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O'pening Notes

Happy New Year! Let's take a breath, forget about the news for a minute and plan how to thrive in 2025! One thing for sure is: there's a lot of great jazz on the horizon.

Our Winter issue finished 2024 with a bang! There are 103 solid reviews, some new strong Holiday picks, and solid performances from several new artists including young pianist Sean Mason in the Top Ten Scores this quarter.

There are a wide variety of instruments in this issue including headliners on banjo (Luis Gomez), koro (Momi Maiga), harmonica (Enrico Granafei), flute (Andres Belmonte), and violin (Jason Kao Hwang & Jumbo Ross).

We will share more live reviews in 2025, mostly on the web site! In a world dominated by digitization, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and streaming services, we risk losing

O's Place Jazz Magazine

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---> Sound advice at a nice price!

www.OsPlaceJazz.com

O'pening Notes cont.

the intimate connection that live jazz performances can provide. There's magic that happens in a dimly lit, small venue, where musicians and audiences connect spiritually. And most of these leave your hearing intact without ear protection!

As we move forward let's remember the power of shared energy in a live show! We owe it to ourselves and the artists to keep that spirit alive.

Enjoy the music!

O

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THE TOP TEN* SCORES

1. **JACQUI DANKWORTH** - Windmills
1. **NATALIE JACOB** - Sooner Or Later
3. **TOM HARRELL** - Alternate Summer
4. **EUGENIE JONES** - Eugenie
4. **ERIC PERSON** - Rhythm Edge
6. **FRANCO AMBROSETTI** - Sweet Caress
6. **RAHSAAN BARBER** - Six Words
6. **DELFEAYO MARSALIS** - Crescent City Jewels
9. **BILL BANFIELD** - Take Time To Listen
9. **CATHERINE RUSSELL & SEAN MASON** - My Ideal
9. **DONALD VEGA** - Freedom Weaver

* This quarter we list the Top 11 vs. the usual Top 10 because there are 3 reviews tied in the nine position with scores of 83!

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

O's primary listening is done with a Sony XA777ES SACD player, Ayre C5-xe^{MP} CD player, Jeff Rowland Consonance preamp, two Jeff Rowland Model 1 amplifiers (balanced mono mode), Classe CA-200 amplifier, Mirage M1 speakers and B&W 800D speakers wired with Cardas Hex 5C speaker wire, Transparent Audio interconnects, vpi HW 40 (40th Anniv) turntable with Gimble Tonearm and E.S.P. Essence Reference Power Distribution System.

O's Rating Scale (X)

0

65

80

95

Pass

Contemplate

Buy

Strong Buy

Unbiased Sound Advice *from* O's Place Jazz

Top Traditional Picks

O's Notes

| ARTIST Title Label Perf/Sound | |
|---|--|
| POSI-TONE SWINGTET T^S <u>In Jazz We Trust</u> <i>Posi-Tone</i> 81 | Jazz recording label Posi-Tone celebrates its 30th Anniversary with <u>In Jazz We Trust</u> , featuring seven of their artists playing ten songs. They start with a rousing performance by tenor saxophonist Diego Rivera on “Invocation” followed by “Free Time” with rich trombone work by Michael Dease, and they never let up! Alex Sipiagin (t), Patrick Cornelius (a-sax), Art Hirahara (p), Boris Kozlov (b), and Rudy Royston (d) are world class musicians composing and playing great music to make this a worthy commemoration! “Below The Line”, “Stepped Out”, and “Simmer” are also notable. |
| ALEXIS COLE <u>Jazz Republic</u> T^b <i>Tiger Turn</i> 77 | Alexis has a beautiful voice, projected in front of The Taipei Jazz Orchestra for <u>Jazz Republic</u> . The music is pleasant in a session that filled with beautiful solos from many talented musicians. Cole stands out in “Bye Bye Blackbird”, scatting on “Corcovado”, and soaring on “Begin the Beguine”. Featured saxophonist Brandon Fields shines on “Common Ground”, and the band stands strong, complimenting Cole on “Uptown Girl” and “Here’s That Rainy Day”. |
| MUSIC SOUP <u>Upbeat Mood</u> T^K <i>Chicken Coup</i> 77 | Music Soup is a Greek jazz trio with organist Evgenia Karlafti, guitarist Nestor Dimopoulos and drummer Vangelis Kotsabasis. They’ve been together as a trio for a decade. The music for <u>Upbeat Mood</u> is all original and it speaks in a jovial tone over eight selections. “Fun Island” and “Around the World” both feature guest pianist Kim Purling. We also liked the title track. |
| ROBERTO OCCHIPINTI 77 <u>Remnants</u> T^N <i>Modica</i> | Remnants is a warm set of jazz, including originals by Canadian bassist, arranger and producer Roberto Occhipinti. He performs in several configurations from trio to nonet to big band. We liked the peaceful vibe on “This Is America”, the soothing “Augusto”, “A Flower Is I Lonesome Thing”, and our favorite, “Tuareg”. |
| RIGHTEOUS ROOSTER <u>Fowl Play</u> T^K <i>Shifting</i> <i>Paradigm</i> 74 | Righteous Rooster is a Chicago-based organ trio featuring Henry Dickhoff (B3), Kenny Reichert (g), and Luke Sagadin (d). Fowl Play is their debut, a funky, jazz groove containing six original tunes. We enjoyed “James Beam”, “The Fridge”, and “Aravind” with a crisp guitar intro. This is a head-bobber that suggests the trio has staying power! |

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O's Place Features

BRIAN HO

Photo: Viscount International



77
Cellar Jazz
Cool
2024

Bridges

Fans of the B3 are in for a treat under the hands and feet of Brian Ho on Bridges. He employs guitarist Paul Bollenback and drummer Byron “Wookie” Landham, regulars behind the late Joey DeFrancesco! They play four of Ho’s compositions along with jazz classics and some his favorite R&B tunes. Of note are an up tempo take on “Yearning For Your Love”, the relaxed “Bonnie”, the racy “Into Something”, “Just In Time” and “Silver’s Serenade” featuring Bollenback and Wookie.

Gunhild Carling

2024 Swing
Carling 74

Jazz Is My Lifestyle

Swedish multi-instrumentalist, vocalist Gunhild Carling performs in front of her 13-horn big band and The Prague Strings Chamber Orchestra. Gunhild started as a drummer but sparkles on Jazz Is My Lifestyle with her trombone, trumpet, voice, and leadership. Special guests Scotty Barnhart (t) and Chloe Feoranzo (cl) are among the many artists adding pizzazz to this energetic set. “Mack The Knife” and “Monday Through Sunday” are prime examples of the entertaining, old school big band with brass and vocals.

JACK WOOD

Movie Magic

82
Jazz Hang
Ballads
2024

Jack Wood teams up with Australian vocalist Nichaud Fitzgibbon on Movie Magic: Great Songs From The Movies. The supporting cast is almost endless with numerous guest musicians and The Salt Lake Jazz Orchestra. They start with “Make Someone Happy” and continue bringing joy over sixteen classics. There are five solo efforts by each of the headliners, satisfying their individual fan bases. But we enjoyed the true magic in the six duets. We don’t typically go to the movies for the music but if the billing included Jack and Nichaud, perhaps we would!



Photo: Jack Wood

O's Place Features

75

Modern
Cellar Jazz
2024

History of the Vibraphone

WARREN WOLF

Warren Wolf is one of several talented vibraphonists on today's jazz scene following the path of legends Roy Ayers, Lionel Hampton, Bobby Hutcherson, Cal Tjader, and many others. Wolf provides a brief History of the Vibraphone in the liner notes. He aligns himself with a formidable team for this effort: Alex Brown (p), Vicente Archer (b), Carroll "Cy" Dashiell III (d), and Tim Green (a-sax, s-sax). The program includes compositions from the legends along with "I See You Looking At Me" by Wolf. Of note are "Spring High", "Vibrations", and "Sad Eyes".

