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Richard Wyands
Got To Be Listenable

By Ken Weiss

Pianist Richard Wyands (b. July 2, 1928, Oakland, CA), who turned 90-years-old a few weeks after this interview, has spent the bulk of his career as one of the most highly sought-after jazz sidemen. He’s comfortable playing most jazz genres and is known for his consistency, dependability, flexibility, and especially for his very tasteful piano work. He’s developed his skills as a listener and has concentrated on organically deepening the music at hand in place of impressing with showy piano chops. Wyands has accompanied Ella Fitzgerald, Carmen McRae, Anita O’Day, Gigi Gryce, Roy Haynes, Charles Mingus, Oliver Nelson, Etta Jones, Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis, Gene Ammons, Freddie Hubbard, Zoot Sims, Benny Carter, Illinois Jacquet, and was a mainstay with Kenny Burrell for many years. This interview took place on May 25, 2018 at his home of over 50 years in Manhattan’s Upper West Side. The piece ends with a little anecdote from Wyands’ wife, Leonora, who was kind enough to relate how she met her husband.

Jazz Inside Magazine: There’s few who have played this music professionally longer than you have. You’re turning ninety in less than five weeks and you’ve been performing for seventy-four years. What do you attribute your longevity to?

Richard Wyands: This may sound strange but living on the West Coast as long as I did may have had a lot to do with it. My life was pretty well laid out for me. The Bay Area was very nice to live in. I went to school there, grammar school through San Francisco State College. I have no way to explain my longevity except to say perhaps clean living. I never got hustled or went to jail. I’ve traveled all over the world and I’ve never had any problems with people. Maybe I was just lucky but I did pretty well. I’ve had a lot of good friends, a lot of musician friends, and my parents and family were very good. I’ve been married to my wife for over fifty years and we’ve never had any problems. I didn’t get married until I came to New York. I decided I wanted to see a lot of the world before I got into a marriage situation and that worked out perfectly. Some of my friends didn’t do too well in that respect.

Ji: At this point, you’ve cut back your performances. You have a steady Thursday night trio gig at the 75 Club in Lower Manhattan with Lisle Atkinson and Leroy Williams. How is it to still have people want to hear you play at age 89?

RW: I’m sort of semi-retired. Things aren’t like they used to be, I don’t travel very far. I used to travel all over the world but there’s no place to go to that I haven’t already been to. It seems almost impossible, musically speaking. Personally getting along with musicians could be a little difficult. I had to work at being good without losing my mind with some of the musicians you had to deal with. I worked with a lot of singers who could be difficult, I’m not gonna mention names.

RW: Sometimes it’s not so good, it all depends on who the people are. I used to try to get along with everybody somehow, musically especially. Like I said, Buddy didn’t have much to say and he and Flip Phillips were having some problems.

Ji: What kind of problems?

RW: I don’t know, which one was the leader, to start off with. I believe Flip was supposed to be the leader in that trio. Buddy could be a little difficult. [Laughs] but I admired him as a musician. He really could play. That was a hard group, but I managed. I’ve managed to get through situations that seemed almost impossible, musically speaking. Personally getting along with musicians could be a little difficult. I had to work at being good without losing my mind with some of the musicians you had to deal with. I worked with a lot of singers who could be difficult. I’m not gonna mention any names, but very difficult. But I managed, and in this business, you have to do that, otherwise you’ll lose your mind.

Ji: You’ve played with many of the greatest musicians in jazz history. In what setting do you feel about things just about the same as I do. That’s one reason why we get along. Musically we get along fine, and that means a lot. You gotta play with somebody who you can communicate with easily and that sometimes is not so easy. Fortunately, I’ve managed to get along with musicians.

RW: That’s hard to say but I’ll say a great bassist, I’ve done a lot of duo work with just bass and piano and you can’t have a duo with just drums and piano, although I’ve done that in the old days, like in the ’30s and even ’40s. I used to do that but it’s a little rough, it sounds strange. Bass is very important. Drums are important too and I’ve played with some great drummers including Buddy Rich.

Ji: What was it like to play with Buddy Rich?

RW: That was a trio with no bass, Flip Phillips was the horn player. Buddy Rich, that was very interesting. We played at a club in San Francisco named the Black Hawk. I played there from 1950 to 1955 with various people. Buddy Rich, a great drummer, but we never had much to say to each other, strangely enough. We never even had a conversation. We worked together for a week and he never said hello. I was replacing Hank Jones, who called me at the last moment to make the gig because he couldn’t. Flip Phillips was a pretty good friend however, we did a lot of things together.

Ji: So how is it to play in an intimate setting with someone you don’t have any relationship with?

RW: So how is it to play in a club? With a guy you don’t know at all? He may just start to play and you’ve gotta play back. But if you’ve got a leader who’s there, you got to play with the leader. If you’re not with the leader, you gotta play back the way you think they’re going.

