



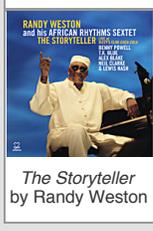
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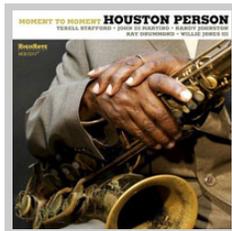
BY ED ENRIGHT

Clayton Brothers, *The New Song And Dance* (ArtistShare)

Brothers John (bass) and Jeff (saxophone) Clayton explore the influence of dance on jazz for their latest fan-funded project, a collection of compositions and arrangements built upon some of their favorite grooves. With inspirations ranging from the tango, the cha-cha and finger-poppin' jazz to break-dancing, steppin' and New Orleans second line, *The New Song And Dance* serves as an occasion to explore movement and dance through improvisation and composition. Check out the highly kinetic hand-in-hand interplay of the Claytons' intergenerational quintet, which includes trumpeter Terell Stafford, pianist Gerald Clayton and drummer Obed Calvaire.

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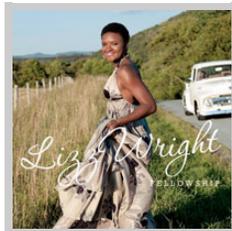
BY AARON COHEN

Houston Person, *Moment To Moment* (HighNote)

As an autumn chill is just around the corner, the season seems to beg for putting on a warm tenor saxophone CD. So Houston Person's new *Moment To Moment* came at just the right time, but it also offers much more than seasonal musical comfort food. Most of the disc's highlights are in Person's heavy and deeply melodic ballad playing, like in his pairing with pianist John Di Martino on "Don't Take Your Love From Me" or Person's lead on the closing "Nina Never Knew." But there are also subtle challenges that keep the leader on his toes, even at his most seemingly relaxed tempos. In particular,

young drummer Willie Jones III provides a new edge for the saxophonist, and especially for bassist Ray Drummond. On "Bleeker Street" [sic] and "Back In New Orleans," trumpeter Terell Stafford is Person's ideal foil.

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BY FRANK ALKYER

Lizz Wright, *Fellowship* (Verve Forecast)

When Lizz Wright debuted earlier in this decade, she was being sold as the next great modern jazz singer. But with her latest recording, *Fellowship*, she could become the next great modern gospel singer. Wright displays her deep connection to the church on a fantastic, uplifting collection of songs. Nicely produced by Brian Bacchus, *Fellowship* features some timeless gospel standards like "Sweeping Through The City," "God Specializes" and "Amazing Grace" and continues a collaboration with singer-songwriter Toshi Reagon. Wright also finds the spirit in more unusual places, such as the title track, a

Bob Marley tune, as well as Eric Clapton's "Presence Of The Lord" and Jimi Hendrix's "In From The Storm." The recording also features guest performers Angelique Kidjo, Me'Shell Ndegéocello, Joan as Police Woman and Bernice Johnson Reagon. Even with all of these collaborators, it's Wright's refined, powerful alto voice that makes this recording sing. During her short career, she has made such diverse music that she has become an artist who's difficult to put into a neat category—unless you simply create a category for wonderful, individualistic vocalists. *Fellowship* is proof. This is a great album for a Sunday morning, or any time you need a boost.

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BY ED ENRIGHT

Various Artists, *The NYFA Collection: 25 Years Of New York New Music* (Innova)

In 1983, the New York State Council on the Arts established fellowships in 16 arts disciplines, including ones for Music Composition and Sound administered by the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA). To celebrate 25 years of fellows (there have been more than 200 to date), this five-CD



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The January 2011 issue of DownBeat highlights keyboardist and global collaborator Herbie Hancock on the cover. Other features in this issue include saxophonist Dave Liebman, vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater, the Best CDs of 2010 and Soul Sidewomen Tia Fuller, Crystal J Torres and Kim Thompson.

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collection features 52 of them, mostly performing new compositions heard here for the first time. The pieces show the diverse range of contemporary musical expressions the program supports—experimental jam bands, works for newly invented instruments, electronic manipulations, jazz and world forms, music for dance and film—enough to challenge and reward anyone with an appetite for well-crafted sonic adventures. Notable names like Meredith Monk, Robert Dick, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Fred Ho and Paul Motian stand out among the many forward-thinking, New York-based composers and performers featured in this stunning document of a historic culture.