Photo: Warren Wolf

Patricia Brennan

74 Latin 2024
Pyroclastic

Breaking Stretch

Port of Veracruz native, Patricia Brennan plays marimba, vibes and electronics on Breaking Stretch, her latest release. She leads a quartet with Mauricio Herrera (perc), Kim Cass (b) and Marcus Gilmore (d). The horn section is Jon Irabagon (a-sax, s-sax), Mark Shim (t-sax), and (t, electronics). This is edgy, Latin fusion, full of syncopated, rhythms and energetic percussion. "Five Suns", "Manufacturers Trust Company Building", "Palo De Oros" are among the best of nine originals.

75

Swing
Microscopi
2024

LLUIS GOMEZ

Dotze Temps

Spanish banjo player Lluís Gomez leads a quartet with French violinist Raphaël Mailliet-violin (6 vocals), Czech guitarist, violinist Ondra Kozák, vocals and violin (10) and Spanish bassist, vocalist Maribel Rivero. This is a combination of flamenco and gypsy jazz complete with banjo and fiddle on "T'ho Vaughn Dir!". Carol Duran adds violí and vocals on "Tardes de Julio" and sing on two other selections. We liked "Walk On Boy", "Zrädny Banjo" (Polka On A Banjo), and "Dora" featuring special guest Nat Torkington (5-string banjo). While this is not what we typically review, we enjoyed this session and encourage you to sample it.

Photo: Lluís Gomez

Big Band Picks

O's Notes

| ARTIST Title Label Rating | |
|---|--|
| FRANCO AMBROSETTI ^{T^N} <u>Sweet Caress</u> <i>Enja</i> 84 | Veteran trumpeter Franco Ambrosetti has decades of experience and maintains a soothing tone at 82, preferring his flugelhorn on Sweetleaf Caress. He collaborates with arranger/conductor, pianist Alan Broadbent performing eight selections including four originals that are true to the title. The band is a large ensemble centered around John Scofield (g), Scott Colley (b), Peter Erskine (d), and a 29-piece orchestra including strings. Sara Caswell is the featured violinist on the title track. The music is relaxing and sets the mood as such, notably on “Nightfall”, “Ode to George Floyd”, and “Go Down Moses”. We also enjoyed the upbeat “Keep It Movin” and “Blues For The Cage”. |
| DANILO PEREZ <u>Lumen</u> ^{T^N} <i>Prophone</i> 77 | Latin American pianist Danilo Perez matches his talent with the Swedish Bohuslän Big Band on his latest encounter. The music is heavily syncopated with lots of percussion and vibrant piano from the masterful Perez. There are also edgy ballads like “Suite For The Americas” featuring soprano saxophonist Joakim Rolandsson. We also enjoyed the adventurous “Expeditions” and “Galactic Panama”. Collectively Perez surfaces many emotions on <u>Lumen</u> with the help of the large ensemble. |
| JON GORDON ^{T^N} <u>7th Ave. South</u> <i>ArtistShare</i> 75 | Alto & soprano saxophonist, Professor Jon Gordon teaches at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg and surrounds himself with faculty and alumni on <u>7th Avenue South</u> , his latest recording. Pianist Will Bonness is blazing on the title track. Vocals come from a choir with Erin Propp featured on “Here, There (and Everywhere)”. Trumpeter Jonathan Challoner breathes clear tone into “Visit” while Jocelyn Gould shines on “Ponder This”. We also enjoyed “Paradox”, arranged by trombonist Alan Ferber. Walter Smith III (t-sax), and John Ellis (b-cl) are both key components of the rich harmonies that make this session a winner. |
| HYESEON HONG <u>Things Will Pass</u> ^{T^N} <i>Pacific Coast</i> 74 | Korean pianist, composer, band director and co-producer Hyeseon Hong presents a dynamic large ensemble reflecting on the seemingly impossible challenges that many of us have faced over the last several years. Personal strife, the pandemic, seas of misinformation, and personal loss at times create a sense of hopelessness but Hong suggests that Things Will Pass. The rays of hope come through in her music, a peaceful, yet dynamic set that is well-recorded. “Run Away” featuring vocalist Aubrey Johnson, Alejandro Aviles on alto sax, and guitarist Matt Panayides, and “Night Climbing” with guest Rich Perry (t-sax) are highlights. |

Jazz thrives, our legacy artform!

Traditional Selections

| ARTIST | Title | Label | X | T |
|--------------------|---|----------------------|----|----------------|
| NORM AMADIO | <u>After Hours 1966</u> | <i>Panda Digital</i> | 73 | T ^S |
| TOM JOHNSON | <u>Time Takes Odd Turns</u> | <i>Tom Tunes</i> | 72 | T ^N |
| ANN & MARK BURNELL | <u>This Could Be The Start of Something Big</u> | <i>Burnell Music</i> | 66 | T ^b |

Jackson Potter

74 Bebop 2024

Small Things

Young guitarist, Jackson Potter *Shifting Paradigm* forms a new quintet with Alex Ridout (t, flugelhorn), Troy Roberts (t-sax), Hamish Smith (b), and Marcello Cardillo (d). This is his second take, consisting of a mix of warm, relaxing ballads, mid-tempo beats, and burners. The title track features guests Sophia Formella (vocal shadowing) and Jaleel Shaw (a-sax) Jackson cooks on “Everything I Love” displaying his prowess. We enjoyed the swinging “Trams”, and entire band in “Background Noise”.

Tatiana Eva-Marie

Djangology

Swiss-American vocalist, actress, bandleader, producer Tatiana Eva-Maria is a true talent. She graces us with delightful session of gypsy music, specifically music composed by Django Reinhardt & Stéphane Grappelli with her own lyrics. Tatiana sings passionately in English, French, Romanian, and Rromanes (Gypsy). Violinist Daniel Garlitsky shines on “Nuages”, and guitarist Duved Dunayevsky steps up on “Dinette” & “Insensiblement”. We enjoyed the crisp vocal arrangement of “Caravan”, and the funky take of “Lady Be Good”.



O's Rating System

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

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

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

O's Bass Features

Photo: Arild Andersen



79
ECM
Pop+Jazz
2024

ARILD ANDERSEN Landloper

Veteran Norwegian jazz bassist Arild Andersen goes solo on Landloper playing his bass with real-time creation of electronic loops. The music is rather spacey on the opener “Peace Universal” but comes into focus on Andersen’s originals, notably “Dreamhorse” and the title track. Arild integrates traditional Norwegian music, jazz standards and classics in a session that goes well beyond the boundaries of a singular musician.



76
ECM
Fusion
2024

MATT BOOTH Sun Prints

Bassist, composer Matt Booth serves up an hour of original material on Sun Prints. He forms a band with a talented team: Oscar Rossignoli (p), Steve Lands (t), Peter Varnado (d), and Sam Taylor (sax), and allows each of them to express themselves. “Optimal Chunks” and “Ice Bear” have funky undertones courtesy of Booth and Varnado. That contrasts with ballads like “Otero Canyon” featuring Taylor. Also notable are the Latin-infused “Time to Spare”, and the passionate “You Came Along”. It’s good to hear a dose of new music in a sea of covers that dominates many releases!

Luke Sellick

Canadian bassist Luke Sellick is now based in New York where he leads a band of his contemporaries on Discovery, his latest release. He composed 7 new, original songs that are mostly pop-fusion for the recording. They open with the title track followed by “Fun”, “Friends To The End”, and then impart a sense of adventure on “Scottish Folk Song”. We also liked the wind down effect of “Memory Wheel” and the groovin’ finale, “Movin’ On”.