Ji: If you had to choose between a great bassist or a great drummer in your trio, which would be more important to you?
Richard Wyands

feel produced your most important music?

RW: It’s hard to say. I’ve often thought of all the groups, all the different musicians that I’ve performed with, and some of it was difficult, very difficult. I spent a lot of time with Kenny Burrell. Guitar and piano can be very difficult at times, they get in each other’s way harmonically. It’s not easy, but I managed to keep things balanced between the two of us, or whatever guitarists I’d be working with. Actually, I really didn’t want to work with guitar players. In the early days of my career, playing with a guitarist wasn’t so difficult, it wasn’t so complicated. To have a trio like the Nat King Cole Trio, that was easy, but as things progressed harmonically, it became a little difficult to work with a guitarist. But I worked with a lot of different guitarists successfully. At one point, I decided I’d try to avoid working with guitar players. [Laughs] I didn’t care how good they were. The better they were, the harder it was.

JI: Who was the most creative musician you’ve ever worked with? You played with so many of the greats.

RW: I don’t know, it would take me some time to answer that question. I wish I could answer that. I wouldn’t say it was a singer, I was usually the teacher when it involved a singer. The piano player was the main man for all the singers I performed with. They were great singers. Carmen McRae, she was good because she was also a pianist. She could play piano and she knew her music. Ella Fitzgerald didn’t play piano, but she was easy to work with. She would listen and you could explain things to her easily. But she was so great in her own right, she didn’t need much help. [Laughs] Really she was something else, that’s all I can say. I worked with male singers at times, but mostly female.

JI: Can you recall your most memorable performance or musical experience?

RW: I did a record with Oliver Nelson’s big band that was outstanding - the arrangements, my performance, and the band. There was only one thing wrong - they never released the record. [Laughs] Kenny Burrell was the leader and he said he didn’t like the way he played and he wasn’t gonna let this record be released. And everybody in the band couldn’t believe what he was saying. What? There were great arrangements and he played good, everybody played good, but he said it was not going to be released. I think the label was Prestige. I was very disappointed. How could he? That was one of the better records I played on. Oliver Nelson was an excellent arranger and player. I’m still friends with Kenny but I still think how could he do that? How did that record company allow that to happen? They had to pay a lot of money to have this record produced. I’ve been trying to find that record, to find out if it ever was released. That’s enough of that. I thought some of my own records were pretty good.

RW: No. Most of the people who hired me for dates were crazy about my playing, otherwise they would have hired somebody else. That’s the way I look at it. There were certainly enough other people to hire, all kinds of people.

JI: Was there someone who hired or wanted to hire you that most surprised you?

RW: Not really. I wanted to study music when I was about seven-years-old. I wanted to play piano. I played classical music first and then I decided I wanted to play jazz. I listened to the radio – Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Teddy Wilson, oh wow. I wanted to play jazz piano like them and be a band leader. My mother was very interested in jazz. She bought jazz records for me and a little turntable to play them on. My father wasn’t interested in jazz, all he wanted to do with it was to dance. He loved to dance. My mother was very important in the expansion of my career.

JI: After starting with classical music, you had to find a jazz teacher on your own.

RW: Right. I was in junior high school and I studied with one of the West Coast jazz pianists by the name of Wilbert Baranco. He had a six-month course. He said, “Richard, this is it. All I can teach you is gonna last only six months,” and he was right. He lived in walking distance from my house and I walked there once a week. That’s all I needed and soon I was playing in lots of San Francisco’s clubs. Things were easy. I was able to play pretty good piano in high school. If you look at that 1945 photo on the wall there, that was our last jazz group in high school. The government hired us, I don’t remember if we ever got paid, but we’d go to Army and Navy bases and play for the service men and they enjoyed it. In those days, it was great. We were pretty good. I was only sixteen at the time. After I had had two piano teachers, I decided that I didn’t need any more teachers, and my mother agreed with me. She listened to me. I was still also playing drums at that time, and I was good. I would have been a good drummer but she wasn’t gonna buy me drums.

JI: You mentioned your interest in drumming.

“I wouldn’t play in a free-type jazz group, I know that. I have but it’s not easy. I’d rather have things in a more organized, or at least what appears to be a more organized setting. I’ve been in all kinds of groups where the bandleader just stomps the tempo off and says, ‘Okay, one, two, one,’ and you go for yourself, [Laughs] which is not my idea for something musical. I have to have it more organized. I wouldn’t think about playing in a musical group like that. No, no, no, no. I like organization.”

It’s very impressive that you took lessons from Johnny Otis, the singer/musician/talent scout who was known as “The Original King of Rock & Roll,” and “The Godfather of R & B.”

RW: Johnny Veliotes was really his name but he shortened his last name to Otis. He was Greek. He lived a few blocks from me so I asked him if he would teach me, which he did, until he decided to be a singer and left Berkeley, California and moved to Los Angeles and got his big band together.

