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**jazz**  
**& blues** **report**

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**PORTLAND**  
**JAZZ**  
**FESTIVAL**

**FEBRUARY 18-27**

# Jazz & Blues Report

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## 2011 Portland Jazz Festival Set for February 18-27

**Portland** –The 2011 Alaska Airlines/Horizon Air Portland Jazz Festival presented by US Bank will be held Friday, February 18 through Sunday, February 27 at venues throughout Portland. The week-long festival will include jazz education and outreach along with a series of concerts all supporting the 2011 theme, *Bridges and Boundaries: Jewish & African Americans Playing Jazz Together*.

Among this year's headliners are the SFJAZZ Collective, in the world premiere of new repertoire paying homage to African American pop icon Stevie Wonder; NEA Jazz Master Randy Weston, performing solo piano in support of his new release, *The Storyteller*, and autobiography, *African Rhythms: The Autobiography of Randy Weston*; celebrated clarinetist Don Byron and his new project dedicated to the great Jewish entertainer, Mickey Katz - a reunion of the groundbreaking and virtuosic klezmer ensemble that recorded Byron's eponymous Nonesuch album and spearheaded the klezmer revival in the 1990s; a special performance by The 3 Cohens, featuring siblings, trumpeter Avishai Cohen, saxophonist/clarinetist Anat Cohen, and pianist Yuval Cohen; famed African American violinist Regina Carter will return to Portland, presenting her newest project, *Reverse Thread*, which traces the musical history of African Jews; saxophonist Joshua Redman - son of African American saxophonist Dewey Redman and Jewish American dancer Renee Shedroff - leading his new project, James Farm, that includes both African American and Jewish American musicians; and the Portland Jazz Festival's new Artistic & Community Ambassador, bassist Esperanza Spalding (who will lead her new Chamber Music Society in an exclusive Portland area engagement).

#### Complete concert schedule:

Friday, February 18, 7:30pm, Winningstad Theater, Randy Weston  
Saturday, February 19, 7:30pm, Winningstad Theater, Anat Fort  
Sunday, February 20, 7:30pm, Winningstad Theater, Dave Frishberg  
Thursday, February 24, 7:30pm, Newmark Theater, Don Byron  
Friday, February 25, 7:30pm, Newmark Theater, Esperanza Spalding  
Friday, February 25, 9:30pm, Crystal Ballroom, Poncho Sanchez  
Friday, February 25, 9:30pm, Alberta Rose Theatre, Nik Bartsch's Ronin  
Saturday, February 26, 2:00pm, Crystal Ballroom, The 3 Cohens  
Saturday, February 26, 7:30pm, Newmark Theater, SFJAZZ Collective  
Saturday, February 26, 8:00pm, Tony Starlight's, Gerald Clayton  
Saturday, February 26, 9:30pm, Crystal Ballroom, Regina Carter  
Sunday, February 27, 2:00pm, Newmark Theater, Joshua Redman  
Sunday, February 27, 7:30pm, Crystal Ballroom, Maceo Parker  
The Story Behind the Theme

This year's festival theme, *Bridges and Boundaries: Jewish & African Americans Playing Jazz Together* represents past, present and future collaboration between African Americans and Jewish Americans. "The original idea for this festival came from Nat Henoff's writings about jazz as a meeting place for African and Jewish Americans." said Bill Royston, Artistic Director of the Portland Jazz Festival. "His writings of Steven Bernstein's 'Diaspora Blues' to the odyssey of Willie 'The Lion' Smith were of primary influence. Historically, the music drew people together, and today there is a new wave of Israeli musicians who have moved to New York and elsewhere across the United States."

For more than 100 years, jazz has been the timekeeper of change in America's moods, lifestyles and

overall social awareness. Jazz has historically broken down racial color lines and cultural differences. Its stage has been a magnet for African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Western Europeans; all playing together in jam sessions long before the Civil Rights movement existed. Truly, jazz is America's classical music, and its only indigenous art form.

In his acclaimed history of Portland jazz, *Jumptown*, Robert Dietsche documents how communities were divided and destroyed by urban development. As I-5 segmented the Black community and signaled the death of the N Williams cultural scene, I-405 shattered the Jewish neighborhoods. In many cities, the Black community evolved from what had originally been a Jewish neighborhood. These physical boundaries, however, only enhanced cultural divisions and misunderstandings, which remain prevalent today.

Movements in contemporary jazz are again leading the way in creating bridges between African Americans and Jewish Americans. This merger of new directions in Jewish music with African American jazz improvisation has brought together the theme of the 2011 Portland Jazz Festival (February 18-27).

#### **Jazz Education and Outreach**

Jazz education and outreach events include a week long performance at Portland Area Middle Schools of *The Incredible Journey of Jazz*, a Black History Month celebration staged each February. The 60-minute musical/theater piece was originally developed by Portland State University professor and pianist Darrell Grant and the Leroy Vinnegar Jazz Institute. The performance features seven actors and musicians who each play multiple roles in depicting the experiences of African Americans through the history of jazz. Early scenes have students communicating through African rhythms, and then follow the evolution from gospel, blues, ragtime, Dixieland and New Orleans. Eventually, we witness the migration of African Americans traveling up the Mississippi River to Chicago and other industrial centers with the big band sounds of Ellington and Basie, to the bebop of Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, contemporary experimentation of Miles Davis and Ornette Coleman, and ultimately to rap and hip hop.

African and Jewish American community leaders, national jazz journalists and festival performers will participate and interact in panel discussions, focusing on a wide range of artistic and social perspectives. Additionally, featured headliners and members of the Jazz Journalists Association (JJA) will participate in the one-on-one interview series, *Jazz Conversations*. These interviews are presented before a live audience in the intimate PCPA ArtBar, among other locations to be announced. Notable participants will include author and journalist Nat Hentoff and *DownBeat* correspondent Paul De Barros.

#### **Tickets**

Portland Jazz Festival tickets are available to the general public at all TicketMaster locations, by calling 503-228-JAZZ (5299), or online at [pdxjazz.com](http://pdxjazz.com). Those

who sign up for the PDX Jazz mailing list will receive the first notification when tickets go on sale to the public.

PDX Jazz is Portland's jazz organization, producing the annual Alaska Airlines/Horizon Air Portland Jazz Festival presented by U.S. Bank. PDX Jazz offers an array of distinguished programs throughout the year in a variety of indoor and outdoor settings boasting internationally recognized artists while supporting regional fan favorites from the Northwest, often times presented in newly configured formats. PDX Jazz in partnership with Oregon Music News recently initiated a monthly jazz series at PDX Jazz @ Tony Starlight's, an intimate music venue, located in northeast Portland.

## **Savannah Music Festival launches free web-based learning center for aspiring jazz musicians**

**Savannah, Georgia** – Recently praised as the “Pro Bowl of high school jazz band competitions” by the South Florida Sun Sentinel, SWING CENTRAL JAZZ (SCJ) has become a year-round jazz education program with the launch of its multimedia web-based learning center at [www.swingcentraljazz.org](http://www.swingcentraljazz.org). The new site includes video lessons from SCJ's esteemed clinicians focused on elements of practice, rehearsal, performance and inspiration, and also serves as a companion site to the annual jazz band workshop and competition.