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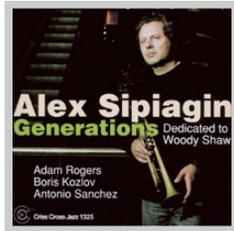
BY FRANK ALKYER

Avishai Cohen, *Introducing Triveni* (Anzic)

Avishai Cohen is a tremendously fluid trumpet player with great tone and technique, and a very fine composer, too. It's all on display on his latest recording, *Introducing Triveni*, a collection split between Cohen originals and choice standards. On *Triveni*, we find him in a trio setting with bassist Omer Avital and drummer Nasheet Waits. Looking for a very different solo outlet from his gig in the SF Jazz Collective, Cohen said his goal was to create a book of music that the three could improvise over without a great deal of charts, or rehearsal. In *Introducing Triveni*, we have a freely swinging, casual

date where all three musicians shine. Cohen is a terrific musician, so too are Avital and Waits. The trio trades licks and lines with ease and joy. They cook on Don Cherry's "Art Deco." You can almost see them smile and chuckle their way through "Mood Indigo." "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To" is simply lush. And they offer a reverent jam on John Coltrane's "Wise One." Of the originals, "October 25" and the opening track, "One Man's Idea," come at the listener as bouncy romps; "Amenu" and "Ferrara Napoly" are lovely ballads.

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BY AARON COHEN

Alex Sipiagin, *Generations: Dedicated To Woody Shaw*

(Criss Cross Jazz)

During his brief lifetime, trumpeter Woody Shaw proved to be brilliantly formidable—so much so that his work may be overlooked today because his wide intervals and other musical feats are so difficult to play correctly. At the time of Shaw's death in 1989 (at 45), trumpeter Alex Sipiagin had been studying his music for about four years in Russia. From the sound of this welcome, and rare, Shaw tribute, he internalized those lessons, yet he has the smart inclination to not try to duplicate the icon's approach. Most of the

tracks are Shaw's compositions or associated with him, like Larry Young's "Obsequious," which the organist/pianist wrote on a session with the trumpeter. Sipiagin takes an engaging turn with the material, like slowing down "Beyond All Limits," which keeps the focus on the beauty of the underlying melody, yet drummer Antonio Sanchez and bassist Boris Koslov throw in surprising twists. And picking up the flugelhorn, Sipiagin sounds particularly stunning on Shaw's waltz "Katrina Ballerina." An original two-part Sipiagin composition, "Greenwood," opens and closes the disc with a cool double-time jaunt that would make Shaw nod in appreciation.

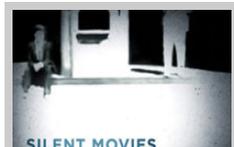


BY ED ENRIGHT

Bobby Watson, *The Gates BBQ Suite* (Lafiya Music)

Smoking meat remains near and dear to Kansas City native Bobby Watson, who was inspired by family tradition and a famous local barbecue establishment to write this extended big band work. The alto saxophonist and educator leads the University of Missouri's "Kansas City's (UMKC) Conservatory Concert Jazz Orchestra through seven movements written around a central theme that reflects real people and places from his past and present. Watson waxes nostalgic with his finger-lickin' compositions; obviously he missed Kansas City ("the Napa Valley of barbecue," he calls it) and its

culinary culture during the 25 years he spent based in New York before accepting an endowed professorship at UMKC and returning to his hometown in 2000. The well-rehearsed big band swings solidly and heeds dynamics with sensitivity under the leadership of Watson, who greases the grill with his own tasty solos and allows his students generous opportunities to blow.