JI: Do you think your knowledge of drumming helps your piano playing?

RW: Yes, definitely. I paid a lot of attention to drums, even in my early years when studying piano. Percussion was very important to me.

JI: You graduated with a degree in music from San Francisco State College but there was no official jazz professors there at the time. How did you get a jazz education there?

RW: I went to college and played in the college orchestras and bands and then we finally got a professor who was interested in jazz so I had a couple courses in jazz. He didn’t really teach jazz, it was just you write your arrangements and we’ll play them. The teacher wasn’t much of a jazz player himself, but that really helped my

(Continued on page 8)
Richard Wyands

(Continued from page 7)

career.

JI: How did you learn to improvise?

RW: I learned like most jazz musicians then, you just learned on your own somehow. You listened to records, went to see bands play, you talked to musicians. That was then, now it’s a different scene. There were no courses in jazz at San Francisco State College but a number of jazz musicians went there because it was inexpensive.

JI: Your classmates at SFSC included Jerome Richardson, Cal Tjader and briefly Paul Desmond.

RW: Right, we worked together. I worked in a group with Paul Desmond, that was before he was with Dave Brubeck. Jerome Richardson lived around the corner from me in Berkeley and we got to be pretty good friends. I made my first recording in a band with Jerome that was led by saxophonist Quedelis Martin.

“...playing for strippers, it was no big deal. I certainly wasn’t going to invite my parents over to see me play in these clubs. Oh, boy, those strip clubs, there were so many strippers, you wouldn’t believe it. They’d have like fifteen or twenty strippers in one club, and they wanted jazz, that’s why they hired us to play for them to do their strip tease. I was young, I looked like a little kid, they used to call me “Younghood,” but San Francisco was different, the police didn’t bother you. That was work, that was employment. We played whatever songs they wanted. There wasn’t any music to read so I could spend my time watching them. That’s why back."

JI: Because you were gigging so late into the night during college, you often were operating on only four hours of sleep. How were you able to fit in school and gigging?

RW: I did what I had to do. The San Francisco clubs closed at 2 AM, it wasn’t as late as in other cities. I was nineteen and going to college while living in Berkeley. I was doing well enough to buy my own used car.

JI: By the time you finished college in 1950, bebop was well-established and the swing era was fading. What was your reaction to hearing bebop for the first time?

RW: [Laughs] I don’t know whether I ever did. Most of the musicians were trying to play bebop and I played with these bands. After World War II there was a shortage of musicians so they took anybody they could get. I was pretty young but they said, “Okay, Richard, we want you to be in our band.” I ended up playing better than they did, solo-wise. They had more experience playing in big bands because of the service bands. I hung out with them, went on jobs with them, and we tried to play bebop and modern jazz, and the people liked it. That’s what they wanted to hear. We played blues and all sorts of stuff, everything under the sun. I liked it. I had to learn how to play everything, all kinds of styles, or I wouldn’t work. Things have changed a lot since then. That was a great era. At the end of World War II there were a lot of clubs, even in San Francisco, where the bands played so-called modern jazz. We tried to play like Charlie Parker and Bud Powell.

JI: What was your experience seeing Charlie Parker play?

RW: I was thrilled. I just stood there watching.

JI: You found work in the early ‘50s as sort of a music director at San Francisco’s historic Black Hawk club. Talk about that time.

RW: I was there with bassist Vernon Alley. The club had been there but they decided they wanted to hear a different kind of music in the club so they hired Vernon to bring his group in there. There were two bands – our band and a group that was playing some old-time music. They weren’t bad but finally the club decided to hire only modern jazz groups, including us. I guess I was hired, not because I was that good, there just weren’t that many piano players that could play that style of music in 1945-'46. Vernon Alley hired me when I was eighteen-years-old and I stayed with him quite a while. The Black Hawk was not a very interesting looking place but I spent a lot of time there. I saw all kinds of stars there and met so many people.

JI: One of the people you played opposite at the Black Hawk for a few weeks was Art Tatum.

RW: I sure did. We sort of became friends. I... (Continued on page 10)
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Richard Wyands

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would play intermissions when he finished playing, I would play solo, by myself. He had a trio with guitar and bass. Slam Stewart was the bass player, who I later became friends with. Anyway, what I would do was I would sit right next to the bandstand, right next to the piano Art Tatum was playing. I would tell him I was sitting there, because he was partially blind, and he would talk to me while he was playing. He’d say, “Now Richard, this is what I’m gonna do. I’m gonna play,” and he named the chords and what he was doing. He’s doing all this talking while he’s playing. Every time he played, I’d sit right by him and he knew I was sitting there. He didn’t mind. He was fantastic. He couldn’t see me but...

J: So he was giving you lessons?

RW: Sort of. He’d tell me what he was going to do and I’d sit there and watch his hands on the keyboard.

J: Did you improve from these sessions?