“Through this technology project, we're making our unique jazz education initiative accessible to the masses,” remarks SMF Associate Artistic Director of Jazz Education, Marcus Roberts. “The internet continues to be a primary learning tool for people of all ages, and young jazz musicians will benefit greatly from the lessons, artist interviews and audio/video performances that are featured at [swingcentraljazz.org](http://swingcentraljazz.org).”

At [swingcentraljazz.org](http://swingcentraljazz.org), jazz students can create individual profiles, filtering SCJ video lesson content by their specific interests. Individual profiles can also be linked to group band profiles, which are administered by participating band directors. The students can ask specific questions to SCJ staff about lesson content, post comments under each of the videos, and communicate with one another about their pursuits in jazz. In addition to streaming video lessons, free downloads are available to all approved users for use in the classroom or at home. To promote their artistic and scholastic abilities as a whole, clinician profiles are also hosted at [swingcentraljazz.org](http://swingcentraljazz.org). The clinician profiles include individual video lessons, concert footage, biographical information, RSS feeds and tour schedules, links to artist websites, and links to purchase downloads of their music.

As a companion site to the annual competition & workshop, [swingcentraljazz.org](http://swingcentraljazz.org) includes downloads of forms and audio previews needed for bands to complete and submit applications. SCJ staff is also working on a video documentary project with the Center for New American Media that follows the 2010 SCJ workshop

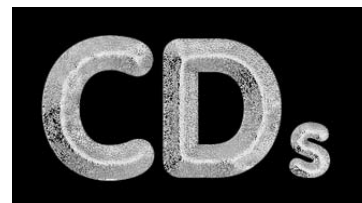


and competition process from the clinicians' perspective, further promoting the importance of mentorship and teamwork within the jazz tradition. Tentatively entitled "Passing It On," the documentary will be available to all future applicants for the SCJ workshop and competition, both online and on DVD. SCJ staff will continue video and audio documentation of the annual competition and workshop every year for use on [swingcentraljazz.org](http://swingcentraljazz.org).

The project is funded by the Jazz.NEXT program of Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation through the generous support of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

SWING CENTRAL JAZZ is an annual summit of America's finest jazz educators and high school jazz bands at the Savannah Music Festival. Committed to promoting the continued study of jazz among young musicians, it fuses a world-class mentorship program with a jazz band competition of national scope.

The Savannah Music Festival presents a world-class celebration of the musical arts by creating timeless and adventurous productions that stimulate arts education, foster economic growth, and unite artists and audiences in Savannah, Georgia. The 2011 festival runs from March 24 through April 9, including more than 100 performances of world-class jazz, classical, blues, bluegrass, gospel and other genres of American and international roots music in intimate venues throughout the historic district of Savannah. The season will be announced on November 10.



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## PLAYING FOR CHANGE

Playing For Change Live  
HEAR MUSIC DVD+CD

Several months ago I reviewed a recording by Grandpa Elliott, a New Orleans Street Singer who was associated with Playing For Change. At that time I noted that Playing for Change, according to its website (<http://www.playingforchange.com>), began as the brainchild of Grammy-winning music producer and engineer Mark Johnson. Utilizing innovative mobile audio/video techniques, Playing For Change records musicians outdoors in cities and townships worldwide. They have a single-minded passion to record little-known musicians.

The name Playing For Change evokes the coins thrown to street musicians as well as the transformation their music inspires. They also believe music can be a force to foster understanding and peace between persons of diverse backgrounds and cultures. They have an arrangement with Concord Records to allow dissemination of their recordings, one of which was the fine Grandpa Elliott CD. Now they have issued a combined CD/DVD package, "Playing For Change Live" (Playing For Change Records/Timeless Media). The concert DVD has two more performances than are on the CD as well as two bonus performances

Included are performances from several concerts in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada and Spain with a core group of musicians that travel and perform together which does seem to have varying personnel from tour to tour (I am basing this on the personnel on this CD/DVD set with a slightly different personnel for a fall 2010 US tour that is given on the website. Grandpa Elliott is present on this to contribute his harmonica and vocals and other members of the Playing For Change Band here on pretty much all

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the performances include vocalist Clarence Bekker from Amsterdam, Netherlands; guitarist Jason Tamba from Matadi, Congo; vocalist Mermans Kenkosenki from Matadi, Congo; vocalist Ruth 'Titi Tsira from Guguletu, South Africa; guitarist Louis Mhlanga from Harare, Zimbabwe and djembe by Mohammed Alidu from Tamale, Ghana.

There is a mix of classic blues, rhythm and blues and reggae songs mixed with African based performances. Grandpa Elliott opens up with a robust and exuberant "Fannie Mae," with Keb' Mo' guesting on guitar with the band and his later rendition of "Sugar Sweet" is only on the DVD. "Don't Worry" is an uplifting song with wonderful vocals from Bekker and Tsira as the band gets a strong reggae groove with Grandpa Elliott taking a solo break as well as guitarist Mhlanga who consistently plays some of the sweetest sounding guitar, with a precise attack that is rhythmically compelling.

Mermans Kenkosenki contributed "Back to the Roots" with a bit more African-reggae flavor again with such marvelous singing that bring so much warmth with the message of understanding an hope. The great Toots Hilbert is guest vocalist on a terrific rendition of Otis Redding's "I've Got Dreams to Remember," with supporting vocals from the aggregation. There are so many highlights including Titi Tsira's marvelous original "Fela Ngaye," as well as Ziggy Marley guesting on

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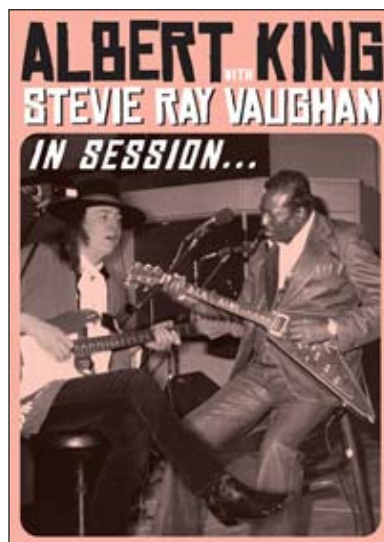
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"Love is My Religion."

Bob Marley's "One Love" serves as the basis for the group to conclude the filmed portion of the DVD while the exhilarating treatment of "Stand By Me" on the DVD serves as backdrop for the credits. Interspersed between the performances on the film are back stage scenes and the performers talking about their background and what music has meant to them and how they came to join Playing For Change. Of the two bonus scenes, one is of Grandpa Elliott singing "Amazing Grace" without accompaniment while hugging a cancer patient who was a special guest at the performance due to the Make A Wish Foundation.

The singing is so good, the band is terrific and the non-performance film scenes show how in touring they have become as much a family as a performing troupe. The whole experience presented here has so much soul and joy about it. In case I have not been clear, this is highly recommended. It should be available from better vendors as well as from the Playing For Change website.

*Ron Weinstock*



**ALBERT KING / STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN: IN SESSION**  
STAX

A December 1983 television production "In Session" in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada featuring Albert King and Stevie Ray Vaughan has become legendary. The music has been available for years (and Stax reissued it a few years back) as has been the video of the television broadcast. Now Stax has issued a deluxe DVD/CD set of "In Session" that includes three previously unissued performances on the DVD, which had been left out of the original broadcast because of time constraints. The previously unissued performances are signature songs of Albert, "Born Under A Bad Sign," and Stevie Ray, "Texas Flood," along with Albert doing the blues standard "I'm Going to Move to the Outskirts of Town."

