

Bopndicks 10 picks Feb 2008

By Dick Crockett

Mondays 10am & 10 pm, Pacific

www.accesssacramento.org

"The Voice:" 88.7fm

JIMMY GREENE GIFTS AND GIVERS Criss Cross Jazz

Saxophonist Jimmy Greene's new cd is a specially appointed jazz classic. Already?

Listen and dig "Mr McLean," a soulful tribute to one of the main brothers of hard bop, recent Jackie McLean, whose early playing alto under the aegis of Charlie Parker was a Mo Fo! (Do we have to explain.) Slipping, schlepping, slapping, which ever you prefer.

Then to re- harmonized bop in "Greene's Blues," so bright, easy and understanding, as a heavy dose of vitamin D with an anecdote to psychology 101. What a great understated and impressive, organically committed saxophone player is Jimmy Greene, as you will discover if you haven't already in the ballad "Forever," where guitarist Mike Moreno makes a full contribution. These are the dynamics that implore full disclosure. Therefore young Miami saxophonist Marcus Strickland, adds, contributes, forecloses on this jazz happy meal.

Young L.A. pianist Danny Grissett, whose making his NYC/International bones very quickly here with Jimmy Greene and fortunate others, Reuben Rogers, bass and the heavy and groovy Eric Harland touch on drums. "26-2" by Coltrane shows how ambidextrous and versatile this band is with two outstanding saxophonists. Enough said, as you may want to look over the territory and dig these outstanding musicians especially on this tune.

Then "Blue Bossa/Boudreaux starts off a soft bossa between Greene on soprano sax and Strickland on tenor, then gets into other exotic territories and as the story goes many sub plots emerge in this Kenny Dorham piece.

Sonny Stitt's "Eternal Triangle" concludes this set with a hard bop jam session sure to bring out the best in Jimmy Greene and Marcus Strickland, straight and sassy with Grissett's voluptuous leanings on piano with Reuben Rogers and Eric Harland kicking down the door, so to speak.

"Gift And Givers" is a tribute to the new moderns, as Jimmy Greene sets his place at the table of gifted saxophonists with his performance and writing abilities.

PAT METHENY w/CHRISTIAN McBRIDE & ANTONIO SANCHEZ
DAY TRIP Nonesuch Records

This is Metheny Au Naturele, a trio format perfect for your Metheny fix. With the backing of two fine accompanying musicians, Reuben Rogers and Antonio Sanchez, Metheny lets it all out on this new jazz cd with his unique take and style. His articulation is evident in "Snova" as they dance about together in a bacchanal celebratory give and take with sophistication and understanding. It's as joyous as a hip swing of "Calvin's Keys" giving us some Tal Farlow musings to ponder, missive- manic and romantic.

"Is This America? (katrina 2005)" is Pat Metheny displaying his remarkable acoustic and emotive talent simple, original and folksy intent. "When We Were Free" is more assertive and demonstrative with an angular disposition with Sanchez stepping up his energy and focus. "Dreaming Trees" is a spiritual sequence reminiscent of much of Metheny's work, bright, melodic as the warm sun shining through the flowing shade of a Missouri slide, an impressionist painting, yellow splashes on green and soft summer days. There's lots of love here. You just smell the air.

"The Red One" is hard, direct, more bombastic but not too much. When Pat Metheny makes a statement he blends the right ingredients. There's seems to some a synth guitar here and there, adding a signature.

"Day Trip" is a final end to a perfect day. You've left the city life rigors to experience the freedom of the open spaces.

Yes, it's another new addition to the vast Pat Metheny collection. And you'll be tempted because it's too good to pass up, as "Day Trip" regales on radios, CD and MP 3 players around the planet.

A joyful noise.

FRANK KIMBROUGH AIR Palmetto Records

Here's a solo. A painter with a presence for all art is done alone in his loft, far from the pretense of audience, exclusion from the rest, a Chopin temptation, a solitary soulful journey to a place where Frank Kimbrough sings lyrics to his own songs, "Quickening," as "Coming On The Hudson," as Thelonious Monk, as gesture of "Air" by himself and mortal as "Wig Wise" by Ellington. This sort of intimacy we implore the form of the jazz artist, open, expansive and incisive.