RW: Oh, did I ever! He was one of the greatest pianists in the world. I used to sit next to Erroll Garner too. Sometimes he would also say something to me. I saw Erroll Garner saw off one of the black notes from the piano. How he did that I don’t know. I had to come back and play after he had played and I looked down and saw a note was missing and there it was on the floor.

J: How did you come to be music director for Ella Fitzgerald in 1956?

RW: I was recommended by Oscar Peterson and Ray Brown. She was looking for another pianist and they recommended me. They also recommended a bass player, whom I had never met, and a drummer from Los Angeles. We didn’t even know each other. Can you believe that? She didn’t even come to the rehearsal. Here she’s hiring three new musicians that she’s never heard before and she doesn’t come to the rehearsal. I thought that was rather strange. How do you know you even like these guys? It turned out she didn’t like the drummer and the way he played. I thought he was alright but not for her. The thing about Ella, as great as she was, she didn’t want to rehearse.

J: It’s quite impressive that Oscar Peterson recommended you.

RW: That is impressive. He and Ray Brown had heard me play in San Francisco and they thought I’d be pretty good for Ella.

J: Any Ella memories?

RW: We didn’t have any problems with Ella. She wouldn’t turn around and yell at us or anything like that. Some of the other singers, God! They’d call you a bunch of names. I used to drive her. We played Las Vegas for three weeks and that was the most miserable, miserable three weeks I ever spent. Not musically, not with Ella, but just being in Las Vegas. That was terrible. Do you have any idea what Vegas was like in the mid-’50s? I’m talking about the race situation. We were the stars of the show and we couldn’t even go into the club except through the kitchen. We couldn’t eat at a table at the club where we were working. We had to eat in the kitchen or in our dressing room. We weren’t allowed to go into the audience to say hello to someone at the tables even if they asked us over. We’d get told to go back to the dressing room or the kitchen. Is that any kind of way to live? Even Ella had to sit in a room. We did two shows a night like that. And then we couldn’t stay at the hotel where we were playing. Ella couldn’t either! She’s the star of the show! I had a car so I used to drive her back and forth to the club from where we had to stay. That was awful. That was my first time in Vegas and I had no idea that was happening there. I said, ‘Oh my God, we’ve got to be here for three weeks?’ I’d go out in the daytime and walk around downtown Vegas and the cops were looking at me. Vegas! This was not down south. I wondered how we were going to make it through this. The drummer was white but we didn’t have any problems in that respect. I said I’d never come back there and I haven’t been back since. That was 1957, my first and last time in Vegas. Never go back to Vegas, that was my theme song. [Laughs] Reno, same thing. Cops following you around, watching you. The United States of America. It’s improved since then but my God! That’s why I [avoided] the south. I played in the south but years later.

J: You’ve mentioned some of the numerous singers you’ve played and recorded for. How satisfying is it to play behind a singer night after night?

RW: It all depends if you like the singer and the way they sing. Your job is to play behind them. I got to a point where I could enjoy it. You’ve got to enjoy it or you shouldn’t even be there. If you don’t like being an accompanist then forget it. But playing behind Ella and Carman McCrae, and a few other singers, was very satisfying to me. Some pianists didn’t really like it, they just did it because of the money, but I enjoyed playing with some of the singers. Ella and Carmen were very special.

J: Do you have any special insight to share regarding how best to accompany vocalists?

RW: You really have to know exactly what they want, which is part of the job. That’s why you rehearse. They tell you, although some singers don’t even know how to talk about it. You have to like it, and I did. I enjoyed accompanying Ella, Carman, and whoever else I played for. But if I didn’t like the way they sang, now that’s something else, but you’re not supposed to be there anyhow if you don’t like the way they sing. Ella was special, that’s all I can say, but at times we didn’t know how special or whether she was special or not. She was so nervous, imagine Ella Fitzgerald being nervous? During the first couple of weeks, she would turn around and look at us like she wasn’t happy. We didn’t know why. Say something, speak up. If you don’t like the way we’re playing, tell us. I never said that to her but I wanted to. I couldn’t understand why she was looking at us like that. So finally she tells me why. She didn’t like the drummer, the way he was playing. She finally fired the drummer but it took two weeks! She should have been at the rehearsal in the first place and then she would have known what he sounded like. But Ella, it was hard being on her. I tried to be as nice as I possibly could with her, mainly because I liked the way she sang. I wouldn’t go on the road with a singer whose singing I didn’t like. No, that didn’t make any sense, but that sort of thing is still happening.

J: Carman McRae hired you shortly after you left Ella and brought you to New York City in 1958 on tour. You ended up leaving her tour to stay there. Had you planned to do that?

RW: I was supposed to leave when we came to New York. She told me she liked the way I played but she had somebody else in mind. I forget who. I didn’t have any trouble with her but I know other pianists did. I got along with Carman fine, musically, I thought.