While they had previously played together at Antoine's in Austin, Texas, this session was performed



# Why Some People Think Duke Ellington Is a Member of the Royal Family.

**KIDS DON'T GET ENOUGH ART THESE DAYS.** So you can see why some of them might accidentally confuse a jazz legend named Duke with royalty named duke. But it's finally time to set the record straight.

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington didn't rule over a small English estate. Instead he reigned supreme over jazz institutions like The Cotton Club. He riffed

powerfully on the piano, but it was the full orchestra that he considered his most compelling instrument. He introduced improvisation to his compositions — a process unheard of using a 15-piece orchestra. The result was a different approach to jazz that sparked a revolution and an evolution.

His music spread across the world with songs like "Sophisticated Lady," "In a



*A piano player. A composer. An orchestra leader.  
Duke Ellington reigned over a land called Jazz.*

Sentimental Mood," and "Take the 'A' Train." His historical concert in 1953 at the Newport Jazz Festival has entered the lexicon of legendary live performances. There is no doubt about it, Ellington's brand of jazz has contributed significantly to the American songbook and to the lives of anyone who has ever tapped their foot to a beat.

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can

really transform lives. In fact, the more art kids get, the smarter they become in subjects like math and science. And the more likely they'll become well-rounded, cool members of society. For *Ten Simple Ways* to get more art in kids' lives, visit [AmericansForTheArts.org](http://AmericansForTheArts.org).



*Royal dukes are squaresville.  
They have no rhythm  
And they wear crowns.*



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not too long after Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Texas Flood" was released. In the liner notes for this new release of this material Samuel Charters writes, "It was evident from the first choruses, that they were playing for each other. And that was the best audience either of them could ever have. The music never lost its intensity, its quality of something very important being handed back and forth and there was time for Stevie and Albert to see where their ideas took them." It is a joy to watch the two interact, accompanied by organ, bass and drums who I would hazard a guess were Albert's rhythm section at the time.

Watching and listening to them, it is clear that Albert is the mentor and Stevie Ray, his student as Albert recalls seeing Stevie and talking about others who play a lot of notes but lack soul, but Stevie was always watching and learning. Albert handles the bulk of the vocals and one watches them trade extended solos and play rhythm for each other. The vocals may be a tad restrained at the beginning of the performances, but as they get into them and get into their solos, there are some truly magical moments. At times, one can't hear where Albert's playing begins from that of Stevie Ray as his playing here certainly shows King's influence on him with his phasing and tone, yet at other times, there is more in the vein of the post-war Texas blues guitar tradition. The smiles they give for other's playing and the hug of the two at the end of the performance shows that they realized just how magical the performances were. It was the last time they would share the stage together, and now all the magic of that December day in Hamilton is finally available. *Ron Weinstock*



## BROOKLYN JAZZ UNDERGROUND

### Brooklyn Jazz Underground, Volume 4 BROOKLYN JAZZ UNDERGROUND RECORDS

I had been listening for several months to "Brooklyn Jazz Underground, Volume 4." This is one of several compilations of performances by some of today's modern jazz performers who call Brooklyn home.

BJU is a collective of composers and musicians who operate in a similar manner to Chicago's AACM, and other similar groups, enabling BJU to showcase their own music. In addition to producing recordings, they have produced festivals to showcase the BJU

performers.

This collection provides a sample of the musical range within the BJU. The disc opens up with "Cataldo One" by Danish bassist Anne Mette Iversen, a rousing hard bop number with some tenor sax from Jerome Sabbagh and piano from Danny Grissett. It is followed by Adam Kolker's strutting "Flag Day," from a new Sunnyside album, with a band that includes John Abercrombie and drummer Paul Motion. Kolker's dry tenor sax is very appealing to these ears and complemented by Abercrombie's chords and single note runs.

Just these two numbers provide the listener with a sense of the variety to be heard. I am not going to run down all eight selections, but simply mention three more. Sunny Jain Collective is led by drummer and composer Sunny Jain, and the track "Avaaz," from the album of the same name mixes the sounds of his native India including sitar guitar and the vocals of Samita Sinha, with Steve Welsh's emphatic tenor saxophone creating a wonderful blend of sounds.

Another drummer, Rob Garcia, contributed the fascinating "Little Trees," opening with some free sounding piano from Dan Tepfer, before tenor saxophonist Noah Preminger engages in some call and response with Tepfer as drummer Garcia and bassist Chris Lightcap answer and provide a responsive foundation. "After," by tenor saxophonist Dan Pratt, is composition that evokes some of Abdullah Ibrahim's ballads.

The group includes trombonist Alan Ferber, organist Jared Gold and drummer Mark Ferber, and opens with the leader's bluesy saxophone and there is strong interplay here between Pratt and trombonist Alan Ferber.

"Brooklyn Jazz Underground, Volume 4" is a marvelous introduction to these independent and inspired musicians. BJU also has a series of podcasts where the musicians discuss their music at length from influences to their present objectives.

This can be downloaded from their website, [www.brooklynjazz.org](http://www.brooklynjazz.org). Also, listening to this sampler has led to the purchase of several albums by these performers. More information on the artists and the recordings can be found on the BJU website and many of these artists have recordings available on cdbaby. *Ron Weinstock*

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## CHRIS CAIN

### So Many Miles

BLUE ROCK'IT RECORDS

Chris Cain has been playing his blues with a jazzy twist on the West Coast for quite some time. Having recorded for the Ford Brothers' Blue Rock'It label as well as Blind Pig, since 1987 he has built up quite a body of excellent recordings that is matched by his lively performances. A reference point for Chris' sound might be B.B. King (who his dad first took him to see with he was three), particularly the King matched by the soulful jazzy grooves provided by the Crusaders (think of B.B.'s rendition of "*Never Make a Move Too Soon*"). His latest album on Blue Rock'It, "**So Many Miles**" is another strong recording.

He is provided excellent support here by the Robben Ford Band with Robben playing rhythm guitar on many tracks and on one instrumental, "*East Foothill Fingerprints*," Larry Carlton joins him for a soulful jazzy-blues guitar jam. Outside of the instrumental, the disc is a showcase for Cain's songwriting and shows the way he has with words while displaying his heartfelt vocals and hot guitar as he tells his stories quite strongly.

The title track is a tale of driving from Syracuse, stopping in Lincoln, staying at a funky hotel room, flying down the highway, and "so many miles, so many places, so many wide open spaces." "*Tomorrow's Gonna Be A Better Day*," finds Chris evoking Albert King in his opening guitar lines as Ford drives the groove with his rhythm playing as Cain sings that "we have both wasted, all the petty games we have choose to play, I know we had some good times ... but tomorrow is going to be a better day," with a strong solo from Cain before he vocally returns and asks to bury the past and clear the way for the better day.

He brings us some intriguing urban vignettes such as "*Late Night Jungle Dreams*," a powerful topical lyric about a Vietnam Veteran who is a demolition expert but never adjusted to returning home, and then takes us down to this joint and the folks hanging there in "*Down at Dino's*," that opens with Ford's backing wah-wah guitar setting the atmosphere. On "*Interplanetary Jam*," he introduces us to a character who is preparing for alien invasion in his basement while "*The Decline of the Golden Boy*" deals with a former superstar college athlete and big man on campus who never adjusted to

life after college. Throughout, Cain interlaces these stories with strong vocals and guitar with excellent backing from the Ford Band, with horns added on a few tracks. Throughout, Cain's ability as a guitarist is displayed as his driving solos are concisely delivered, interesting driving solos, swinging with unexpected twists. Chris Cain's sound is soulfully delivered blues with an urbane jazzy spicing and "**So Many Miles**" showcases this exceptionally.