BY FRANK ALKYER

Marc Ribot, *Silent Movies* (Pi)

Guitarist Marc Ribot has played many roles in his career. Some of my favorites come from his sideman work with Tom Waits and The Lounge Lizards, his contributions to John Zorn's Masada and his leadership of Los Cubanos Prostizos (The Prosthetic Cubans). Fact is, any time you see him

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leading a band or working as a sideman, it's a treat no matter the setting. Here, on *Silent Movies*, we have Ribot playing solo guitar—as open, personal and vulnerable as a musician can be—and it's beautiful. The recording was partially inspired when Ribot accompanied the Charlie Chaplin silent film *The Kid* at Merkin Concert Hall as part of this year's New York Guitar Festival. Other songs were written for the soundtrack of the documentary *El General* and for an unreleased film called *Drunk Boat*. Throughout the CD, Ribot transcends styles and labels. One moment he's downtown hip, the next sweet and sad, the next a Latin devotee. But everything he touches on *Silent Movies* is part of the continuum of his musicianship and artistic being. Songs like "Delancey Waltz," "Requiem For A Revolution" and "Postcard From New York" take your breath away. "Natalia In Eb Major" offers a whisper and a shout. "Fat Man Blues" is a bouncing number that highlights Ribot's sharp rhythmic sense and melodic drive. "The Kid" is as close to Chaplin as you can get without seeing him on film. And "Radio" has a far-away sound, as if you're listening through an old transistor. The only other sound besides Ribot's guitar comes from soundscapes, created by Keefus Ciancia, that serve as preambles to several tunes—the sound of trains, traffic, steps, movement. They set up each piece beautifully, as if you're going on a journey. That's exactly what Ribot's *Silent Movies* does: It takes you on a joyous, out-of-the-ordinary journey.



BY AARON COHEN

Stanley Livingston and Michael Erlewine,
Blues In Black & White (University of Michigan Press)

In the late '60s and early '70s, a legion of musical heroes converged on Ann Arbor, Mich., for the university town's influential blues festival. And when the likes of B.B. King, Lightnin' Hopkins, Otis Rush and Howlin' Wolf took the stage, photographer Stanley Livingston was right there to capture it all in vivid black-and-white. He also caught the contrasts in these performers' personas: Howlin' Wolf's fearsome eyes onstage and the same Wolf chilling with a cup of coffee and chatting it up backstage. Then there is the simple joy in seeing a young Bonnie Raitt in 1972 clearly beaming at being on the same bill as her idols. Festival volunteer Michael Erlewine's introduction and quotes from some of those legends add important historical perspective to Livingston's dramatic images. Trivia note: In the '60s, Erlewine sang lead in Michigan's The Prime Movers Blues Band, whose drummer James Osterberg would later become known as Iggy Pop.



BY FRANK ALKYER

Howard Wiley and the Angola Project,
12 Gates To The City (HNIC Music)

Howard Wiley is an extremely ambitious, thoughtful artist. I was introduced to the music of this 31-year-old composer/saxophonist in 2007 when he released *The Angola Project*, an extraordinary, challenging recording inspired by the field recordings of Alan and John Lomax in the 1930s at Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola. *12 Gates* is a followup to that project. And it's a brilliant sequel. Wiley said the recording is a suite based on the traditional spiritual, with the 12 gates representing the many paths one can take toward finding redemption. Wiley finds a way to fuse old-time gospel with modern-day jazz, avant garde, spoken word, rap and serious saxophone chops. On "Come Forth (To The House Of The Lord)," Wiley blows a mean tenor solo over an in-the-tradition composition. That tune features what's great on a good portion of the record. Faye Carol, a gospel-infused jazz singer from Wiley's San Francisco, delivers earthy, wordless vocalizations as the band cooks and Wiley wails. But he's not satisfied to simply rework old jazz forms. "Endless Fields" is an avant ode to the idea that he saw endless fields of cotton when he visited Angola prison and realized someone had to pick it. That range—from old-time to avant garde to almost operatic—is what makes *12 Gates* so appealing. Yes, Angola is still a working prison that houses mostly a black population. And Wiley obviously feels a breadth of emotions when he hears the field songs of long ago or during his modern-day research visits there. Both *12 Gates* and its precursor, *Angola*, span that joy and pain of the past and the present. Wiley is calling attention to the fact that African-American men make up six percent of our population in the U.S. but remain the majority in our prison population. Something's wrong here, and Wiley makes the point the only way he knows how: with musical notes and his saxophone. He's earned our attention.

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