J: Reports are that you found it uncomfortable to adjust to McRae’s slow-paced ballads.

RW: Whew! Oh, yeah. You read that? She sang very slow tempo, extremely slow, which is hard [for an accompanist] to do, to play along that slowly. I just had to bear down, not rush, be careful. I kept telling myself that while I was playing. You’ve got to play with all sorts of singers and musicians. It’s almost impossible to play that slow tempo but I liked Carmen, I liked her style and the songs she sang. I worked with so many singers, especially when I was in Canada before I came to New York. There it was a different singer every week. It was a good experience. That’s the way I had to look at it. I also worked with Johnny Mathis in Canada.

J: Once you settled in New York City, you had to live there for a number of months before the union would let you work, since you were transferring from the San Francisco union. What did you do to earn a living during that time?

RW: I had to wait something like three or six months before I could get a union card and be able to work certain jobs. I could only work certain places because I was on a transfer, that’s what they called it. You transferred from San Francisco to the local New York union. You don’t have to go through that now but in those days you did. Sometimes I cheated and I’d sneak
Richard Wyands

(Continued from page 10)

out of town and go to Philly.

JI: So you didn’t get a non-musical side job?

RW: Oh, no. What was I gonna do? I didn’t know anything else. Teach maybe? I think I had some piano students.

JI: How was it to transition from the West Coast to the East Coast style of living?

RW: It was a transition in some respects. I didn’t think it was too difficult. I came from a fairly large city to a giant city but I had been in New York before and I knew people in New York.

JI: You ended up having to sell your car in New York?

RW: Yeah, I did, I couldn’t pay my rent. [Laughs] I had to sell my car to get money. The car was only two or three years old. Things weren’t going too well, workwise, so I said, ‘Well, I guess you’ll have to sell your car. You’re not gonna go back to California. You’ve got to stay here somehow.’ So that’s what I did.

It wasn’t easy. Paying rent, oh jeeze. I thought I’d never make it through that. A lot of musicians came from the East Coast so they could just go home, but to go all the way back to California? [Laughs] For what? California wasn’t doing too well either. By the way, I still belong to the union in San Francisco.

JI: What memories do you have of those artists?

RW: I was on Etta Jones’ famous recording Don’t Go to Strangers. Prestige decided to use me with her. I had never even met or heard her before until in the studio for that recording. I had no idea what she sounded like. [Laughter] I’m telling you. I also did a couple more recordings with her and then I worked with her and Houston Person around the city. I was on her last studio album [Etta Jones Sings Lady Day, 2001, Highnote]. She was sick, everybody knew it, but you couldn’t tell. Her singing wasn’t effected. She stayed in the recording booth and just came out once to use the bathroom that day. A few weeks later we found out she was gone. I noticed she was moving around slowly the day we recorded but she sang just as well as ever. We got to be good friends. She used to come around and listen to me play at various places. Yeah, I liked Etta, I really did.

JI: You spent a lot of time in the early ’60s in Rudy Van Gelder’s famed studio. What was your experience there?

RW: Just be calm, don’t let Rudy get on your nerves. [Laughter] He didn’t bother me but some of the musicians and him … He didn’t want you to do this, don’t touch that. I liked him, we got along fine, but a lot of musicians didn’t like him. One day he accused me of breaking the glass to his piano booth and he made a big deal about it. It was a little chip. I looked down at it and said, ’Rudy, what? Oh, come on now, that little chip?’ Other than that we got along fine.

JI: Did you break his glass?

RW: No, not that I know of.

JI: One of your first recordings was with Charles Mingus [Jazz Portraits: Mingus in Wonderland, United Artists, 1959]. What do you have to say about Mingus?

RW: A little difficult, he was a little unusual. You just had to know how to deal with him. He was from California also, Los Angeles. That’s where I met him. He called me for some work in California. He said he liked the way I played. So we got to know each other. He was always nice to me. A very odd guy, I guess you’ve heard things, but a great bass player, man.

JI: You also made a recording with Rahsaan Roland Kirk [We Free Kings, Mercury, 1961]. That was your first time meeting him?

RW: [Laughter] I think that was the first time I worked with him, I don’t know that I’d even seen him before with those instruments. I walked into the studio and I saw all these strange looking instruments and I said, ‘Well, I’ll just pay attention to these things.’ He was blind so you had to approach him a little differently. But he wasn’t hard to get along with. I got along with him fine. The first recording I did with him, I had no idea what his music was like, but as long as he played alright, I didn’t care. I worked in a few clubs with him. I liked him, I really did.

JI: Was it difficult to play with his unusual instruments, such as the stritch and manzello, and his use of multiple horns at the same time?

RW: No, you just listened. It sounded different but I just waited to see what it was gonna sound like. Okay, count off the tempo – one, two, one, two, three, four, and then you listen. That’s all I can say about Rahsaan. I worked with him and got used to what he was doing. He played good, blowing whistles and all sorts of stuff. I’ve known a lot of musicians who were sort of out there. I liked him, I’ve got some of his records here.