Discovery

78
Pop+Jazz
Outside In
2024



Photo: Luke Sellick

O's Latin Features

Ittetsu Nasuda

Photo: Yusuke Yamanouchi

Tailwind

Japanese pianist, composer Ittetsu Nasuda was educated at Berklee and then established himself on the Latin jazz scene in New York City. Tailwind is his recording debut, centered on Afro-Cuban jazz. Dan Neville (vibraphone), Gabriel Vivas (b), Juan Chiavassa (d), and Takafumi Nikaido (perc) join him. We liked the calypso beats on “Arroz Con Mi Son” and “Centre Habana”, the fine bass work by Vivas on “September Breeze”, “Ishigaki Blues”, and the mild Japanese influence on “Greyscale” and “Sparkling Reflection”. Nasuda is one to watch!

81
Ittetsu
Latin
2024



Joanie Pallatto & April Alosio

Latin 2024
Southport 75

Sing!

Vocalists Joanie Pallatto and April Aloisio celebrate their long-term friendship with a wonderful collection of duets backed by wonderful musicians. The girls scat in a spirited exchange with trumpeter Frank Youngwerth on “It Ain’t Necessarily So”, then with Dedé Sampaio (berimbau) on “Brazilian Rats”. Flamenco guitarist Tomas de Utrera joins them on “Little Sparrow”. We also enjoyed “Simone” with vocals and piano from Bob Dorough, “Samba Do Solo”, and “Antonio’s Song” with strings arranged by Cliff Colnot. April & Joanie Sing! is a fun-loving session including a taste of Holiday cheer with “Have A Merry Christmas”.

Juan Alamo

Marimbissimo

Marimba soloist, composer, percussionist, and educator Juan Alamo produced Marimbissimo, an eight-movement suite that is a musical explosion of Latin American rhythms, and jazz! The music has tribal influences on songs like “Tupanachiskama” & “Little Angel”, and swings on “One Of A Kind” & “Encrucijada”. We also enjoyed the groove on “Elegia” and the calypso-laced “Ita”.

78
Latin
Summit
2024

Juan Alamo



O's Trombone Features

Uptown On Mardi Gras Day

Delfeayo Marsalis

77
New Orleans
Troubadour
2024

Trombonist and composer Delfeayo Marsalis leads the Uptown Jazz Orchestra on a trip to New Orleans for Mardi Gras Day. The vocals come from Andrew Baham, Tonya Boyd-Cannon and Glen-David Andrews. The rhythm section is anchored by two of the best drummers in the business, Herlin Riley and Marvin “Smitty” Smith. Special guest Branford Marsalis (t-sax) solos on three selections notably “Big Chief”. We also enjoyed “So New Orleans” featuring Dr. Brice Miller (vocals, t), “New Suit”, and “Carnival Time”.



Photo: Delfeayo Marsalis

John Fedchock

Justifiably J.J.

80
Summit
Modern
2024

John salutes the legendary, trombonist J. J. Johnson’s centennial birthday, with a live performance at The Jazz Kitchen in Indianapolis on March 3, 2024. The band is a quartet with Steve Allee (p), Jeremy Allen (b), Sean Dobbins (d) and leader, trombonist John Fedchock. They play eight of Johnson’s compositions and capture some of his essence. It’s Justifiably J.J. highlighted by “Lullaby of Jazzland”, “Ten 85”, “Short Cake”, “Lament”, and “Kenya”.



Photo: Stephanie McKendrick

O's Piano Features

Zachary Bartholomew

Balancing Act

Miami-based pianist, composer, Professor Zachary Bartholomew launches his debut recording, Balancing Act with his quintet. Marty Quinn (b), Rodolfo Zuniga (d), David Fernandez (sax) and Benny Benack III (t) round out the band. Zachary aims to balance the cohesion of the band with explosive, passionate solos. "Time Apart", "Sunny Days", "Bring The Noise", and both versions of "Crazy Socks" grabbed our attention. Strong musicians and fresh original music lead to a satisfying set that is easy to embrace.

82
Fusion
Bemuse
2024



Photo: Zachary Bartholomew

Bruno Hubert

Fire Waltz

Canadian pianist Bruno Hubert leads a trio with James Meger (b) and Joe Poole (d). They shine on fresh arrangements of jazz classics. "Con Alma" featuring Meger and Poole, "Golden Earrings" and "Edda", a fast tempo waltz, are the best of nine swinging selections.

Bebop 2024
Cellar Live 75

Bevan Manson & Tierney Sutton

Talking To Trees

78
Ballads
Tiger Turn
2024

Bevan Manson is a composer, pianist, and arranger equally at home on jazz and classical forms.

His latest release, Talking to Trees is big band jazz. Vocals come from featured artist, Tierney Sutton, bathed in strings and a large ensemble. They open with an orchestral rendition of "All Blues", moving to fresh arrangements of timeless classics like "Willow Weep For Me" and "Banyan Tree/Take The A-Train". We also enjoyed "Redwood" and "Mr. PC" in a rather symphonic session.



Photo: Ticket Web

O's Piano Features

Photo: ECM



Tord Gustavsen

Seeing



Norwegian jazz pianist, composer Tord Gustavsen leads a trio with Steinar Raknes (b) and Jarle Vespestad (d) for his new release *Seeing*. Gustavsen's music is introspective, dark, and reflective, preferring a concentrated, minimalist approach to blazing gymnastics. The results are magnetic music that is meaningful and easily absorbed. "Extended Circle", "Beneath Your Wisdom", and "Seattle Song" are highlights.

Antonio Adolfo

2024 AAM
Latin 75

Love Cole Porter

Brazilian keyboardist, Antonio Adolfo pays homage to legendary composer, songwriter Cole Porter, a man who was a major influence in Rio de Janeiro and throughout Brazil. *Love Cole Porter* is Adolfo's interpretations of Porter's music with a dash of samba. "I Concentrate On You", "I've Got You Under My Skin", "Love For Sale", and "Night and Day" are some of Porter's best penning, and Adolfo presents fresh arrangements that make for a rich session.

Ben Sidran

77
Bonsai Music
Ballads
2024

We The People

Keyboardist, composer, vocalist Ben Sidran teams up with his son Leo Sidran (d, vocals), Billy Peterson (b), and Paul Peterson (g, vocals) to give us his take on life in general. They speak their mind on all sorts of issues, politics and blues. We enjoyed the blues on "Old Wine New Bottle", "Brand New Music", and the hip hop vibe on "Are We There Yet?" We also enjoyed the funky beat on "Too Many People".



Photo: Ben Sidran

O's Piano Features

All In Good Time

Monika Herzig

77
Zoho
Modern
2024

Keyboardist, composer Monika Herzig assembles Sheroes, an all-female band for All In Good Time. Rosa Avila (d), Jamie Baum (fl), Reut Regev (tb), Gina Schwarz (b), Leni Stern (g), and Camille Thurman (t-sax, vocals) are the band members. They perform ten selections, originals by Herzig and Schwarz along with a cover of “Run The World”. Our favorites are “Right Now”, “PC”, and the title track.



John Chin

Journey of Han

Photo: John Chin

Korean, American pianist, composer John Chin explores his identity and diversity through his music over 25 years living in New York City. The Journey of Han reflects who he is, the challenges he faces and the confidence that allows him to flourish. Chin leads a trio with Jeong Lin Yang (b) and Jongkuk Kim (d). There is diversity in his musical background, but his signature is undeniably jazz. We liked the funky, syncopated “ATL”, “Midnight Sun”, and the peaceful rendition of “Never Let Me Go”. We also enjoyed Kim’s solo drum effort on “Loom” before the energetic “The Next Thing”, and the finale, “Stardust” featuring Chin alone.

