Day Regimen”, the cool breeze of “Will You Follow”, “Carousel”, and vocals from Ghegan and Chrissi Poland on “Girl”.

James Wengrow

Australian fusion guitarist

on Emissary. Danish bassist Mathias Højgaard Jensen, and New York drummer James Paul Nadien join to form Wengrow’s Crypsis Trio. They play highly improvised rock fusion, with six originals composed by Wengrow and two covers. The music is a unique blend of rock and jazz genres. Highlights are “Arborealpolitik”, “Deadline Junky” with a fine solo by Jensen, “This is for Us to Share”, and “Let’s Call This”.

77 Pop+Jazz
Booshkaboo 2026

Emissary

James Wengrow makes his debut

Russ Spiegel

Timepieces

Veteran New York City-based guitarist Russ Spiegel leads a core quartet with Tal Cohen (p), Vince Dupont (b), and Brandon Lee Lewis (d) on Timepieces, his latest album. They open with the pleasing sounds of “Greener Pastures” followed by the syncopated “Timepiece”. Jean Caze (t, flugelhorn), Tim Armacost (t-sax), and Javier Nero (tb) join the foursome swinging on “You Stepped Out of A Dream”, and the relaxed “Lydian Dream”. We also enjoyed melodies by guest Hendrik Meurkens (harmonica) notably on “Sidewalk Detour”.

Photo: Russ Spiegel

76
Ruzztone
Fusion
2026



O's Guitar Features

Mike Clement

Polka Dots & Ray Bans

Photo: Adam Clements



Canadian guitarist Mike Clement is living in the Crescent City where he leads a core organ trio with Tris Duncan on the B3 and Gerald Watkins Jr. on drums. He adds brass on several tracks as well. The guitarist shines on “Bohol”, chilling on “Instadaddy” with Connor Stewart (a-sax), blazing on “Don’t Be Sus” with Miles Berry (t-sax), cooking on “Surreal McCoy”, and bopping on “Blues For Leroy” with Leroy Jones (t). This is a hot set.

79
Bebop
Cellar Music
2026

Bobby Broom

75 Cool 2026
Clean Sweep

Notes of Thanks

Jazz guitarist, producer Bobby Broom performs with bassist Dennis Carroll and drummer Kobie Watkins, his working trio, on Notes of Thanks, his latest release. It is a tribute to the legendary saxophonist Sonny Rollins featuring his compositions. Both Broom and Watkins played in Sonny’s bands, adding to the authenticity of the work. The sole original is Carroll’s ballad “Me Time”. Most of the music showcases Broom’s prowess but both Carroll and Watkins bode well trading with Broom on “Strode Road”. We also enjoyed “Pent Up House”, “Doxy”, and “Alfie’s Theme”.

Chris Standring

Time of Change

Chris Standring composed and produced all of songs on Time of Change, based on the retro groove from the 1970s. He plays guitar and keyboards with a core band including Andre Berry (b), Chad Wright (d), and Lenny Castro (perc). Four tracks on the album are bolstered by a horn section comprised of Brandon Fields (tenor sax), Tom Saviano (alto sax), Michael Stever (trumpet), and Erik Hughes (trombone). The formula works well as they get funky on “Magnetic”, soothing on “Slippin’ In These Streets”, & “Where Were You When”. We also enjoyed “A Good Game”, and “Remember The Day”.

79
R&B+Jazz
Ultimate Vibe
2026

Photos: Chris Standring



O's Blues Features

Freddie King

Feeling Alright

Photo: Bear Family Records



77
**Elemental
Blues
2026**

Usually when we think of legendary blues artists with the last name King, the first name that pops up is BB; a close second is Albert; and the one that we least come across is Freddie. Most likely it is because

Freddie died at the young age of 42 before generating as much material as the others. Albert and BB lived to 69 and 82 respectively, but don't get confused, Freddie had a lot to offer. Feeling Alright is a 2-disc compilation recorded at the Nancy Jazz Pulsations Festival in Nancy France on October 10, 1975. Freddie gets support from Alvin Hempfill (organ), Ed Lively (g), Lewis Stephens (p), bassist Benny Turner (b), and Calep Emphrey (d). This is 100%, unapologetic BLUES and Freddie is tearing it up! "Sweet Little Angel" says it all.