JI: The longest professional relationship of your career was with Kenny Burrell [1964-77]. Would you talk about him and why the two of you were such a good fit?

RW: He realized that I was paying attention to what he was doing and how to blend with the guitar without getting in the way, because it’s not easy for guitar and piano unless things
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### Wednesday, September 19
- Regina Carter & Xavier Davis; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Davina and the Vagabonds; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Bill Stewart Trio - Walter Smith III, Saxophone; Larry Grenadier, Bass; Bill Stewart, Drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Stanley Clarke Band; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Coltrane Revisited: Eric Alexander, Greg Osby, Jon Irabagon, Helen Sung, Lonnie Plaxico, Matt Wilson; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

### Thursday, September 20
- Ulysses Owens, Jr. THREE; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Theo Croker Quintet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Bill Stewart Trio - Walter Smith III, Saxophone; Larry Grenadier, Bass; Bill Stewart, Drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Stanley Clarke Band; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Coltrane Revisited: Eric Alexander, Greg Osby, Jon Irabagon, Helen Sung, Lonnie Plaxico, Matt Wilson; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

### Friday, September 21
- Ulysses Owens, Jr’s New Century Big Band; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Theo Croker Quintet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Bill Stewart Trio - Walter Smith III, Saxophone; Larry Grenadier, Bass; Bill Stewart, Drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Stanley Clarke Band; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Coltrane Revisited: Eric Alexander, Greg Osby, Jon Irabagon, Helen Sung, Lonnie Plaxico, Matt Wilson; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

### Saturday, September 22
- Late Night Dance Session: Charles Turner III & Uptown Swing; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Theo Croker Quintet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Bill Stewart Trio - Walter Smith III, Saxophone; Larry Grenadier, Bass; Bill Stewart, Drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Stanley Clarke Band; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Coltrane Revisited: Eric Alexander, Greg Osby, Jon Irabagon, Helen Sung, Lonnie Plaxico, Matt Wilson; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

### Sunday, September 23
- Smokestack Brunch: Jamie Reynolds; Theo Croker Quintet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Bill Stewart Trio - Walter Smith III, Saxophone; Larry Grenadier, Bass; Bill Stewart, Drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Stanley Clarke Band; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Greg RuvoLo Big Band Collective; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

### Monday, September 24
- Monday Nights with WBGO: Orrin Evans Captain Black Big Band; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Mingus Big Band; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Eddie Palmieri & Friends: Honoring The Legacy of McCoy Tyner; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Scott Allan; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

### Tuesday, September 25
- Tord Gustavsen Trio; Late Night Session: Jen Allen; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Mark Guiliana SPACE HEROES; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Chris Potter, Saxophone; James Francis, Piano; Eric Harland, Drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Chick Corea Trio; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Alyson Briggs & Fleur Seule; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

### Wednesday, September 26
- Ted Rosenthal Trio; Rhapsody in Gershwin; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Mark Guiliana SPACE HEROES; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Chris Potter, Saxophone; James Francis, Piano; Eric Harland, Drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Chick Corea Trio; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Yellowjackets; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

### Thursday, September 27
- Magos Herrera and Brooklyn Rider; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Freddy Cole Quartet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Chris Potter, Saxophone; James Francis, Piano; Eric Harland, Drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Chick Corea Trio; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Yellowjackets; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

### Friday, September 28
- Louis Hayes: Serenade to Horace Silver; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Freddy Cole Quartet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Chris Potter, Saxophone; James Francis, Piano; Eric Harland, Drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Chick Corea Trio; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Yellowjackets; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

### Monday, October 1
- Moutin Factory Quintet; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Mingus Big Band; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Alex Lore Quartet; Anthony Wonsey Quartet; After-Hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Steve Ross

### Tuesday, October 2
- Abelia Mateus And Friends; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Eli Degibri Quartet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Tom Harrell’s Trip - Tom Harrell, Trumpet; Mark Turner, Saxophone; Ugonna Okegwo, Bass; Adam Cruz, Drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Spike Wtiles Trio; Frank Lozay Group; After-Hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Dee Dee Bridgewater With The Theo Croker Quintet

### Wednesday, October 3
- Piotr Orzechowski/Ruba Wielaek Trio; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Allison Miller and Carmen Staaf’s Science Fair; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Tom Harrell’s Trip - Tom Harrell, Trumpet; Mark Turner, Saxophone; Ugonna Okegwo, Bass; Adam Cruz, Drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
Friday, October 5
- Willie Jones III Quintet; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz at Lincoln Center; 60th & Bway
- Kenny Werner Quartet; Jazz Standard; 116 E. 27th St.
- Tom Harrell’s Trip - Tom Harrell; Trumpet; Mark Turner; Saxophone; Ugonna Okegwo; Bass; Adam Cruz; Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Monte Croff Quartet; Tivon Pennicott; Quartet; JD Allen “After Hours”; Small’s; 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper X Chris Davis X Derrick Hodge; Blue Note; 131 W. 3rd St.
- Dee Dee Bridgewater With The Theo Croker Quintet