76
Chinsy
Modern
2024



O's Sax Reviews

Eric Alexander & Mike LeDonne

Saxophonist Eric Alexander and pianist Mike LeDonne perform Together as a duo with many solos dispersed in the nine compositions. Half of the selections are originals like “Mutation” & “Lost But Not Forgotten”, along with several freshly arranged classics like “Round Midnight”. Both musicians are proven, poised and confident, with a high degree of trust and respect for each other. Their prowess comes out but never in a boastful manner. Just sit back and take it in!

Together

79
Classic
Cellar Jazz
2024

Photo: Eric Alexander

Photo: Mike LeDonne



Vincent Ingala

Escape With Me

Smooth jazz tenor saxophonist, multi-instrumentalist Vincent Ingala serves up an enticing set on Escape With Me. He continues to play all instruments for the recording and composed all but two songs! Pablo Batista adds percussion on “That Familiar Feeling”, and Lindsey Webster sings over the club beats of “Free”. We also enjoyed “Let’s Get To It”, “Pump It Up”, “Lene’s Groove”, and “Midnight Confession”.

79
Smooth
Shanachie
2024



Photo: Vincent Ingala

O's Sax Features

Photo: Eric Person



Eric Person

Composer, arranger, *Rhythm Edge* bandleader Eric Person plays

86
Modern
Distinction
2024

sax on his latest release *Rhythm Edge*. His band includes pianist Jerod Kashkin, Ingrid Jensen (t), Robin Eubanks (tb), and Daniel Sadownick (congas, perc). They swing on “The Multitudes” and continue pushing Person’s upbeat repertoire before relaxing with “Beauty”, accelerating on “Reach” then picking up the pace on the title track. We also enjoyed “It’s Time Again”, “Pretty Strange Love”, and relaxing on “Sunset”. This is an engaging set with a wealth of good music across many tempos.

Photo: Lucia Sarmiento



Lucia Sarmiento

Escape

2025 Fusion
L. Sarmiento 74

Contemporary saxophonist Lucia Sarmiento hails from Peru bringing a spirited act to her global stage. *Escape* opens with a syncopated, fusion on “Signal Flow” featuring Lucia on sax and flute, with guitarist Ry Dill. That sets the tone for the next ten tracks. “Morningstar Delight”, “Skipping A Beat”, “Rosie”, and “Tapetown” are also notable.

Paul Carlon

Blues For Vita

Saxophonist, composer Paul Carlon leads a quintet with Eddie Allen on trumpet, bassist Harvie S., pianist Helio Alves, and Willie Martinez on drums. They mix jazz tradition with Carlin’s, modern jazz originals with tastes of Latin and R&B flavors. *Blues For Vita* is dedicated to Paul’s wife Levita who is illustrated on the CD cover. “Colored Paper”, “Dee Dot”, “Isabel The Liberator”, and the titled track are some of the best in a strong set.

82
Modern
Paul Carlon
2024



Photo: Paul Carlon

O's Sax Features

Rahsaan Barber

Six Words

There is a lot of great jazz in North Carolina, now coming from Professor Rahsaan Barber at UNC. He teams up with his twin brother Roland Barber (tb), Pharez Whitted (t), Matt Endahl (p), Kevin Beardsley (b), and Joshua Hunt (d) for Six Words. The album is a 9-part suite that is inspiring. Our favorite tracks are “Unity Parts I & II”, “Reach”, “The Long Wait For Justice”, and “Sun Dance”. We also enjoyed “Open Sesame”; a bonus track not listed on the CD jacket!

84
R&B+Jazz
Jazz Music City
2024



Photo: Mosaic

Bennett Wood

Modern 2024
B. Wood 74

Space In Time

Saxophonist, Composer Bennett Wood performs in a quartet with features pianist Andrew Ouellette, bassist Bob DeBoo, and drummer Joseph Winstein-Hibbs for Space In Time. Guest trombonist Alan Ferber joins them on two selections, notably “Fourth Wall”. They open swinging on the upbeat “Catamaran” including a solo by DeBoo, injecting a little Latin spice on “Chile Y Limón, and continue flowing, to end on “For All We Know”.

Ben Kono

Voyages

82
Fusion
Chamber Music
America
2024

Saxophonist Ben Kono surrounds himself with first call talent on Voyages, his third album as a leader. Pete McCann (g), Mike Holoher (keyboards), Jared Schonig (d), and Matt Clohesy (b) are elements of his standard quintet, accentuated with strings from Sara Caswell (violin), Meg Okura (violin), Lois Martin (viola), and Jody Redhage Ferber (cello). The strings add passion and depth to Kono’s original compositions. The music is centered on the voyages of immigrants and depicts the challenges they encountered on their journey, and through generations, most notably on the four-part “Generations Suite”.



Photo: Tracy Yang

O's Drummer Features

John Alvey

Loft Glow

82
Modern
Jazz Music City
2024

Nashville based drummer John Alvey makes his debut paying homage to the late Benny Golson. He assembles a fine band with warm horns from Joel Frahm (t-sax), Roland Barber (tb), and Jovan Quallo (a-sax), anchored by bassist Jacobs Jezioro and pianist Matt Endahl. "Terminal 1" and "Blues For D. P.", dedicated to Ron Carter are prime examples of the fine music on Loft Glow. We also enjoyed "Winslow Nocturne", a ballad composed by Barber, and "Azure".



Photo: John Alvey Music

Antoine Cara

2024 funky jazz 74
Antoine Cara

Status Quo

French Drummer Antoine Cara serves up a funky set of original contemporary jazz on Status Quo. He gets help from guest artists Mike Stern (g) and Randy Brecker (t) on three selections each. Cara uses judicious sampling and bassist Kevin Reveyrand dials in the funk all the way through. We liked "Wrong Turn", "When We Were Young", "Let's Play" featuring Yannick Soccac (t-sax), and "Nevermind" featuring Stern and Yvonnick Prene (harmonica).

Tomohiro Mori

Prana

78
Modern
TMori
2024

Japanese drummer, composer Tomohiro Mori leads a large ensemble for Prana, a collaboration with many musicians, including trumpeter Benny Benack III and Erena Terakubo (a-sax, fl). Benack also sings on "Coast" with a rich string quartet. We also enjoyed the upbeat "Pedalada", and concluding with "Heights" and the lush strings.



Photo: T. Mori

O's Drummer Features

Louis Hayes

Artform Revisited

Veteran drummer Louis Hayes has anchored some of the best jazz ensembles including work with Oscar Peterson, Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins, Woody Shaw, and Horace Silver's quintet in the late 1950s. He swings on Artform Revisited with Abraham Burton (t-sax), Steve Nelson (vibes), David Hazeltine (p), and Dezron Douglas (b). This is the same lineup as on their last release, Exactly Right(79) and they are just as strong. Burton breathes passion into "You're Looking At Me" including a crisp solo by Hazeltine. Douglas stands tall on "Ruby" with nice work by Nelson and Burton as well. Nelson shines on "G" to wrap up a strong encounter.

79
Modern
Savant
2024



Photo: Louis Hayes

Matt Slocum

Lion Dance

2024 Modern
Sunnyside 79

Drummer Matt Slocum leads a trio with tenor saxophonist Walter Smith III and bassist Larry Grenadier for Lion Dance, a set of mostly original music. We liked the title track, the seductive "What Is There To Say?", the cool "This Is All I Ask", and Monk's straight up "We See". The live-to-two-track recording results in a realistic listening experience.