Doug MacDonald

74 R&B+Jazz
dMac 2026

Tribute to South Central

Guitarist, composer/arranger Doug MacDonald is striking the blues on his Tribute to South Central. He leads a band with Wayne Cobham (t, flugelhorn), Richard Turner, Jr. (keyboards), Del Atkins (b), Ronnie Kaufman (d, perc), and Eric McKain (perc). The groove is tight on "Mr. Walker" featuring Turner on organ and Cobham. They relax on the beautiful "Self Portrait", and swing on "GG" with Mac Donald shining on both capping a good session.

Dominic Walker

Hurricane Summer

Jazz, blues guitarist



79
**D. Walker
Blues
2026**

Dominic Walker has been lighting up the music scene in Tampa Bay over the last few years. He leads a trio with drummer Paul Gavin, and organist John C. O'Leary III for Hurricane Summer. They add a jazzy blues touch to classics like "Witchcraft", "Satisfaction", and "Tangerine". We also enjoyed the racy "Les Is More" and "On The Sunny Side Of The Street". It's a groove set that mirrors the intensity of his live performances.

ARTIST Title <i>Label</i> Rating	<u>Top Contemporary Picks</u> O's Notes
JONATHON C^R "BOOGIE" LONG <u>COURAGE IN THE</u> <u>CHAOS</u> 86 <i>Myrical</i>	Blues, rock, singer, guitarist, songwriter Jonathon Long is straight out of Louisiana, delivering racy blues that are true to the region. He takes charge right out of the gate on "A Fool Can See", continues engaging his audience with "Hell or High Water", "Insanity", "The World Is A Prison", and "Catfish Blues". <u>Courage In The Chaos</u> is right on target!
ENSEMBLE C <u>EVERY JOURNEY</u> C^F <i>Adhyaropa</i> 83	Ensemble C is Claire Cope's large ensemble, presenting <u>Every Journey</u> their sophomore recording. There are eight lengthy original compositions that range from light fusion to contemporary big band. We enjoyed "Flight" with vocalization from Brigitte Bertha, and solos by Matt Carmichael (t-sax) and Ant Law (g), "Isabel" featuring soloists Anoushka Nanguy (tb), Rob Cope (b-sax), Freddie Gavita (t), and Jack McCarthy (perc), and the airiness of "The Light of the Dark" & "Amboseli". The liner notes provide excellent background for each song, enhancing the listening experience.
YASMINNA C^A <u>HYPERSENSIBLE</u> <i>Microscopi</i> 78	French Moroccan, Australian, DJ/producer Yasminna is a singular force on the house music scene. The set opens with "MDMA" and she's rapping like a champ! There is a pounding club groove on "Let Me Rise", the hard core "Put Me On A Screen", "To Fall", transitioning to French rap on "Requiem Pour Capital", "A Mon Pere", and "Clean Slate".
IAN SMIT <u>¿QUÉ?</u> <i>Ian Smit</i> C^F 76	Experimental guitarist Ian Smit plays an amalgamation of genres best classified as free, rock fusion. His latest release <u>¿QUÉ?</u> features recording engineer Scott Petito (b), Tom Rainey (d), and David Torn (g, effects). We liked "Wizard of Wut", "Barker de la Carnivale" and "Oil Can Leaks" in a rather eclectic set.
Photo: Mike Freeman  75 Bell Bar Latin 2026	<u>Circles in A Yellow Room</u> Mike Freeman It's 2026 and we're still feeling the impact of the pandemic. <u>Circles in A Yellow Room</u> is yet another recording created in 2019 and refined during the pandemic yet not released until 2025. It is a reflective work by Mike Freeman (vibes, marimba, perc) with Guido Gonzalez (t), Jim Gailloreto (t-sax, b-cl), Reuben Rodriguez (b), Robert Quintero (congas, bongos, perc), and Joel Mateo (d). Freeman was inspired by memories of his children and their creativity while growing up. It's a fresh, festive set. "El Cuarto Amarillo", "Funky Cha Cha", and "Wellspring" are highlights.

O's Place Features

78

Nth Power
R&B+Jazz
2026

Never Alone

The Nth Power is a trio that brings experience backing proven performers with over 10 years playing as a unit. Drummer, vocalist Nikki Glaspie, bassist Nate Edgar, and guitarist, vocalist Nick Cassarino serve up a dose of funky R&B on Never Alone playing with a laid-back maturity. “Dream Alive”, “Could It Be ’74”, “Finding Ourselves”, and the title track are highlights.