Ron Weinstock



## NORMA WINSTONE

### Stories Yet To Tell

ECM

The celebrated vocalists's solitary lyrical themes prevail on her second release with pianist Glauco Venier and bass clarinetist/soprano saxophonist Klaus Gesing. Gracing the music are Winstone's often poignant lyric sets addressing the state of being alone from a romantic perspective, "Just Sometimes", to the mystical, "Goddess" and the just plain lonely, "The Credits". Each is treated to Winstone's elegant, deceptively effortless sounding delivery.

As a unit the trio is splendid in its sparing nature with reedman Gesing playing an ideal second voice to Winstone. With musical roots from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to Wayne Shorter, "Stories Yet To Tell" is a quietly engaging set.

Duane Verh

## KEITH LITTLE

### Take It Off And Get Loose With It

BLUE SKUNK

Keith Little, called Cincinnati's "King of the Blues," is a multi-talented personality as a musician, singer, songwriter, documentary producer and more. The British publication, "Juke Blues," recently did a nice write-up on him and he has a new CD on Blue Skunk "Take It Off And Get Loose With It" that displays his soulful blues vocals and songs. With a background in gospel and soul as well as blues, this new recording (which is at least his fourth) shows why he was regarded highly enough for a British publication to devote a feature to him.

I am not familiar with most of the musicians backing Little on this with the exception of Rick Nye who plays the keyboards on a number of tracks (Nye is best known for the annual boogie woogie parties he throws).



Other prominent members of the backing musicians is guitarist Marcos Sastre, Cheryl Renee Little (his wife) on keyboards and Gary Winters (credited on horns and arrangements, although the horns sound like a synthesized keyboards on the opening "Stand My Ground." Keith Little is heard on bass guitar on several tracks while playing lead and rhythm on a few songs.

The opening track, "Stand My Ground," is an uptempo burner with Sastre blasting things out while Little sings about he won't let things bother him as he has to stand his ground.

There is a soulful warmth in his gritty baritone that is even better displayed on "Copper Tops," with Nye's strong piano setting the tone before he sings about having a die-hard love affair as delivers an amusing lyric. His vocals might be likened to Brook Benton but with a bit more grit.

The title track, "Get Loose With It," is a playful number as Little tells his lady to take it off and get loose with it, followed by the slow blues "Wheelin' and Dealin'," where Little talks about being a being with a brand new attitude, and either she loves him with a feeling or he is wheelin' and dealin' out the door with Sastre playing some particularly nice guitar on this while Little's relaxed, natural delivery of his song helps it resonate with the listener.

His soulfulness also is displayed on another strong slow blues, "Show Some Sign," again with strong fretwork from Sastre.

"It's All About you" is a funky dance number where his wife adds a guest vocal. "Going Down Slow" is not the St. Louis Jimmy classic, but more akin to the Freddie King "Going Down," as he is "going down, way way down too far to go." Little, waiting for his woman to come home, knows his woman has her "New Shoes" on and he has pain in his heart as he breaks into a falsetto as he tells his baby it's too late now with a nice understated accompaniment.

The disc closes with the only song Little did not pen, Tony Joe White's "Rainy Night in Georgia," on which Little sounds pretty close to Brook Benton on the hit recording with some smooth saxophone from Marcus Grison and some sound effects in the background.

Marcos Sastre does rock out a bit at times and a live horn section would have been stronger than the synthesized horns heard on several tracks, but Keith Little really has a way with a song and brings a warm, gritty sensualness to the music here that should appeal to fans of blues and soul.

This can be obtained from Blue Skunk at [www.blueskunkmusic.com](http://www.blueskunkmusic.com) from which this can be purchased. Keith Little's website is <http://www.summitartists.com/little/home1.htm>.

*Ron Weinstock*



## ISABEL ROSE

### Swingin' From the Hip

THE JUBILEE RECORDING COMPANY

Actress, writer and vocalist, Isabel Rose has just issued her first album, "Swingin' From the Hip" (The Jubilee Recording Company). An unusual selection of songs mixed with strong big band arrangements and fine production make "Swingin' From the Hip" an intriguing recording that crosses the jazz-cabaret-pop boundaries. The overall sound is bright and punchy with imaginative orchestrations and piano from Jeffrey Klitz who takes songs that may be familiar from some contexts into what sounds like totally new compositions.

Rose has a nice delivery for a pop-cabaret singer, which comes off best on the peppy rendition of Irving Berlin "A Lovely Day," or the coquettish treatment of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "I Enjoy Being a Girl." "Temptation" is a lively song whose origins I can't place, but she brings plenty of sassiness. However, listening to reworking of "Aquarius" from the musical "Hair" some may find her vocal style incongruous with the lyric. The old Joan Jett classic "Hit Me With Your Best Shot" is rendered in an intimate manner such as Julie London might have done with her vocal accompanied by walking bass and percussion with percussive riffs from the horn section building to a crescendo by the band as she sings "fire away." The intimate setting of the guitar accompaniment also suits her vocal on "Haven't We Met."

These ears do not find Ms. Rose a persuasive on "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me," which many will remember from Mel Carter's mid-sixties hit. It's not a bad performance, but one that does not resonate as strongly to these ears. Anybody who covers "I Only Want To Be With you" is inevitably going to be compared with Dusty Springfield's classic hit recording and she wisely doesn't try to match Springfield's power as a singer and the subdued backing with nice harmonica from William Galison in the accompaniment makes her softer delivery of the song effective.

Lerner and Loewe's "On the Street Where You Live" is a jaunty, big band swinger with an amiable vocal. The swinging "Thirteen Men" was originally recorded by Ann Margaret with surreal lyrics about dreaming about after the H-Bomb, there was only "13 men and me the only gal in town," a rather surreal lyric.

**jazz-blues.com**

While the playing time for the thirteen songs on “Swingin’ From The Hip” is just under 40 minutes, it is a marvelously good sounding album. Jeffrey Klitz’s orchestrations-arrangements are first-rate and Isabel Rose comes across as a very good singer in the pop-cabaret vein. For more information on this, including how to purchase or download, you can visit [http://isabelrose.com/Isabel\\_Rose.html](http://isabelrose.com/Isabel_Rose.html). **Ron Weinstock**



**ROB BLAINE**  
**Rob Blaine’s Big Otis Blues**  
**SWISSISSIPPI**

Forged in the same sort of fire as is the power blues-rock of Popa Chubby and Tinsley Ellis, Chicago-based guitarist Blaine’s spin on the sound includes side trips into very soulful regions. And Blaine’s trump card is a voice that can deliver either way.

Muscling his way through the rocker “Affection and Pain” makes for an excellent setup for his most respectable take on the Freddie King favorite, the Don Nix-penned “Same Old Blues.”

Blaine stands toe-to-toe, chops-wise with any guitar-slinger one might think of and here has delivered one of the more exciting blues releases of the year.