With "Air" you're standing looking up at a Monet in the Guggenheim on a holiday, alone. You walk outside and there's no one, no traffic, no workers, no silence, nothing but the free...quiet, the UN is closed until further notice and the

world is happy, cooperative and free to choose, where blasphemy takes a long and difficult holiday.

Down on Park Avenue, where there's no limousines, attendants, helicopters, a sunny Sunday afternoon quiet takes over, a ballet from the Old World, quaint, private and understanding Frank Kimbrough's responsive tribulations "Three Chords." Only on a Dorothy Parker trivial Sunday, could "Three Chords," such an remarkable composition be borne. "Three Spins" revitalizes that lazy relaxed frame, where picnics, family gatherings trace warm afternoons, sky ways to the highways to ultimate acceptance where everyone has time and a place to play cards, gossip and listen to music, the solo piano of Frank Kimbrough fits in, and if you let it...will change your life.

Is that too much a burden? Then all you need is listen, forget the dailies, talk shows and tv gossip, mountainous newspaper ads, too much wary about nothing.

We stop by the Wayfare Inn off the Pennsylvania turnpike, we sit in the lounge having coffee and blithe full of listening to this transformation, this kilning of remarkable solo piano music.

We are blessed.

RON BLAKE SHAYARI Mack Avenue Records

This is the Ron Blake we've been talking about. The post modern Sonny, roots deep within St Johns, the Caribbean, a dancing enchanting Sonny from the new rainbow, a blast past and forever new bombast, as Ron Blake takes everyone aside to his own news gathering, this very intimate portrayal of a new evolving style, intimate, prosaic and he has this thing to get funky, once in awhile.

Don't say this can't be resolved in the first eight seconds of every song, don't say no to whole show, no way. There's an intimacy here that may go unchallenged

This is jazz, you know, multi changes, multi plasmic, orgasmic, inordinate to various stages, plains and phases of the Ron Blake phenomena. New, that it's new and all the now new, that's new.

Isn't this what the post modern is about.

Only now, upon retrospect, it's all now and new, up for your review to nudge you in the right direction.

There's something more...pianist Michael Caine is a motivational aspect of this album. It just could be that without Caine's direction maybe this album may not exist within the context, it does...

These are only apprehensions for we haven't consulted the artists.

We can only go by ear and maybe that's the only case, for we're all up for grabs in the world of this prurient music business, for without we may not exist.

Ditto....

Another breath .

This will not exist for the rest of us

As we look over and study, an anthropologist to a prehistoric worm, the transformation as saxophonist Ron Blake, a Joshua Redman to his conception and with pianist Michael Caine,a progressive move forward.

Percussionist Jack DeJohnette offers his sustenance on a few sets here, "Hanuman,"

"What Is Your Prayer For" features Christian McBride on bass with a beautiful sonorous calling.

"Of Kindred Spirit" highlights another Detroit musician, violinist Regina Carter with Michael Caine, pianist and Ron Blake saxophone, foremost.

Then the classic, "Please Be Kind," a saxophone and piano at closing time, a monastery to an off ramp on the Ohio turnpike.

We may be so quick to claim this is what the music is about.

There are other more perpetuating sequences on this album where Ron Blake climbs aboard with the other great saxophonists of our time.

Watch this man and listen to saxophonist Ron Blake and the cd, SHAYARI, the best of his time, his articulation and amorphous, could just mean the 2008 saxophone of the year. This is not Coltrane, maybe a Sonny Rollins, for Ron Blake goes his own way.

BRAD GOODE NATURE BOY Delmark Records

A former Chicagoan whose chops and technique have forgone any conclusion, as he travels west to teach at Colorado, for students of jazz technique, composition and improvisation, this new cd fills the bill. Brad Goode is one of the most articulate, heady, under appreciated trumpet players whose as well versed in classical music as well, spending time with The Chicago Symphony as evidenced by his "Nightmare Of The Mechanized World."