Photo: Matt Slocum

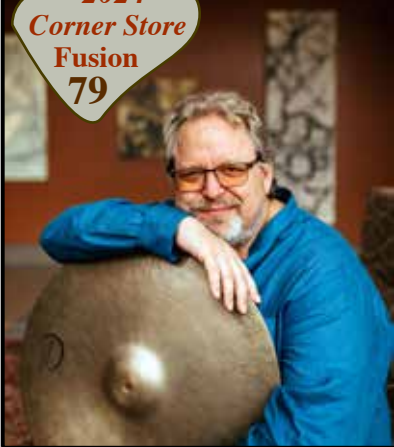
4 Horns & What?

Phil Haynes

2024
Corner Store
Fusion
79

Photo: Amanda Nichols

Drummer, composer and bandleader Phil Haynes is featured as an integral member of 4 Horns & What?, in direct exchange on each song. The Complete American Recordings is an extensive 3-disc set including 1989's 4 Horns & What?, 4 Horn Lore from 1991, and 1995's Live At B.A.M. Haynes, Paul Smoker (t), and Andy Lester (reeds, fl) appear on all three discs. Ellery Eskelin (t-sax) plays on the first two albums with John Tchicai playing tenor on the 1995 session. Clarence 'Herb' Robertson played brass on the last two sessions with Jo Daley playing low brass on the first. Each of the bands is an explosive and spontaneous leading to an engaging set. We liked the horn work, underscored and framed by Haynes on "Blues For Israel" and "A Lil' Iowa Get-Down", as well as many other of the 28 songs!



O's Vocal Features

Windmills

Photo: John Kentish

Jacqui Dankworth



89
Ballads
Perdido
2024

British vocalist Jacqui Dankworth presents her interpretations of many popular classics on Windmills, her latest release. She has strong accompaniment from The BBC Big Band, The Carducci String Quartet, and The Bedazzle Strings. Arranger Charlie Wood (p), Oli Hayhurst (b), and Ralph Salmins (d) are a solid rhythm section. Jacqui shines on “Windmills Of Your Mind”, “Love Dance”, “Baubles, Bangles & Beads”, and “Send In the Clowns”, all classics done with her signature in a delightful performance.

Maria Puga Lareo

75 My Kete
2024 Latin

My Universe

Maria has warm vocal tones that flow nicely over the bossa nova beats from the large ensemble conducted by Nan Schwartz. We liked the orchestrated arrangement of “Make Someone Happy”, and the rich saxophone accompaniment from Bob Sheppard on “We’ll Be Together Again” & “Spring”. There’s a dose of R&B courtesy of bassist Mike Valerio on “At The End Of The Night”, before they relax with a little Brazilian twist on the finale featuring guitarist Leo Amuedo. My Universe is a captivating, soothing session.

Catherine Russell & Sean Mason

Photo: Sandrine Lee



83
Ballads
Dot Time
2024

My Ideal

This is the pairing of the polished, New York, jazz vocalist Catherine Russell with rising, young pianist, Sean Mason from Charlotte, NC. They trace traditions with samples from the Great American Songbook, Broadway, Hollywood, and Tin Pan Alley. This collaboration represents pages in music history presented in true form, notable for the young Mason who exhibits poise end to end with excellent support of Russell. Her depth and warmth are effortless. They take us back, including a church feel on “Ain’t That Love”, moving to blues stories like “Ain’t Got Nobody”, the soulful “South To A Warmer Place”, and a few show tunes. My Ideal is one to listen to repeatedly and we’ll wear out the grooves of our vinyl edition!

O's Vocal Features

Samara Joy Portrait

Samara Joy has the most soulful voice on today's jazz scene. Yes, that's a strong statement but justified! Her voice is deep, rich and full of emotion. She demonstrates her prowess on the operatic "Reincarnation Of A Lovebird", among several others. The band swings in the background including energetic horns and a tight rhythm section. We enjoyed "Peace Of Mind / Dreams Come True", "Autumn Nocturne", and a Latin-infused rendition of "No More Blues". Portrait is a fine set in Samara's growing collection of albums. Stay tuned!



82
Ballads
Verve
2024

Photo: AB + DM

Janis Siegel & Yaron Gershovsky The Colors of My Life

Ballads 2024
75 Club 44

Renowned vocalist Janis Siegel teams up with pianist Yaron Gershovsky for The Colors Of My Life. The list of all-stars that Gershovsky has supported is endless, ranging from Ray Brown to Pharoah Sanders to Toots Thielemans, and Take 6! The headliners play as a duet on "That's My Style", but we also love the full band with drummer Cliff Almond and bassists Boris Kozlov or David Finck providing a rich canvas for Siegel. They add strings on "Being Without You" and the title track. The vocal harmonies on "Playboy's Theme" with background vocals from Aubrey Johnson remind us of Siegel's work with Manhattan Transfer. We also enjoyed Siegel soaring on "Witchcraft".

From Here

Alyssa Allgood

81
Ballads
2024
Next



Photo: Alyssa Allgood

Chicagoan Alyssa Allgood is in prime form on From Here, backed by a world class band including Geoffrey Keezer (p), John Patitucci (b), Kendrick Scott (d), and Greg Ward (sax). "Burn", "Still", "Both Sides Now", "No Good", and "Brave Little Flower" are some of the twelve passionate ballads that make this set sizzle. Allgood sings with the poise of a seasoned professional. This all-original set is impressive and noteworthy.

O's Vocal Features

Natalie Jacob

89
Ballads
N. Jacob
2024

Sooner Or Later



Photo: Natalie Jacob Music

Natalie has a delightful voice that she spills over ten classics. She's up to the task, singing in many configurations. The core rhythm section is Pianist Tamir Hendelman, Carlitos Del Puerto on bass, and drummer Clayton Cameron, shining on tunes like "East Of The Sun". They add Scotty Barnhart (t), on three selections notably "Exactly Like You" and "Sooner Or Later". We also enjoyed her duet with Hendelman on "Smile". Anthony Wilson (g), and Kevin Winard (perc) join the core for three selections, notably "Corcovado" with lyrics in Brazilian Portuguese. You may have heard Jacob singing some of these tunes live in the Los Angeles area. This is an impressive sampling of what she has to offer on her debut.

DeeAnn

Ballads 2024
74 DeeAnn

It's My Time

DeeAnn combines contemporary, electronic rhythms with traditional vocals, giving us a novel attack for jazz ballads that is refreshing and rewarding. She has good tone, range, and a lot of passion. From "Killing Me Softly", to "Sunshine" to "Fine And Mellow", she tapped into a wide array of popular and jazzy tunes that will spark the memories of many in her audience. There's also the blues based "Writing On The Wall", a duet with Mick Hayes that rounds out a contemporary set of ballads.

Veronica Thomas

They Say It's Wonderful

82
Ballads
Nica Carrington
2024

Veronica Thomas is a singer that is new, yet familiar, with a great story and vocal chops to match! She's joined by a fine band including pianist, producer John Proulx. This debut is actually her second release! She released her first album, Times Like These (82) in 2022 under the pseudonym Nica Carrington. She gained her confidence and is in full pursuit of music on They Say It's Wonderful. A few bars into the opener "Almost In Your Arms", and we're locked onto Veronica's slightly smokey, soulful voice. "Get Out Of Town", "Invitation", "Stuck In A Dream" with a nice piano solo from Proulx, and "Dindi" are some of the bests in a set full of show tunes.



Photo: N. Carrington

O's Trumpet Features

Tom Harrell

Venerable trumpeter, composer Tom Harrell has been making great jazz across five decades! He leads a fine band including Luis Perdomo (keyboards), Charles Altura (g), Ugonna Okegwo (b), and Adam Cruz (d), with tenor saxophonists Dayna Stephens and Mark Turner alternating tracks. They open blazing with the upbeat “Miramar” followed by “Peanut”, slowing down a tad on “Alternate Summer”, with a taste of gospel courtesy of Perdomo’s organ work on “UV”, and the funky “Wind”. All are a part of the rich canvas for Alternate Summer.