**Duane Verh**



**ANAT FORT TRIO**  
**And If**  
**ECM**

Wrapped as they are in the trappings of contemporary chamber jazz, most every track on “And If” strongly suggests Israeli pianist Fort’s craft is firmly grounded in the ballad. While the themes evolve in a free-form manner evoking the 60’s trios of Paul Bley- one of Fort’s NYC

mentors, her graceful touch continually betrays the romanticism of a true balladeer. Evidence of this abounds on tracks including “Clouds Moving”, “En If” and “Lanesboro”. Fort is a rising star in the jazz world and “And If” will only further establish the fact.

**Duane Verh**



**LEGENDARY SHACK SHAKERS**  
**Agri-dustrial**  
**COLDL / THIRTY TIGERS**

The Legendary Shack Shakers rip through this 16 track set with the urgency of a man on the gallows with a lot still left to say as the floor falls away.

While things lighten up a bit on the banjo fueled *Sugar Baby* and *Two Tickets to Hell* as well as on the aptly named *Dump Road Yodel* and the jug band/ vaudeville evoking *Hoboes are my Heroes*, for the most part these tracks rock hard with clanging hammers, chains, tongs and anvils providing extra percussive effects and chilling lyrics about big name politicians and “Mal Wart”, *Dixie Iron Fist*, nighttime murders, *Greasy Creek*, laws as sinister as the feared night riders, *Night-ride*, losing the righteous battle, *The Lost Cause* and the graphic violence of *The Hills of Hell* where whores are crucified and the family dog carries around your severed hand.

Even when the lyrics aren’t chilling, the music and vocals are: *Hog-Eyed Man* and *Sin Eater* move at break neck speed with vocalist J.D White sounding as if he’s getting choked by the noose while trying to get his message out to the masses. Avoid while caffeinated.

**Mark Smith**

**FATS WALLER**  
**Fats Waller On The Air: 1938 Broadcasts**  
**TAI PING RECORDS**

Just a brief note on a new release of primarily broadcast recordings made by Thomas ‘Fats’ Waller for the National Broadcasting Company in 1938 at a time when the major radio broadcasters had a policy of only allowing live broadcasts and not pre-recorded material. The result are the three very different programs from 1938 made available on “Fats Waller On The Air: 1938 Broadcasts” (Tai Ping Records). By the time waller made these recordings, he had already recorded over 200 78’s with his *Rhythm* and was a household name.

The first show represented was one of several 15 minute broadcasts Fats did with His *Rhythm of Herman Autry* on trumpet, Gene Sedric on clarinet and tenor



sax, Al Casey on guitar, Cedric Wallace on bass, and Slick Jones on drums. After a short reading of his theme "Ain't Misbehavin'," they kick into gear for "The Joint is Jumpin'" followed by "Inside (This Heart of Mine)," which the vocalist Catherine Russell recently revived as the title track of her most recent album. His introduction to "E Flat Blues," is amusing and followed by a concise "Honeysuckle Rose." The second show was a "Broadcast to America," from London where Fats was touring at the time. He is heard on both piano and organ and in the company of vocalist Adelaide Hall who sang on several numbers on which Waller plays pipe organ including "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" and "That Old Feeling." Fats himself delivers a crisp rendition of "Marie" as well as displays his finger-busting stride piano on "Handful of Keys."

The final broadcast reproduced here is from a long engagement from the New York City's Yacht Club, again with the Rhythm and includes several previously unissued performances include dazzling performance one of his showcase piano instrumentals "African Ripples," as well as take a romp through "I Got Rhythm," with the Rhythm following long at a breakneck tempo, and a hot "Some These Days," which Herman Autry kicks off before Waller takes a rollicking solo. The CD is filled out by previously unissued vinyl test pressings and the closing "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child," with Waller playing a Hammond Organ that he recorded for a V-Disc in September 1943 shortly before he passed away in December 1943.

There is some marvelous music that sounds alive over seventy years later. Waller's personality comes

across not simply from the liveliness of his music, but from the vocals and interjections he added. The sound is quite good with little if any defects from the source material being audible. This should be available from better jazz mail order vendors. **Ron Weinstock**



**CHARMAINE CLAMOR**  
**Something Good**  
**FREEHAM RECORDS**

Vocalist Charmaine Clamor describes herself as "I'm a Filipino-American. It's true; I'm a jazz singer. I do this musical blending called jazzipino, and it comes straight from my heart. But it's also true that I'm a citizen of Earth, and I'm a world-blues-funk-soul-pop vocalist who won't be, can't be, categorized. I'm me, and this is my music." She certainly has come along way from entertaining passengers -- whether they liked it or not! -- in the back of buses traveling to Manila. In the interim, she has garnered more than a few rave reviews.

Her new CD, "Something Good" (Freeham Records)

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Photo © Robyn Churchill



mixes jazz, R&B, Filipino and other elements. She displays smokey, sensuous style and at times more of a romantic charm, but throughout enchants with her timing, phrasing and tone. It's a delightful mix of songs and settings to frame her voice.

The opening "Every Single Moment" has a languid delivery of her reflections of past moments, kisses, plans and now she is so much wiser, set against an intricate accompaniment of strings and percussion followed by her understated, delightful updating of Jon Hendrick's lyrics for Horace Silver's "Doodlin'", with swinging piano from Eli Brueggemann.

The title track is the Rodgers-Hammerstein standard taken at a slow drag tempo that allows Clamor to lend it a bluesy flavor with effective use of stop-times in the performance. Synth'ed horns and real ones are part of the backing in the buoyant celebration of Stevie Wonder's music, "Feelin' Stevie," with Clamor joyfully singing a lyric that incorporates a number of Wonder's song-titles as she sings he is the "Master Blaster of the harmonica, Charlie Parker on a prayerful mission..." After that ebullient performance the mood shifts a Filipino adaptation of the traditional negro spiritual on, "Motherless Ili Ili," with Dominic Thiroux's arco bass adding to the performance's mood.

The spirited Brazilian styled "Flow" celebrates life and nature, from a simple drink of water, and a simple drink of life. A children's chorus is added on the vocal

chorus here. "Maalaala Mo Kaya" is sung in her native tongue to the bouncy Latin rhythm she asks "Do you remember, your promise to me, that your love, will never end," backed by the marvelous piano trio that is the core of the accompaniments here." Clamor turns in a sultry, sensuous blues vocal on "Sweet Spot," with Brueggemann adding grease on the organ.

Tempo changes on the cha cha cha, "The Farther You Go," with punchy and responsive horns added, while "Believe in Love" is an uplifting ballad as her voice soars as she delivers this wonderful lyric.

I cannot overstate how consistently fine the backing she receives is as well. They add embellishments around her vocals, but never dominate a performance, rather providing a supple setting for her singing. The mix of material and musical backdrops combined with Clamor's sensuous and evocative vocals makes "Something Good" a terrific recording. Her website is <http://www.charmaineclamor.com/> and the CD can be purchased there.