The Nth Power



Photo: The Nth Power

TWO FROM GORDON GRDINA

Canadian oudist Gordon Grdina is back with his band Qalandar for his latest release, Reza. They are Reza Honari (Kamanche), Ali Razmi (Setar), Hamin Honari (Tombak, Daf), and Kenton Loewen (d). It was recorded live at China Cloud in Vancouver and is one of three simultaneous releases from Grdina along with Ash and Turnpike. The music is a worldly jazz-fusion that is enticing, exotic and engaging with a definitive contemporary Indian bent. “Gaza” and “Morning Moon” are highlights.

Reza

74
Pop+Jazz
ABG
2026



Ash

74
Pop+Jazz
ABG
2026

Free jazz guitarist, oudist Gordon Grdina presents Ash, the third album with his Nomad Trio including pianist Matt Mitchell and drummer Jim Black. This is a studio recording with six well developed originals with Grdina alternating between oud and guitar. We liked the raging, free, fusion on “Simultanism”, followed by “Huzam” opening with an excellent oud solo. We also enjoyed “Ejdeha” and the percussion heavy title track.

O's Place Features

Jim Robutaille

74 Fusion 2026

Whaling City Sound

Sonic

Guitarist and composer Jim Robitaille leads a jazz-fusion trio with bassist Tom Casale and Chris Poudrier on drums. They play 8 originals and two covers for Sonic, the latest release from Robitaille. There is a level of respect between the musicians that allows ample individual expression and seamless transitions. Of note are the relaxing “Central Park West”, “All Blues”, and the title track.

Daggerboard

the Skipper and Mike Clark

Daggerboard is a San Francisco-based band formed by producer Gregory Howe (g) and Erik Jekabson (t). It is anchored by drummer Mike Clark, and “The Skipper”, bassist Henry Franklin. They sprinkle several other artists into the mix including Mads Tolling (violin), Babatunde (congas), Dave MacNab (g), Dave Ellis (sax), and Matt Clark (p). The program opens with a sense of mystery on



Photos: Erik Jekabson & Greg Howe - Wide Hive



86

Fusion
Wide Hive
2026

“Desierto De Tabernas”, awakening on “Tanzanian Skies”, strolling on “Running Into One”, a taste of funk on “A Pride in the Prairie”, and back to the adventure of “Street Sheik”. Program is engaging, symphonic Rich with excellent musical performances.

Ancient Future

74 Pop+Jazz 2026

Ancient Future

Purple Spirits

Purple Spirits is a collection of Tributes to musical heroes with past albums on Ancient Future Records. The performers include Matthew Montfort (g, b), Aditya Kalyanpur (tabla), Kai Eckhardt (b), George Brooks (sax), and Mariah Parker (keyboards). We liked their take of “Purple Haze”, and. The flamenco vibe of “Tarantas Alap”, and “Punjabi Jhinzaki”.

Contemporary Selections

ARTIST	Title	Label	X	T
TERRY CALLIER	<u>at the Earl of Old Town</u>	<i>Time Traveler</i>	73	C ^b
ZACC HARRIS	<u>American Reckoning</u>	<i>Shifting Paradigm</i>	73	C ^F
AARON IRWIN	<u>Spark</u>	<i>Adhyaropa</i>	73	C ^P
CAROLYN LEE JONES	<u>Eklektika</u>	<i>Booshkaboo</i>	73	C ^b
L. MARANTZ & S. JERMYN	<u>Echoes</u>	<i>Chill Tone</i>	73	C ^P
RIK WRIGHT	<u>Fool's Fate</u>	<i>HipsSync</i>	73	C ^P
FAYE CAROL	<u>Forever Dynamic</u>	<i>Getdown</i>	72	C ^b
DAVID BAILS	<u>Running Through My Mind</u>	<i>Tourganic</i>	71	C ^F
JUSSI REIJONEN	<u>Sayr: Salt Thirst</u>	<i>Unmusic</i>	71	C ^P
SOCIÉTÉ ÉTRANGE	<u>Heat</u>	<i>Carton</i>	71	C ^P
TOMAS JANZON	<u>Jazz Dairy</u>	<i>Changes Music</i>	67	C ^F
ALISTER SPENCE	<u>Always Ever</u>	<i>Alister Spence</i>	67	C ^F
ERIC ST. GODARD	<u>New Beginnings</u>	<i>Eric St. Godard</i>	66	C ^F
DEL ROSCO	<u>Del Rosco</u>	<i>Waydriff</i>	61	C ^P

RICH WILLEY

Trumpeter, composer Richard Willey leads a large ensemble combining jazz, funk, and reggae into an accessible program on Laid Back, Volume 1. The results leave us with music to chill by, perfect for a cruise on the lake! The 11-piece band includes some fine Chicago musicians and features John Swana playing the Electronic Valve Instrument (EVI). The seven original tracks are highlighted by “Triple Play”, the samba groove on “That’s My Little Girl”, and the title track.