Saturday, October 6
- Willie Jones III Quintet; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz at Lincoln Center; 60th & Bway
- Smokey Robinson; Blue Note; 131 W. 3rd St.
- Tom Harrell’s Trip; Tom Harrell; Trumpet; Mark Turner; Saxophone; Ugonna Okegwo; Bass; Adam Cruz; Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Smalls Showcase: Jamie Davis Trio; Monte Croft Quartet; Tivon Pennicott; Trio; Philip Harper; Quintet; Small’s; 183 W. 10th St.
- Anu Sun & The Shed All-Stars; Bulka @ Sony Hall; Robert Glasper X Chris Davis X Derrick Hodge; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Dee Dee Bridgewater With The Theo Croker Quintet

Wednesday, October 10
- The Little Giant At 90; Celebrating: Johnny Griffin; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Center; 60th & Bway
- Michael Leonhart Orquesta Featuring: Special Guest Randy Brecker; Jazz Standard; 116 E. 27th St.
- Tom Harrell Quartet - Tom Harrell; Trumpet; Danny Grissett; Piano; Ugonna Okegwo; Bass; Adam Cruz; Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Davis Whitley; Abraham Burton; Quartet; After Hours Jam Session; Small’s; 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper: Houston Nights ft Kendrick Scott & More; Blue Note; 131 W. 3rd St.
- Kevin Eubanks: Quartet W/ Terri Lyne Carrington, Nicholas Payton, Ben Williams; Birdland; 315 W. 44th St.
- Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Thursday, October 11
- Dayramir Gonzalez & Habana Encantada; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Center; 60th & Bway
- Perez, Cohen; Potter Quintet with Larry Grenadier and Nate Smith; Jazz Standard; 116 E. 27th St.
- Tom Harrell Quartet - Tom Harrell; Trumpet; Danny Grissett; Piano; Ugonna Okegwo; Bass; Adam Cruz; Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Will Bernard Quartet; Noam Wiesenberg; Quintet; Endea Otis; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz at Lincoln Center; 60th & Bway
- Robert Glasper Trio ft Special Guest Yasmin Bey (Formerly Mose Def); Blue Note; 131 W. 3rd St.
- Kevin Eubanks: Quartet W/ Terri Lyne Carrington, Nicholas Payton, Ben Williams; Alan Broadbent Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

(Continued on page 16)
JAZZ STANDARD

October

TUE OCT 2
Eli DegiBri Quartet
Tom Oren - Tamir Shmerling - Evitar Bluvnik

WED OCT 3
Allison Miller & Carmen Staaf's Science Fair
Dayna Stephens - Ingrid Jensen - Tony Scherr

THU OCT 4
Walking Distance
Jason Moran featuring special guest Danilo Perez

FRI OCT 5-7
Kenny Werner
Dave Liebman - Esperanza Spalding - Terri Lyne Carrington

TUE OCT 9
James Poyser Quintet
Featuring member of The "Tonight Show Band & The Roots"
Ian Hendrickson-Smith - Dave Guy - Adam Cote - Jerome Jennings

WED OCT 10
Michael Leonhart Orchestra
Randy Brecker

THU-SAT OCT 11-13
Pérez, Cohen, Potter
With Larry Grenadier & Nate Smith

SUN OCT 14
Allan Harris - Genius of Eddie Jefferson
Arturo Sandoval - Nimrod Speaks

TUE OCT 16
Rodney Green Trio
Special Guest David Wong

WED-THU OCT 17-18
Ralph Peterson's Aggregate Prime
Gary Thomas - Mark Whitfield Sr. - Davis Whitfield

FRI-SUN OCT 19-21
Life Cycles
Brian Blade - Jon Cowherd - Monte Croft - John Hart - Myron Walden - Doug Weiss

TUE-WED OCT 23-24
Jakob Bro Trio
Thomas Morgan - Joey Baron

THU-SUN OCT 25-28
Christian Sands Trio
Caio Arias - Keyon Harrold - Eric Wheeler - Jonathan Barber