Goode's version of "Nature Boy" is fierce and progressive as if Coltrane was sitting in the room somewhere with his band blazing away, nothing blasé.

Goode's muted horn is on full display with "Sealed With A Kiss," with Jeff Jenkins, piano on full, besides... There's something about a muted trumpet. Miles played it so breathtakingly well.

Brad Goode's tone is very clear and resonating. Johannes Weidenmueller, bass and Todd Reid, drums add a slap happiness to this funky version.

Goode shows his passionate side in "Tres Palabras," a Spanish love song in which the Latin deck chairs are rearranged out of sight of the camera by adding a contrapuntal frenetic middle voice that simply swings with Jeff Jenkins piano in a 'McCoy Tyner' riff.

The romantic "Celedon" conveys Brad Goode's composure and technique, steely, precise and soulful.

"Just In Time" is another muted light fantastic with Johannes bass skirting around with Reid's bombastic rhythms.

"So Beats My Heart For You" is a strange disjointed rhythmic pose, could be an old Hank Ballard song if that's the case, but that's secondary for this counter version, for it's now been branded a Goode jazz tune.

"It's 4 am" is so young, Chicago and hip, reflective to my sixties in Detroit. All youth, romantic, immortal, forever...

"All Through The Night" is an outright jam reminding one of early Clifford Brown.

Believe me, that trumpet player BRAD GOODE QUARTET and the release, NATURE BOY on Delmark is that good!

HOLLY COLE Koch Records

Holly Cole brings to mind. the old, the new, the young, the old, the rusted well worn that becomes new impressionism and bassist Greg Cohen provides added insight into this very progressive nonet avalanche of new arrangements to popular standards. You not have heard anything quite like it.

Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Waters Of March" is most revealing, so different iconoclast the way it's recorded to move, as they say at point of purchase.

It's so majestic, different from above, that you think of what comes before this.

So you return to the beginning to find what you missed. A different "The House Is Haunted," now makes sense.

The musicians in the band are highly regarded as progressive, avant gard and daring. For them to participate this way is notable and rewarding, causing us to be receptive to off line repetitive, quicks and queer, for there's something different going on here.

Holly Cole and her historic post view of this modern world, music and life's very apparent, not even close to child bearing.

There's a trend to be friendly, very different and romantic. A holy grail of Holly Cole.

Then comes "Larger Than Life" and out comes the grand smoky old ballroom for her voice is very intimate, inviting, accommodating...

The arrangement of "It's Aright With Me" is forceful and as band swings traditional with stride acoustic guitar licks forward.

Then it's the song of the day sung by Holly Cole and a wonderful arrangement, the highlight of this cd, "You're My Thrill," as Holly Cole reaches that haunting dangerous Joan Crawford fleeting core of this song, the black & white film noir appeal.

"Life Is Just A Bowl Of Cherries" is a grand old expression of stride and high lights of the first part of the 20th.

Irving Berlin's "Reaching For The Moon" concludes this adventurous cd with a love poem mellow drama. Obscure and relevant here, maybe antique, but such a treasure, listening with muted mood and dalliance, besmirched and aggrandized. There's so much music and creative arranging down to the intricate production. Holly Cole's introspection, much like the intricate formulation of love, where the

pieces fall into place, or you meet, communicate and integrate. Holly Cole's work and love for the place that's the real Home Town Meeting special.

MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY ALL STARS LIVE AT THE 2007TH JAZZ FESTIVAL MJF Records

This is *the* ultra modern composite big band, touring now for the MJF 50TH Anniversary.

Terence Blanchard is lead trumpet on through this Dizzy Gillespie's classic "Be-Bop," with James Moody, soloist, who wrote the book along with Gillespie in the late fifties. This is big band jazz post modern with charts eerily sounding Gerald Wilson, meaning that good sounding memorable music goes a long way, as far as Monterey.