Laid Back Vol. 1



Photo: Rich Willey

77
Baptism
R&B+Jazz
2026

Final Notes

Mike Westbrook a jazz pianist and composer died at the age of 90 on April 11, 2026 No cause of death was given. Drummer **James Gadson** died on April 2, 2026 from unknown causes. He was 86 years old. The legendary tenor saxophonist who practiced, to hone his skills on the pedestrian walkway of the Williamsburg Bridge, **Sonny Rollins** died on May 25th at 95. No cause of death was given. Electric guitarist **James Blood Ulmer** died at the age of 86 on June 4, 2026 from unknown causes. The musical contributions of these fine jazz professionals will remain with us through their music forever.

O's Place Legends

CECIL TAYLOR



Moers Festival 2008

83
Avant Garde
Elemental
2026

Fragments

Pianist Cecil Taylor was a pioneer of free jazz, with an energetic, percussive style. Fragments is a 2-Disc set featuring Taylor with Sam Rivers (t-sax, s-sax, fl), Jimmy Lyons (a-sax), and Andrew Cyrille (d). The music was captured live at the Salle Pleyel in Paris, France, on November 3, 1969, during the 8th Paris Jazz Festival. They played with so much intensity that Taylor took a 3-year break from

public performances afterwards! The music was fully improvised and was at the heart of the controversial, Avant Garde music in the late 1960s. It is being released for the first time now, in 2026, an excellent documentation of the Taylor Unit!

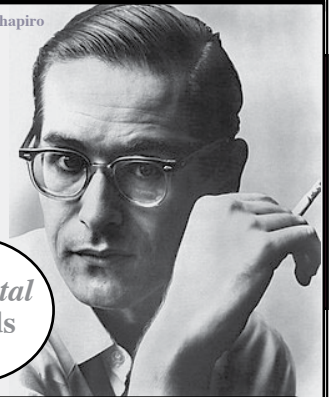
Bill Evans

Photo: Steve Schapiro

At The BBC

The legendary pianist Bill Evans shows up on many lists of best jazz pianist, and this recording offers some justification for that. At The BBC is a live performance from the historic Jazz 625 show at London's BBC Television Theatre. The accompaniment is bassist Chuck Israel and Larry Bunker on drums. They swing through a sweet, sixteen classic selections delighting an appreciative audience.

80
Elemental
Ballads
2026



Roy Hargrove

83 **Bebop 2026**
Time Traveler

BERN

The legendary trumpeter Roy Hargrove is in rare form in this live performance recorded at the International Jazz Festival in BERN, Switzerland, May 4, 2000. Hargrove is accompanied by Sherman Irby (a-sax), Larry Willis (p), Gerald Cannon (b), and Willie Jones III (d). They waste no time getting down to business, burning on "Stranded", the first of five lengthy well-developed tracks. The dynamics are excellent, especially on tunes like "Never Let Me Go".

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O's Place Features

Bassist Buster Williams steps into the leadership role on Pinnacle where he also composed 80% of the music! This is the relaxed 1970s jazz fusion originally released in 1975 and re-released for our pleasure in 2026. Raging sax from Earl Turbinton & Sonny Fortune, funky drums from Billy Hart, with Guilherme Franco adding percussion, Woody Shaw on trumpet, Onaje Allen Gumbs on keyboards, and vocal shadows from Suzanne Klewan and Marcus all support Buster's vision. "Tayamisha" is our favorite of the five lengthy selections.

Buster Williams Pinnacle

75
Time
Traveler
Fusion
2026



Photo: Buster Williams

Taj Mahal

R&B+Jazz 2026
Thirty Tigers 74

Time

Legendary singer, guitarist, composer Taj Mahal leads The Phantom Blues Band for his 2026 release, Time. His long-time band includes Tony Braunagel (d), Larry Fulcher (b) Johnny Lee Schell (g), with guests Jon Cleary (p), & Mick Weaver (organ). The title track is a previously unreleased song written by the late Bill Withers and Taj does it justice. We liked Bob Marley's "Talkin' Blues" with vocals by Ziggy Marley, "Sweet Lorene", "It's Your Voodoo Working", and "Crazy About A Jukebox".

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