**Ron Weinstock**

## KENNY NEAL

### Hooked On Your Love

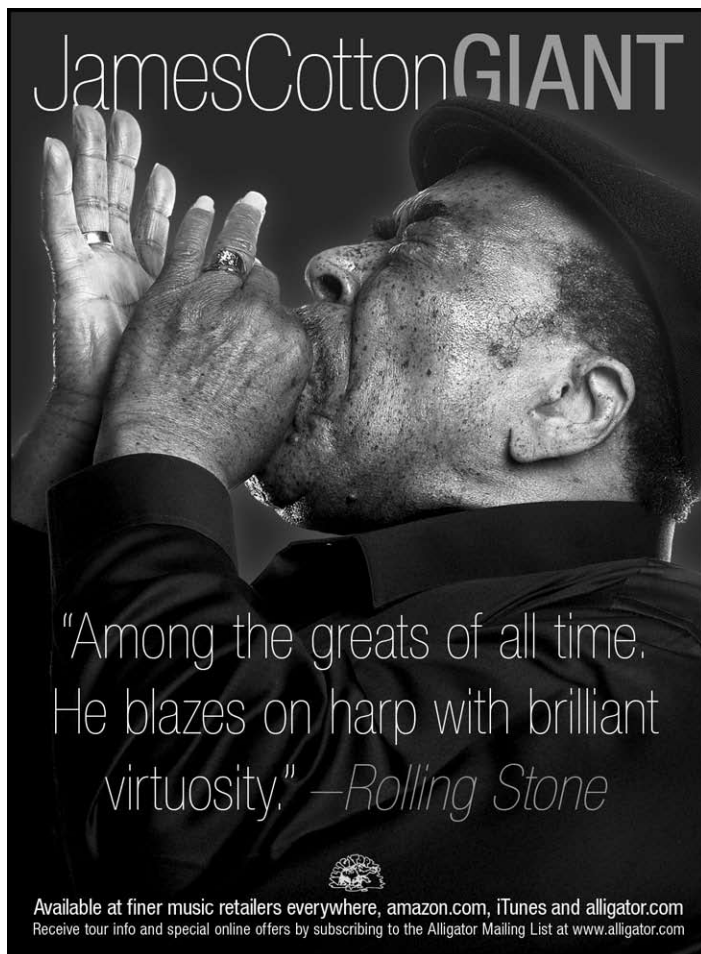
BLIND PIG

With his health issues apparently (and thankfully) behind him, Kenny Neal has a new Blind Pig release, "Hooked On Your Love," that is certain to please his existing fans and garner him some new ones. The twelve performances find him with his brothers and friends like Vasti Jackson and Lucky Peterson as Kenny's immediately recognizable vocals and guitar bring warmth and good times to the listener. Easy swinging grooves are mixed with his own laconic approach that goes down like a smooth scotch.

Neal's restrained approach works well with both the opening title cut that celebrates of his love, and the philosophical "Bitter With the Sweet," where he sings about life is not always champagne and rose, have to take the bitter with the sweet. "Down in the Swamp" reminds me of some of Tony Joe White's numbers as Kenny sings about being on the bayou where the alligators play and plays some nice harmonica (oddly uncredited in the personnel listing.) For some reason, Kenny is credited with composing t

he old OV Wright classic "Blind, Crippled & Crazy," and obviously Kenny can't match Wright's gospel rooted soul shouting, but he does deliver a nicely paced performance with effective use here, as elsewhere on this, of backing vocals. Also, the solo here is a fine example of how marvelous paced Kenny is as a player. Just like his vocals, he never rushes the notes. It's followed by another cover, this time of Little Milton's hit "If Walls Could Talk," an ironic lyric that Kenny ably handles.

"Things Gotta Change" is a soulful ballad with a message about a baby not having shoes on her feet, got to pray for a helping hand, and the need love one another but the backing may be a bit too smooth. The backing provided on William Bell's "New Lease on



James Cotton **GIANT**

"Among the greats of all time. He blazes on harp with brilliant virtuosity." —*Rolling Stone*

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Life” is more emphatic which suits Kenny’s vocal here. Kenny’s rendition of “Ain’t Nothing You Can Do” isn’t far removed from Bobby Bland’s original recording and Kenny can’t emulate Bland’s leaps and cries, but he conveys a suitable legacy. “Old Friends” is a nice swamp-pop number with lazy harp and a country-ish feel, while horns and a second-line groove provide “Voodoo Mama” with a livelier flavor as Kenny plays some nice slide (I presume on lap steel guitar).

The CD closes on a nice shuffle “You Don’t Love Me,” where Kenny plays guitar and harmonica as he tells his baby to get on her merry way. It’s a fine way to conclude this very solid collection of performances that touches a variety of musical bases while always showcasing Kenny Neal’s distinctive style of blues.

*Ron Weinstock*

**TONY GREY**  
**Unknown Angels**  
**OBLIQSOUND**

Electric bassist-plus Grey favors the trance-y regions of fusion. Droning atmospherics and chant-like vocal refrains are key components of *Unknown Angels*. Atop and underneath these are Grey’s graceful bass lines, transmitted at times at lightning speed.

The one-time sideman to Herbie Hancock and John McLaughlin, however, is quite conversant on the high-energy side as well, evidenced here on the leadoff track, “Awake And Dreaming” and on “Out Of Something”. That latter track also features some smokin’ piano work from Romain Collin. Drummer Deantoni Parks provides the fire underneath on these. A nice set.

*Duane Verh*



**JAMES COTTON**  
**Giant**  
**ALLIGATOR**

James Cotton’s career as a musician extends some 66 years and while he no longer handles the vocals, he still wails on the harmonica. His latest CD is “Giant” on Alligator and features his band of the past several years: Slam Allen on guitar and vocals; Tom Holland on guitar; Noel Neal on bass and Kenny Neal, Jr., on drums in addition to Mr. Superharp himself. It’s refreshing that for this latest Cotton recording they featured Cotton with his band and eschewed the

superstar guests. Slam Allen certainly has developed into a solid singer with plenty of personality, and Tom Holland has become one of the most highly regarded traditionally-oriented guitarists around today, and little need be added about Noel Neal and Kenny Neal, Jr. This is a great band as the many who have seen them will readily testify.

There are a few originals here in addition to interpretations of classic blues of which “How Blue Can You Get?,” “Since I Met You Baby” and “That’s All Right” are the best known to most. I know the opening “Buried Alive in the Blues” by Nick Gravenites has been recorded a lot, but it is relatively new to these ears and it receives rollicking shuffle treatment here with plenty of Cotton’s harp. “Heard You’re Getting Married” is a slow blues penned by Allen and Cotton with more crying harp. A pair of Muddy Waters tunes follows, with the slow rendition of “Sad Sad Day” standing out with terrific slide guitar from Tom Holland who evokes Waters’ classic style. Another Allen-Cotton original, “Change,” follows with a churning rhythm and a rocking solo from Allen.

Allen does a pretty solid job singing “How Blue You Can Get.” The song is handled pretty straight and Noel Neal takes a bass solo with Cotton’s harp adding commentary to the bass solo. A hot instrumental, “In the Quickness,” has a short guitar break from Allen and is followed by the Ivory Joe Hunter ballad “Since I Met You Baby,” which again serves to showcase Cotton’s harp with a serviceable vocal from Allen. Holland plays some lovely guitar behind the vocal on this in addition to Cotton’s strong playing responding to Allen’s vocal. The band rocks on Muddy Waters’ “Going Down Main Street,” which includes some strong guitar before Cotton quotes his classic instrumental “The Creeper,” as he takes the song to its end. Allen follows with a first-rate vocal on “That’s All Right,” that also sports first-rate harp. “Blues For Koko,” a moody instrumental by Cotton, is dedicated to the late Koko Taylor, and it concludes this disc on a high note. Mention should be accorded to Tom Holland’s accompaniment of Cotton’s dazzling, virtuosic harp on this.

Bruce Iglauer notes that Cotton has cut nearly 30 albums in his career. That does not include the many recordings he played on as a sideman. “Giant” simply is a strong addition to Cotton’s rich musical legacy and is also valuable to document the terrific music that he has been playing with his working band.