If you haven't been to Monterey and it's celestial of jazz, then this is the next best thing.

Vocalist Neena Freelon is next up front of the band with a song that she penned the lyrics to, a Gerald Wilson "Romance(Winter Love.)"

Freelon's high register will remind you of Ella, if you imagine.

A lovely testy Ellington's "Just Squeeze Me"

with a reparte
between a scatty and a friskie,
James Moody and Neena Freelon,
who I swear just sounds like Ella.
Benny Green, who knows the piano
is musical director of this Monterey Big Band
embarks on this journey
a Monterey 50 anniversary
as his opening chords
gestate us to Gerald Wilson's "Monterey Mist"
and a wonderfully long James Moody solo
with Terence Blanchard next up
a man ready to go ' I got your back'
kind a long intensive solo,
curling his phrase around a misty night in Monterey.
"Misty" provides an interesting character
to an all night Clint Eastwood radio show
"Play Misty For me" Errol Garner's
classic Carmel "Concert By The Sea."
"Benny's Tune" features Benny Green's soft blue incarnation

with a Terence Blanchard and James Moody celebration
and Neena closes the session with a rousing version
"Time After Time. I tell myself that I'm
so lucky to be loving you,
so lucky to be the one
you run to see
when the evening is through..."

NNENNA FREELON BETTER THAN ANYTHING The Quintessential Nnenna Freelon Concord Jazz

This is a compilation of famous Nnenna recordings. Nnenna Freelon's has an exceptional voice, a range for downtown scat, smack and sophisticated review, who sounds so Ella in many ways. Nnenna can sing with such composure as in "Better Than Anything" trading phrase with saxophonist James Sandon. "I Won't Dance" is a Latin dance with a septet of Michael Abene- piano, Dick Oatts- saxophone, Ed Neumeister- trombone, Dave Valentin- flute, Peter Washington- bass, Clarence Penn- drums and Sammy Figueroa- percussion. Freelon is surrounded by all stars, a credit to her wonderful talent and her music, so inviting and resourceful.

This is a mix of standards, pop hits, spirituals and live gigs, a gift box of soft, slow, hard, sweet sounds. That's what a varietal is about, a chemistry, an archive of the artist , Nnenna Freelon.

From Bacharach's, "I Say A Little Prayer," Stevie Wonder and Smoky Robinson's "Tears Of A Clown" to a more hip traditional, "I Won't Dance," Nature Boy" and a reggae "Body And Soul," to big city style, "Button Up Your Coat."

This lady is the real thing, that way she approaches a song.

We try to leave a memory in anything we do, as Nnenna does, we do.

Then comes an original she wrote, "One Child At A time." This is were feminine optimism with a gospel mother church comes from. As Ray Bradbury says, " The center of the Universe."

The last, most best here, "Balm In Gilead," Nnenna sings with pianist Brandon McCune in a most spiritual intent, a mood is so warm and magic, there's nothing left to say, for Nnenna Freelon says it all.

GRAZYNA AUGUSCIK & PAULINHO GARCIA ANDANZA GMA Records

We need not understand the language, but we understand the metaphor . It's all you need to know to appreciate the message of families, singing, laughing, rejoicing love's message, for we always remember the good things. Where the poetry begins by remembering the life's true love of being there.

Grazyna Auguscik, a Polish American jazz singer from Chicago who understands the nuance of music, love and dance sings with Paulinho Garcia, Brazilian guitarist, composer and the DAFO String Quartet, the music of Antonio Carlos Jobim, Baden Powell, Airtio and Milton Nascimento.

"Andanza" a lovely song with a brightly colored bridge, a harmony of singers rising to a connection of strings, of life, music that proclaims the fountain everlasting. "Bala Com Bala" a rousing greeting to dance, enjoy a carioca carefree moment.

Auguscik adds a Polish lullaby, "Gdy wybierac' jeszcze mogtam" with a Brazilian flavor, instinctive. She's able to sing in both languages.