Alternate Summer



Augie Haas

77 Playtime
2024 Swing

Live at the Speakeasy

Trumpeter and vocalist Augie Haas is swinging along with an octet on Live at The Speakeasy, in New York City. Trombonist Hailey Brinnel adds vocals, notably on “The Sound” and “Candy”. Rick Germanson (p) Dick Sarpola (b) and Gary Kerkezou (d) provide a solid rhythm section to build on. It’s a dynamic recording with crisp brass accents and a lot of energetic passion in tunes like “Fly Me To The Moon” and “Jamo Rocks”.

Bryan Lynch

7X7by7

79

Modern
Hollistic
2024

This album, 7X7by7 is all about 7s, seven pieces performed by seven musicians with each track lasting seven minutes. The leader, composer Bryan Lynch (t) is joined by Craig Handy (t-sax), Luis Perdomo (p), Boris Kozlov (b), Alex Wintz (g), Kyle Swan (d), and Murph Aucamp (perc). The music is modern jazz with a twist of Latin spanning Brian’s 63 years (9 times 7). The multiples of seven are everywhere and it’s sounding like the magic associated with the number! There’s a lot to enjoy, from “In The Riv” to “Finnegan’s Garden”. The stellar musicians contribute strong solos in an exciting, adventurous session, notably on “Greeting on 87th Street”.



Photo: University of Miami News

O's Guitar Features

Bill Banfield

Take Time To Listen

Composer, guitarist Bill Banfield goes solo on Take Tome To Listen. Yes, this is the same Banfield who conducts the Imagine Orchestra, and composes operas and symphonies. He's playing songs you know, timeless pop and jazz classics in an easy-going contemporary jazz style. Guitar lovers will be thrilled as Banfield displays strong prowess making his guitar come alive! There are 72 minutes to enjoy including "Summertime", "Fragile", "You've Got A Friend", "This Time", "Autumn Leaves", and "Her Serenade".



83
R&B+Jazz
Bluemoon
2024

Photo: Bill Banfield

Owen Chen

Eternal

New York-based guitarist, composer release *Eternal* with fellow NYU Sukyung Kim (p), Sunhyun Yoo (a-sax), marries Chen's journey in music from classical violin to guitar, playing jazz-fusion and straight-ahead, New Jazz. He leads unselfishly, allowing his mates to shine as on "Infinity" featuring Yoo, and the nostalgic title track featuring Kim. It's a brief, 4-song, 23-minute encounter that packs a strong punch.

74
Fusion
Owen Chen
2024

Owen Chen celebrates his debut with fellow NYU colleagues, Joshua Roberts (d), and Sean Hannon (b). The music marries Chen's journey in music from classical violin to guitar, playing jazz-fusion and straight-ahead, New Jazz. He leads unselfishly, allowing his mates to shine as on "Infinity" featuring Yoo, and the nostalgic title track featuring Kim. It's a brief, 4-song, 23-minute encounter that packs a strong punch.

Photo: Zacc Harris



78
Shifting Paradigm
Fusion
2024

Zacc Harris

Chasing Shadows

Guitarist Zacc Harris leads a quintet with Brandon Wozniak (sax), Bryan Nichols (p), Chris Bates (b), and Pete James Johnson (d) for his latest release, *Chasing Shadows*. "Fleeting Moments", "Wolds Apart", "Catalyst", and the title track are winners. Harris leads a balanced attack across many tempos including ballads like "Moonrise" showcasing Zacc and Wozniak.

O's Guitar Features

Oz Noy & Andrew Synowiec

Photos: Jazz Guitar Today

Recreational Substance



77
Fusion
House of Syn
2024

Guitarists/composers Oz Noy and Andrew Synowiec unite, wielding a Les Paul and a Stratocaster for Recreational Substance. The duo is accompanied by bassist Hadrian Feraud and drummer Marvin “Smitty” Smith. They play a blend of rock, funk and jazz-fusion. We were fueled by the energy of “I Don’t Know Why”, the funky “Burn That Bridge”, and the rocking “Knuckle Shuffle”. The best of the rest are “The Royal You”, a chiller, and “101 Blues”.

Wolfgang Muthspiel

Austrian guitarist Wolfgang Muthspiel a solo effort, Etudes / Quietudes. He blends the improvisation of jazz on an acoustic guitar. These Etudes are training exercises in many different forms from triplets to vamp. But Muthspiel’s mastery makes them into appreciable music. It also traces his musical journey to jazz-fusion.

74
Fusion
Wolf 2024

Etudes / Quietudes

follows up his trio recordings with his classical training on violin with

Thom Rotella

Side Hustle

Guitarist Thom Rotella leads in organ trio with Bobby Floyd (organ) and Roy McCurdy (d). Percussionist Lenny Castro accentuates half of the dozen selections. Thom states his case on the opener “Who Dat?” followed by a laid-back take of “Love For Sale”. Eric Alexander (t-sax) and Jeremy Pelt (t) play on two selections each, notably “Not So Much” and “Don’t Mess With Mister T” respectively. But this Rotella’s date and he shines in the spotlight mend to end. “Georgia On My Mind” and “Pick Pocket” are other highlights.

75
High Note
Cool 2024



Photo: Thom Rotella Organ Trio

O's Violin Features

Jason Kao Hwang

Soliloquies

77
True
Sound
Fusion
2024

Master violinist, composer Jason Kao Hwang gives us a musical, autobiographical sketch on *Soliloquies*, a solo collection. He's playing a Pizzicato Violin and reflecting on his Chinese American heritage, the sometimes unintelligible language of his parents, their broken English, cultural experiences and the joys and pains of his life. The twelve selections are more orderly than random, and easy to comprehend along with the titles.

Photo: Jason Kao Hwang

Jazz Passion & Satin Latin

Jimbo Ross

74
Swing
Bodacious
2024

Jimbo Ross plays viola and violin leading a quintet with Joe Gaeta (g), Stuart Elster (p), Peter Marshall (b), and Ron Wagner (d). Among Ross's arsenal is a customized 5-string, classic viola, reproduced on a 3-D printer! Melodies are packed with energy on a mix of standards and originals including strong performances by Elster, Gary's, and Ross. "Jingles", "Lolita", and "Know It All" are among the best of thirteen songs on *Jazz Passion & Satin Latin*.

Photo: Jimbo Ross

ARTIST

Title

Label

Rating

Top Contemporary Picks

O's Notes

KING LLAMA C^f

FATA IMPLEXIS'

Ttrain Music 76



Photo: Anne Leighton

King Llama is billed as an experimental, fusion-influenced jam band. Guitarist, composer, bandleader Ryan T. Bailey takes us on a wild ride with help from bassist Anthony Crawford, guitarist Billy Paulsen, and drummer Luis Briones. Their latest release is Feta Implexis (fate intertwined), a collection of heavily syncopated songs, notably on “Lora Ky”, “Hamilton”, “Sir Isaac”, and our favorite “Bus Stop”. It’s electrifying.