*Ron Weinstock*

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**RYUICHI SAKAMOTO**  
**Playing The Piano**  
 ECM

Jazz listeners, even those not acquainted with Sakamoto's formidable resume, should find much to savor while traversing the solo piano disc that leads off this double set.

The well-traveled composer/keyboardist, who has left his distinctive mark on the pop, techno and, most often, the film score scenes, draws here from his diverse and dazzling repertoire.

The masterful touch and harmonic sophistication heard on these tracks is like that found on the best of "pure" jazz solo readings. Standouts include themes from the films "Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence" and

"The Last Emperor" and the Ravel tribute "Bolerish".

Disc 2 is titled "Out of Noise," and "Hibari," the multi-tracked piano piece that opens the set, begins a transit to realms of minimalism, ambient, space music and several cross-breedings of these. Sakamoto employs sources from electronics to medieval ensembles, consciously challenging the borders at which "music" becomes pure "sound".

Uninitiated ears shouldn't be scared away as none of the twelve pieces are excessively long. And those that stay within range will encounter a varied and compelling sonic sequence. Regardless of genre, "Playing the Piano" and "Out of Noise" should rate as one of the year's most engaging releases. *Duane Verh*

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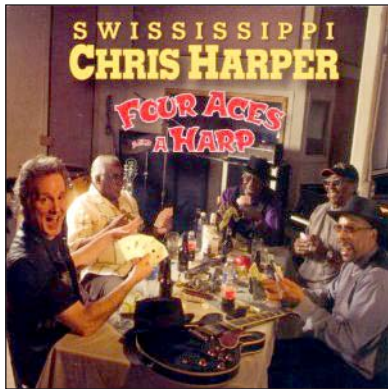
The soul revival in full swing these days has thrown a well-deserved spotlight on the classic approach of Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings and the energetic tribute nature of Eli "Paperboy" Reed. And if a fresh, original sound steeped in classic soul values is next up for notice, this Chicago outfit fits the bill nicely.

With Stefanie Berez's decidedly non-stock soul voice, more predictably cast as an almost coquettish jazz presence, as its centerpiece, the octet's homage to the classic sounds never imprisons them. The end



product, track after track, is a cliché-free sound that pulls the best of that past into a soul music for present times.

*Duane Verh*



**CHRIS HARPER**  
**Four Aces & A Harp**  
**SWISSISSIPPI**

Swiss native Chris Harper left his business in his homeland to become immersed in traditional blues styles, and in conjunction with Dave Katzman, a Chicago music scene veteran, founded Swississippi; a label devoted primarily to record traditional blues artists who aren't being recorded.

'Swississippi Chris Harper himself is among the featured performers on one of the label's initial releases on "Four Aces & A Harp," which has him with blues veterans Jimmy Burns, John Primer, Robert Stroger and Willie 'Big Eyes' Smith, with Katzman, Little Frank Krakowski, and Kenny 'Beedy Eyes' Smith appearing on various tracks in support.

Half of this is recorded is with acoustic backing and half with electric backing with vocals being shared by Harper, Burns, Primer and Big Eyes Smith with one from Tail Dragger.

This is an amiable collection of performances, although of mostly familiar material from the opening electric moments of "Hand Me Down My Walking Cane," as Jimmy Burns emphatically delivers the song many know as "Look on Yonder's Wall," with nice slide guitar on Primer's easy rendition of Rice Miller's "Fattening Frogs For Snakes." Harper showcases some adept harp playing, whether in a Little Walter vein as on behind Willie Smith's rendition of "Sloppy Style," to the more intimate playing style Rice Miller often utilized on the closing number.

Playing acoustically provides a different character to "I Smell Trouble," that Burns sings so well. Harper sings in an affable manner with a jazzy inflection on his original "Blues is My Life," with some nice piano backing from Marty Sammon before a fine harp solo displaying a nice tone and musical imagination. Primer takes the able vocal on a shuffle rendition of Lightnin' Hopkins' "Mojo Hand," with Peaches Staten adding rhythm on a washboard. Willie Smith revisits his "Born in Arkansas," musically set to the "44 Blues" melody, pairing his country harp with Harper's more modernistic playing.

More of Harper's playing, with some choice piano support from Arriyo, is featured on the lovely treatment of Duke Ellington's "Don't Get Around Much Anymore." The rendition of the Muddy Waters recording "Forty Days and Forty Nights," with Burns handling the vocal, benefits from the acoustic setting, almost a back porch feel, while Tail Dragger does his Wolf impersonation on "Evil is Going On." Primer does a fine revival of Muddy's "Long Distance Call," although Harper's accent is evident on his vocal on "Worried Life Blues," credited here to John Estes, which still is an appealing and solid performance.

Overall, this is a collection of some solid performances. Given the derivative quality of most of the material, this recording necessarily stands in the shadows of the originals, but still there is a genial quality that makes this a very entertaining album.

*Ron Weinstock*

**SMOKIN' JOE KUBEK**  
**AND B'NOIS KING**  
**Have Blues Will Travel**  
**ALLIGATOR**

Back in 1996 I wrote "Dallas, Texan Smokin' Joe Kubek's icy demeanor on stage masks the incendiary flavor of his guitar, while B'Nois King provides a contrasting affable stage presence, and his solid rhythm guitar and jazzier guitar leads are combined with some fine singing, somewhat suggestive of a cool Otis Rush." I have seen them a number of times since and their music continues to display this contrast of styles that also is the foundation for the distinctiveness of their music.

This mixing of different approaches may also explain their appeal. Kubek brings his sizzling, trebly, twangy guitar while King soulfully delivers the songs against a solid rhythm section that can rock steady and still swing. Additionally, the pair always brings fine songs with melodic and lyrical hooks to each recording with interesting lyrics that mix humor, irony and a perceptive view of life and human relationships.

Kubek and King have a recent Alligator CD, "Have Blues Will Travel," that continues in this vein. The title track opens this disc and illustrates their songwriting craft as King tells his story about having the time of his life with his girlfriend and then discovers his wife is at the club's door, and then after losing his job the next day, he decides its time to travel. Similarly, on "Get You Out Of My Blood" he still can't get his women out of his mind with a catchy accompaniment that uses a neat repeated guitar riff.

A hyper-charged Lightnin' Hopkins riff opens "RU4 Real?" before Kubek takes a short searing solo against a lazy, if emphatic, groove, before King tells about this woman with Botox in her jaw, collagen in her lips and silicon in her chest, which has him wondering if this woman is for real. Whining slide guitar sets the tone for "Payday in America," as King, who hates his job, can't wait to cut loose and get some drinking done.

Kubek has plenty of space to showcase his slide playing here.

Other hot grooves include “My Space Or Your?,” with amusing lyrics employing computer terminology as a double entendre. King asks his lady, “can I text you baby, I want to do something digital to you,” and wants to show her his hard drive so they can download all night long. King takes the jazzier 1st guitar solo here followed by Kubek with his heavier tone. Next up King offers a bit of advice that if one goes to bed after a fight, one better “Sleep With One Eye Open.” In addition to King’s soulful vocals here, they both offer some tough guitar.

The mix of terrific material and strong performances make “Have Blues Will Travel” another first-rate release by Kubek and King that is easily recommended.