Maybe the rules don't apply here as Garcia adds a line or two, the meaning of life is music in any language. "Casa Forte" is expressive vocalize. Jobim's "Falando de Amor," "O boto" and "Photograph." Bellissimo!

The classic "So Nice" is done so nice in this Auguscik/Garcia emergent duet with a saxophone reminiscent of Stan Getz.

Then a fragrance of Milton Nascimento's "Nothing Will Be As It Is" with strings where Grazyna sings in English and Garcia in Portuguese. Wondrous.

"Spinoza Nas" is another song that Grazyna sings in Polish and Garcia in Portuguese.

We can only speculate. That's the fun of this review.

"Prelude in e-minor" is performed in a minor with "How Insensitive" is poetry, carmel, joy and chocolate.

The Grazyna Auguscik and Paulinho Garcia duet is remarkable, iconic, reflective, everlasting in the minds of fans, creating believers everywhere in this multi shrinking universal world we live.

Paulinho Garcia's acoustic guitar adds just the right gist to Grazyna Auguscik's method a prominent part in this project, his stamp, his scenario as a French new wave, blends with her life of mood, permissive world view and joy.

ELIANE ELIAS SINGS & PLAYS BILL EVANS SOMETHING TO YOU EMI/Blue Note
Bill Evans was considered a made member, a vital contributor, way back when, to the new post moderns of the fifties.

Ever since, most jazz piano players identify with Evans immense contribution to modern jazz, his blues, his lyricism.

Eliane Elias sings and plays Bill Evans. This is not just kitch, for that's left to the kitchen, this is a true representation of her ears. "Waltz With Debby," Evans most true and famous with lyrics by Gene Lees, is a vehicle most comfortable for Elias as she gleans the keys for us and them's and these. Elias rendition of Evans "Five." The changes, the hipness is reserved for a table at the first, last and most definite. We're all aboard on this.

"Blue And Green" is another most Miles and styles, where a tasty Elias never over- plays, just sits in there and plays.

She also has one of the world's greatest rhythm sections with Marc Johnson, bass and Joey Baron, drums, the same five stars associated with world class jazz pianist, Enrico Pieranunzi.

Here's the point. Eliane Elias piano playing is warm, remarkable and memorable in respect for the first disciple of the post modern. Her rendition of "Minha," (All Mine) a solo/vocal accompaniment that's special.

A memorable classic "My Foolish Heart" is portrayed par excellence by Elias on piano, a real reminding performance. "But Beautiful/ Here's That Rainy Day" a sample of her remarkable pianist ability..

Solo pieces, "I love My Wife" and "For Nanette" are Evans romanticism.

She understands the theory of Evans lyricism. "Evanesque" should explain it, a missed train, a slight refrain. Miles Davis "Solar" that Evans participated.

This Eliane Elias cd is a good blissful honorarium to Bill Evans, and her best piano performance yet.

ONES TO WATCH:

METRO EXPRESS with Chuck Loeb-guitarist and Mitchell Forman-keyboards, you can never forget the electric glistened modernity.

JASON KAO HWANG STORIES BEFORE WITHIN Innovva Records

Dare to dunk and trivialize this upper straight up funk laced in avant gard traditionalism with louder back dynamics. This is not rage, but a period avant gard, romanced in dynamics and experimental musical jiu jit su.

PEDRO ALFONSO STRINGS TO YOUR HEART Talent Beach Music

Stephan Grappelli, Nigel Kennedy, Zach Brock take note, Pedro Alfonso, the Cubano, is the new Latin maestro of the violin.

GREGORY HICKMAN-WILLIAMS PASSAGES Shoal Creek Music

An artist who's able to command a performance with just a piano accompaniment has to be special. Gregory Hickman-Williams versatility is beyond Broadway, opera and cabaret. He's a powerful talent for some inexplicable reason has been taken away from us.

til next time.....Dick Crockett
"The Voice:" 88.7fm
Mondays 10am & 10 pm, Pacific
accesssacramento.org