THE HAAS

COMPANY

CELESTAIL

LATITUDE

Psychiatric

C^b

75

The Haas Company Vol 2. is centered around a trio with musical director, composer, producer, keyboardist Pete Drungle, featured guitarist Frank Gamble, and drummer Steve Haas. They open rocking hard on “Mekat Rock”, followed by the mellow "Celestial Latitude" with Percy Jones on bass. Synthesizers prevail on “Drawn & Quartered” before Gamble and Samuel Hallkvist (r-guitar) shine on “Ultra Flamingo” & the finale “Liquid Crystal”, both with Kiwanis Brown on bass.



www.OsPlaceJazz.com

O's Place Features

Eugenie Jones

Eugenie

Eugenie is soulful, resonant, and well-articulated, singing over 57 minutes of heartfelt music. She sings in front of world class musicians from Seattle and New York, led by producer Lonnie Plaxico. We liked the fresh arrangements of “Work Song”, “I Love Being Here With You”, “Natural Woman” and “Trouble Man” including violinist Yoojin Park and cellist Jessica Wang. We also enjoyed “Harlem Nocturne” with warm sax shadowing, “Hold Back The Night”, and “Sinnerman”.

86
R&B+Jazz
E. Jones Jazz
2024



Photo: Eugenie Jones

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 |

78
Shanachie
Pop+Jazz
2024

BPM

Seriously

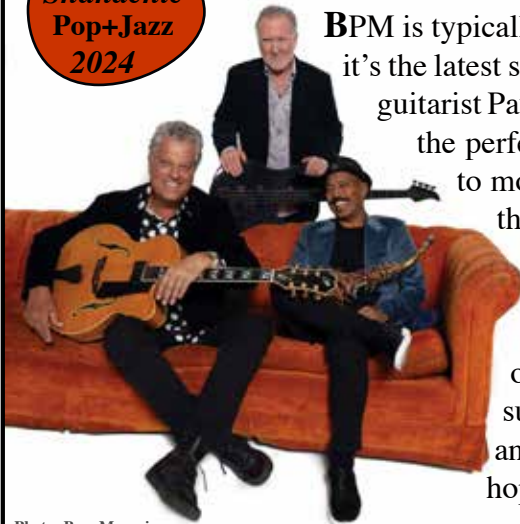


Photo: Bass Magazine

BPM is typically the acronym for Beats Per Minute, but in this case it's the latest smooth jazz combo featuring bassist Brian Bromberg, guitarist Paul Brown, and saxophonist Michael Paulo. They have the perfect blend of jazz and funky R&B to make you want to move, with a laid-back groove. The headliners display their prowess throughout the set with Bromberg shining on the title track, Brown delivering his characteristic liquid melodies on “Gridlock” & “Breakfast In Bed” featuring guest Philippe Saisse (p), and Paulo warming our soul on the title track. The nice thing about these super groups is that we don't get lulled into boredom by an overindulgence of one artist or instrument. Seriously is hopefully the first of many from BPM.

O's Place Features

Photo: Richard Elliot

RICHARD ELLIOT *Straight Up Down*

Veteran smooth jazz saxophonist Richard Elliot leads the charge on *Straight Up Down*, his latest release. He plays in multiple configurations with all-star producers Paul Brown (g, perc), Steven EUGENE GROOve, and Kevin Flournoy and their associated rhythm sections. Elliot is passionate, wailing on “Driftin’” & “Freestyle”, cruising on the title track, and seducing us on the classic, “Tell Me” including Phil Perry and Shannon Pearson singing in the background. This is a polished performance.

78
R&B+Jazz
Shanachie
2024



Andres Belmonte

Andres Belmonte plays music inspired by his trips along the Mediterranean coast, and experimentation in musical art forms, from jazz to classical to hip-hop! Belmonte plays a variety of flutes and adds vocals as well. His band includes Efrén López (oud, buzuq, vocals), Omran Adrah (kanun), Alas Cesarini (b), and David Gadea (perc). We liked the adventure on “Samai Nahawand”, the popping “Albà Xarquia”, the funky “Al Wahid”, and “Suite Yemen” featuring Voro García (t), & Víctor Belmonte (sackbut). This contemporary, mid-eastern music is catchy!

Pop+Jazz 2024
Microscopi 74

Gharbi

Saxophonist, composer T. K. Blue takes us on a journey to Planet Bluu, a utopian world just outside of our galaxy. Everything here is fair and stress-free, as close to heaven as you could imagine. Blue leads a band with Wallace Roney, Jr. (t), Davis Whitfield (p), Dishan Harper (b), and Orion Turre (d). Things come together on the title track and “Chessman’s Delight”, both including guest Steve Turre (tb, shells). We also enjoyed “Turquoise Bluu”, “The Bluu Sea of Our Tomorrows”, and “When It’s Time To Say Goodbye” featuring pianist Dave Kikoski.

75
JaJa
Fusion
2024

T.K. BLUE *Planet Bluu*



Photo: Brad Shepik

O's Place Features

Photo: Neus Solà



74
World Jazz
Microscopi
2024

Nio

Senegalese singer, composer Momi Maiga sings from his soul (Nio), on this debut recording. Vocals are in Mandinka, his native language. Maiga is also a master of the koro, and he gets support from a fine team of musicians including violinist Carlos Montfort, percussionist Aleix Tobias, and cellist Martín Meléndez. In addition to the vocal tracks, there are several inspirational instrumentals like “1001” and “Ocean”.

Kairo two from **Momi Maiga**

76

Microscopi
World Jazz
2024

This is the second release from Senegalese singer, composer Momi Maiga, a blend of world jazz instrumentals and vocals. Maiga marries traditional native music with contemporary rhythms to create his own fresh signature. Aleix Tobias (perc), Carlos Montfort (violin), and Marçal Ayats (cello, vocals) round out the quartet. We liked “Mbolo”, “Yar”, “Salia”, and the title track in a set that is sticky!

Madeline Peyroux

Parisian vocalist Madeline Peyroux

Ballads 2024

Just One 74

Let's Walk

sings romantic adult contemporary music. Her soft tone and smooth delivery makes tough messages easier to swallow. The music is a blend of jazz, folk and pop. Let's Walk was written with multi-instrumentalist Jon Herington. The collaboration allows Peyroux to speak to her audience from her heart. The best selections are the blues based “Showman Dan”, “Take Care”, “Blues For Heaven”, and the title track.

Contemporary Selections

| ARTIST | Title | Label | X | T |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|----------------|
| JAZZ SABBATH | <u>The 1968 Tapes</u> | <i>Blacklake</i> | 73 | C ^P |
| DEKEL | <u>Starlings</u> | <i>Dekel Music</i> | 72 | C ^P |
| RICHARD GUBA | <u>Songs For Stuffed Animals</u> | <i>Goobsjazz</i> | 72 | C ^P |
| LISA HILTON | <u>Lucky All Along</u> | <i>Lisa K. Hilton</i> | 72 | C ^P |
| NICK ADEMA | <u>Urban Chaos</u> | <i>Zennez</i> | 71 | C ^F |
| COLOMA BERTRAN | <u>En Moviment</u> | <i>Microscopi</i> | 71 | C ^F |
| MAURICIO MORALES | <u>Seven Days</u> | <i>Outside In</i> | 71 | C ^F |
| JOHN CHRISTENSEN | <u>Soft Rock</u> | <i>Shifting Paradigm</i> | 69 | C ^P |
| TREVOL | <u>Qui Omple Un Estadi No Es Pas</u> | <i>Microscopi</i> | 66 | C ^F |



Arne Jansen, Anders Jormin & Uwe Steinmetz

The Pilgrimage

**2024 Fusion
Traumton 74**

The Pilgrimage is a solemn, dark, jazz-fusion recording that has warm tones from German saxophonist Uwe Steinmetz and guitarist Arne Jansen. Swedish bassist Anders Jormin is the anchor and the glue in the drummerless trio. “Peace On The Earth”, “New Flower”, and “March” are some of the highlights in a session that captures the essence of each title with passionate performances!