*Ron Weinstock*

## books



### **INNERVIEWS: MUSIC WITHOUT BORDERS**

by Anil Prasad

Foreword by Victor Wooten

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On the cover of the fascinating new book, “Innerviews: Music Without Borders,” it says Extraordinary Conversations with Extraordinary Musicians. Anil Prasad has been editing *Innerviews*, which he calls the web’s longest-running music magazine, since 1994 and is also a contributor to *Guitar Player* and *Bass Player* publications. *Innerviews* offers interviews with musicians in a wide variety of genres and styles of music, including rock, jazz, fusion, hip-hop, world music, pop, and folk. The interviews are intended to get away from typical celebrity oriented interviews and to “enable artists to speak about topics that matter to them.”

Prasad in his introduction to the interviews collected here states “*Innerviews*’ focus on artists with expansive creative mindsets are clearly speaking to an underserved demographic in the world of music

journalism: the thinking listeners for whom music isn’t just aural wallpaper or a lifestyle component, but rather a living, breathing, essential part of everyday existence. ...”

Rather than focus on meaningless trivia, soulless sales data, or simply promoting their latest recording or tour, Prasad’s aim is to get the “musicians to delve deep into their souls to discuss topics that really matter to them.” And he has done this since 1994 with a number of interviews that are on the web site, [www.innerviews.org](http://www.innerviews.org). The book “*Innerviews*” brings together 24 interviews of Jon Anderson, Björk, Bill Bruford, Martin Carthy, Stanley Clarke, Chuck D, Ani DiFranco, Béla Fleck, Michael Hedges, Jonas Hellborg, Zakir Hussain, Leo Kottke, Bill Laswell, John McLaughlin, Noa, David Sylvian, Tangerine Dream, David Torn, Ralph Towner, McCoy Tyner, Eberhard Weber, Chris Whitley, Victor Wooten, and Joe Zawinul. I do not believe these interviews are on the website, although there may be earlier interviews by some of these individuals up there.

Each interview is preceded by Prasad’s concise summary of their musical biographies. Then he starts asking about some of the issues the artist has in the creative process. His first question of Jon Anderson (best known for his work in Yes) is “Provide some insight into your creative process.” From Anderson’s answer, Prasad inquires into how Anderson channels his philosophical and spiritual perspectives into the music he writes. A further inquiry is into the group dynamics of Yes that made them so remarkable between 1971 and 1974. Similarly after discussing Bjork’s career, including an all-vocal album, he asks her “How did knowing you were going to attempt an all-vocal album affect how you wrote material for it.” Or, to Bill Bruford “Describe your approach to collaborating with Ralph Towner and Eddie Gomez during the making of ‘If Summer Had Its Ghosts.’” Later he asks Bruford “What are some of your key bandleading philosophies?”

I cited the above queries to give a sense of the concerns that can be found in all of these interviews, which include the creative process, how one collaborates with other musicians, how the nature of a project affects how material is composed. This is not to mean that other matters are ignored, such as McCoy Tyner reflecting on the deification of John Coltrane or elevation of artists by the public beyond the realm of humanity. The musicians themselves are eloquent spokesmen for themselves, as Tyner in responding to the question of deification states “And athletes. Yeah, we have a tendency to do that. Sometimes we’re very destructive too. We take a person and build him up and then we sometimes bring him down. To say, ‘Well, okay, yeah. If you want me to be a god, fine. I accept that’ can be a little risky.”

Then there is Stanley Clarke who in his interview discusses turning down Miles Davis. Noting that after Chick Corea’s “Light as a Feather” he got calls from tons of bands including what was left of the Doors. “Anyway, Miles used to come see Return to Forever at

## RIP Solomon Burke

the Village Vanguard. In those days, it was still done the way they did in the '50s. They would just come to the gig and say 'Man, I want you to play in my band.' I'll never forget it. Miles came to the Vanguard in this weird, red leather suit. It almost looked pre-Michael Jackson. Miles looked like a spaceman, coming there and he said in his Miles voice 'You don't want to play with Chick. Fuck Chick. You don't need to play with him. Come play with me.' But I was very loyal and the movement we were trying to create.

"I looked at Miles and I looked at Chick and the bigger picture. I felt I could do more with Chick than Miles, although it would have been nice for the resume to play with Miles and experience that. So instead, I'd hang out with Miles and go see him a lot because we used to live near one another."

There are any number of insights about music and life. I like this one from Bill Bruford's interview, "Fans often have too much grinding of axes as they get older. They get grumpy about what an artist has done or has not done in terms of living up to their expectations. Once you establish yourself—particularly in North America— as being something or somebody, it can be difficult to move on. For instance, it would be very hard for a rock star like Mick Jagger to turn into John Coltrane, even if he wanted to. He will always be Mick Jagger, and I've had a lot of that. But I think there is a large number of people who don't know much about us that come in off the street to get an evening of what I think is top flight music. They're not interested in the fact the drummer once had lunch with Phil Collins."

Like many of you, I was not familiar with many of the musicians included here. I learned quite a bit about a number of performers and certainly am going to check out some of the referenced recordings in a few chapters from these 'new to me' musicians, and the insights on these musicians was as valuable. That is an indication of the value this book has.

"Innerviews: Music Without Borders" is a collection of conversations with significant and important musicians that will stimulate the reader. It merits the interest of serious lovers of contemporary music whose love crosses genres.

*Ron Weinstock*

Word was just received that the great Solomon Burke has passed, dying in Amsterdam at the age of 70. Burke, known as the King of Rock'n'Soul was scheduled to perform in the Dutch City. The Philadelphia born Burke was a major soul artist of the sixties and seventies after having made his debut recordings as a gospel artist while very young. When he signed to Atlantic in 1960 he began a series of pioneering recordings such as "Down in the Valley," "Everybody Need Somebody", "Tonight's the Night," and "Cry to Me." The legendary Atlantic producer Jerry Wexler once referred to Burke as "the best soul singer of all time." He may never have achieved the popularity of Marvin Gaye or James Brown but he truly was a great singer and many of his songs have become staples of modern music.

In an interview with this writer, he was proud that "Down in the Valley" was one of the earliest soul renditions of country music. At the interview as he regaled me of his days as a child gospel singer, selling box lunches and the great days sharing the stages with so many other folks who were his peers, and also musical giants. He had a presence (charisma) about him that one felt when talking with him.

He also was a positive person and when discussing others like the great Big Maybelle (whose song "Candy" he recorded for the early 1990s Black Top album "Soul of the Blues"), he didn't discuss her problems but recalled her as a great performer. He recalled for me a performance at Chicago's Regal Theatre, as she somehow made it down the steps to the stage with folks wondering if she would. But once she was on stage, it was like nothing was wrong as she belted out her songs. Then she somehow made it back upstairs to the dressing room.

In live performance, he did more than simply introduce songs and sing them. One of the recordings that this writer would recommend was "Soul Alive" on Rounder where his preaching background was most evident in his medley of his recordings for which he would weave a lesson in living for us. One that stands out in my mind was when he preached about "The Woman of Today," and how men have to learn new ways to love and cherish them.

In the eighties and nineties, Rounder Records and Black Top Records issued superb recordings by Burke, that were followed by recordings produced by Joe Henry which presented Burke in different contexts and singing different material, and all of these introduced him to new audiences while reintroducing him to older audiences.

I only saw him perform once, at the 2009 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, and he still had the voice as he sat on his crown and mesmerized the Congo Square stage audience. It was one of that year's JazzFest highpoints.

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