O's Rating Scale (X)

0 65 80 95



O's Place Legends

Photo: Marek Lazarski



80
Fusion
Resonance
2024

Sun Ra

Lights On A Satellite

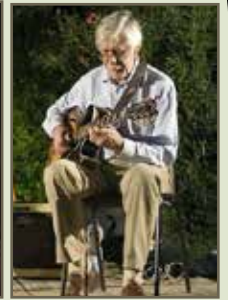
Sun Ra was an experimental, jazz keyboardist who led a large ensemble, his Arkestra, performing edgy, heavily improvised, jazz-fusion. Lights On A Satellite captures a lengthy, live performance at The Famous Ballroom in Baltimore on July 23, 1978. There's a lot here that excited his fan base, tapping into interplanetary energy. The liner notes are extensive and include photos. Sadly, I read them squinting through a magnifying glass. The listening experience is a redeeming factor!

Louis Stewart & Jim Hall

Louis Stewart and Jim Hall perform at The Dublin Concert. It was recorded in Dublin's Maccabi Hall on Boxing Night (26th December) 1982. The previously unreleased tapes were surfaced in 2022, digitized, and released this year on vinyl and CD. This unique pairing features the late jazz virtuosos, one hard bop Irishman and the American, classically trained Hall. They are both polished guitarists who play harmoniously. The program is freshly arranged classics that make for a relaxing set. "Stella By Starlight" is the opener followed by "St. Thomas", and "My Funny Valentine". Hall goes solo on three tracks, notably a masterful take of "All The Things You Are,". This is a great set all around, especially for guitar lovers.

Bebop 2024
Livia 75

The Dublin Concert



Photos: Jim Hall & Louis Stewart (above)

Final Notes Jazz trumpeter **John McNeil** died due to hypertensive cardiovascular disease, on September 27, 2024. He was 76. Saxophonist **Claire Daly** died from head and neck cancer on October 22. She was 66. Violinist **Ben Powell** died from cancer at the age of 38 on October 22. Trumpeter, band-leader, composer, producer **Quincy Jones**, a legend in and outside of jazz, succumbed to pancreatic cancer on November 3, 2024. He was 91. **Lou Donaldson**, a renowned alto saxophonist, died from pneumonia, at 98 on November 9th. Drummer **Roy Haynes** died on November 12. He was 99. No cause of death was given. Pianist **Martial Solal** died at the age of 97 on December 12, 2024. No cause of death was given. The musical contributions of these fine jazz professionals will remain with us forever.

| ARTIST Title <i>Label</i> Rating | <h2 style="text-align: center;"><u>Holiday Picks</u></h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">O's Notes</h3> |
|--|---|
| DONALD VEGA <u>Merry and Bright</u> <i>Imagery</i> TL 83 | <p>Pianist Donald Vega leads a trio with bassist Clovis Nicolas and drummer Pete Van Nostrand on <u>All Is Merry and Bright</u>. There's an element of simplicity that rides in this holiday selection with the rhythm section delivering the goods. Vega starts the session solo on "Once in Royal David's City". The music is as warm as the fireplace embers on "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" and "Greensleeves". We enjoyed all the creative, jazzy, introductory arrangements to the classic tunes.</p> |
| TOWER OF POWER <u>It's Christmas</u> C^R <i>Sheffield</i> 81 | <p>This is a legacy band 56 years of history making R&B-infused jazz! They are still vibrant and currently touring ahead of It's Christmas, their latest release. Lead vocals come from founder, leader Emilio Castillo and Mike Jewel. The crisp horns are lively on "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town", with hints of their past hits. The vinyl is red, and the music is red hot with the Christmas spirit! The album cover even has fonts that are legible for us older cats.</p> |
| ROBERT GLASPER <u>In December</u> C^R <i>Loma Vista</i> 78 | <p>Robert Glasper is a laudable, keyboardist, producer of contemporary jazz laced with tight urban grooves. He collaborates with a wealth of talent on <u>In December</u>, his first release celebrating the Holiday season. Cynthia Erivo is featured on a medley "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen/ Carol Of The Bells". PJ Morton and Sevyn Streeter "Make It Home", Tarriona Tank Ball sings "Memories With Mama", and Alex Isley sings a fresh arrangement of "Joy To The World". We also enjoyed Doobie Powell on "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" and Andra Day singing "December" on this warm, urban take of Christmas!</p> |
| MARGARET SLOVAK & CHRIS MARESH <u>A Star's Light</u> <u>Does Fall</u> C^P <i>Slovak Music</i> 78 | <p>Guitarist Margaret Slovak joins forces with bassist Chris Maresh to record a warm set of Holiday music. Both musicians are Texans with immigrant Czech fathers who were musicians! <u>A Star's Light Does Fall</u> is a peaceful collection of inspiring, instrumental Holiday songs. The music is a perfect backdrop for gazing into the embers with a glass of eggnog to reflect on good times! Our favorites are "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" and "Christmas Time Is Here" among many lesser-known Holiday tunes.</p> |
| VARIOUS ARTISTS <u>Holiday Tracks</u> C^P <i>Concord</i> 78 | <p>Concord has assembled an extensive collection of Christmas music from their vaults. They cut across all genres including jazz, Country and Pop artists like Jewel singing "Winter Wonderland", Andy Williams singing "It's The Most Wonderful Time of The Year", and "Jingle Bells" by Natalie Cole. This is a 3-disc set with sixty-one selections, including something for everyone!</p> |

| ARTIST Title Label | | Rating | Holiday Picks O's Notes |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------|--|
| SCOTT DREIER <u>Christmas</u> <i>Scott Dreier</i> | C^P 71 | | Scott Dreier has built a storied career recording commercials and doing stage work on family-oriented dramas. <u>Christmas</u> is his first Holiday recording with ten fresh classics arranged by producer, pianist Andy Langham with a heavy jazz tilt. Grant Geissman (g, banjo), Lyman Medeiros (b), Kevin Winard (d, perc), Alex Budman (cl, t-sax), and Ron Blake (t) round out the strong band supporting Scott's rich baritone. "Merry Christmas Darling" and "What Are You Doing New Year's Eve?" are among the best selections. |
| MARIA RIVAS <u>Dreaming of</u> <u>Christmas</u> <i>Maria Rivas</i> | T^b 63 | | This is a brief set of three takes on " <u>Dreaming of Christmas</u> " sung in Spanish and Portuguese by vocalist Maria Rivas and in English by Molly Rocklind. |

Jazz thrives, our legacy artform!

Laila Biali

Wintersongs

79
Ballads
Toronto Arts
2024

Photo: Laila Biali

Wintersongs are a set of original, and freshly arranged Holiday music by Canadian singer, pianist Laila Biali. George Kovler (b) and Ben Wittman (d, perc) flesh out the rhythm section with several other talented artists scattered throughout the session. The Venturi String Quartet and a Chamber Orchestra play on four songs each. Wade O. Brown joins Laila singing "Outside". We also enjoyed "Snow", "Rocky Mountain Lullaby" featuring Jane Bunnett (fl), and "Jesus, He Is Born". This is an appreciable Holiday album of fresh, peaceful, relaxing music.



O's Place Features

Enrico Granafei

It's Hard To Say Goodbye

It's been a while since we have last reviewed Italian, harmonica player and guitarist Enrico Granafei. He has compiled compositions made since then on It's Hard To Say Goodbye, including contributions from the late Claudio Roditi (t) and Mike Longo (p), to whom the album is dedicated along with the legendary Toots Thielemans. The music has a cool Latin bent, showcased on "PIA", featuring a rich piano solo by Amina Figarova. Granafei takes the microphone on "Medo De Amar", "Amico" & "Calabrossa", singing in Brazilian Portuguese and soloing on harmonica. We hear the influence of Toots here and throughout this session. Cool bossa nova reigns in unison across many musicians and over an extended period.

79
CAP
Classic
2024



Photo: Enrico Granafei

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