TUE OCT 30
Camille Bertault
Chico Pinheiro - O rather - Offi Nereby

WED OCT 31
Scott Robinson's Heliotones
Mingus Mondays

MON OCT 1, 8, 22 & 29
Mingus Band
Mingus Orchestra
Jazz Brunch Saturdays

SMOKESMOKE BUNCH
SAT OCT 6
Music, Food & Drink

SAT OCT 20
Oscar Perez - Gubbar - Arianna Neikrug

SAT OCT 27
No Brunch - Michael Kanan Trio

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Friday, October 12
- Matt Wilson's Honey And Salt; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Pérez, Cohen; Potted Quartet with Larry Grenadier and Nate Smith; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Tom Harrell Quartet - Tom Harrell, Trumpet; Danny Grissett, Piano; Ugolino Okgwko, Bass; Adam Cruz, Drum; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Brandon Lee Sextet; Seamus Blake Quartet; Corey Wallace Dublet "After-Hours"; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper Trio & Special Guest Yasmin Bey (Formerly Mos Def); Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Kevin Eubanks Quartet With Terri Lyne Carrington, Nicholas Payton, Ben Williams; Alan Broadbent Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Saturday, October 13
- Matt Wilson's Honey And Salt; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Smokestack brunch; Arianna Neikrug; Pérez, Cohen, Potted Quartet with Larry Grenadier and Nate Smith; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Tom Harrell Quartet - Tom Harrell, Trumpet; Danny Grissett, Piano; Ugolino Okgwko, Bass; Adam Cruz, Drum; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Small's Showcase: Fima Chupakhin Quintet; Brandon Lee Sextet; Seamus Blake Quartet; Brooklyn Circle; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper Trio & Special Guest Yasmin Bey (Formerly Mos Def); Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Kevin Eubanks Quartet With Terri Lyne Carrington, Nicholas Payton, Ben Williams; Alan Broadbent Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Sunday, October 14
- Matt Wilson Quartet Plus Steve Nelson; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Jazz For Kids; Allan Harris: The Genius of Eddie Jefferson; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Tom Harrell Quartet - Tom Harrell, Trumpet; Danny Grissett, Piano; Ugolino Okgwko, Bass; Adam Cruz, Drum; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Vocal Masterclass With Marion Cowings; Ai Murakami Quartet Feat. Sacha Perry; Dave Glasser Quartet; Bruce Harris Quintet; After-Hours Jam Session; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper Trio & Special Guest Yasmin Bey (Formerly Mos Def); Madeleine Peyroux @ Sony Hall; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Monday, October 15
- Julliard Jazz Ensembles; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Mingus Orchestra; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Ari Hoenig Quartet; Joe Farnsworth Group; After-Hours Jam Session; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper Trio & Special Guest Yasmin Bey (Formerly Mos Def); Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Ice On The Hudson Featuring: Rene Marie, Janis Siegel, Darius De Haas, Karen Oberlin; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Tuesday, October 16
- Dan Nimner Trio; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Rodney Green Trio & Special Guest; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Fred Hersch Duos - Fred Hersch, Piano; Anat Cohen, Clarinet; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Steve Nelson Quartet; Cody Moffett's Jambalaya; After-Hours Jam Session; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Cory Henry: First Steps Band R.Jay White & Carlin White; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Ron Carter's Great Big Band; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Wednesday, October 17
- Dan Nimner Trio; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Ralph Peterson's Aggregate Prime; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Fred Hersch Duos - Fred Hersch, Piano; Anat Cohen, Clarinet; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Or Bareket Quintet; Danon Boiler Quintet; Drs. Whitfield "After-Hours"; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper X Christian McBride X Nicholas Payton; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Ron Carter's Great Big Band; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Thursday, October 18
- Juan Andrés Ospina Big Band; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Ralph Peterson's Aggregate Prime; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Fred Hersch Duos - Fred Hersch, Piano; Anat Cohen, Clarinet; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Alfyn Johnson Quartet; Jeremy Manasia Quintet; Jonathan Thomas - "After-Hours" Jam Session; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper X Christian McBride X Nicholas Payton; Boney James @ Sony Hall; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Ron Carter's Great Big Band; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Friday, October 19
- Scott Colley Quintet; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Fred Hersch, Piano; Esperanza Spalding, Vocals; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Joey Alexander With Strings - Pianist Joey Alexander Performs With A 20-Piece String Section Under The Direction Of Music Director/ Arranger Richard Derosa; 8PM, Rose Theater; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Adam Bimbaum Quartet; Charles Ruggiero Octet; JD Allen "After-Hours"; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper: Miles Davis Tribute "Everything's Beautiful" w/ Bilal; Kenneth Whalum; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Ron Carter's Great Big Band; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Saturday, October 20
- Scott Colley Quartet; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Fred Hersch, Piano; Esperanza Spalding, Vocals; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Joey Alexander With Strings - Pianist Joey Alexander Performs With A 20-Piece String Section Under The Direction Of Music Director/ Arranger Richard Derosa; 8PM, Rose Theater; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Small's Showcase: Teddy Press; Adam Bimbaum Quartet; Charles Ruggiero Octet; Philip Harper Quintet; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper: Miles Davis Tribute "Everything's Beautiful" w/ Bilal; Kenneth Whalum; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Ron Carter's Great Big Band; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Sunday, October 21
- Carlos Henriquez Octet; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Fred Hersch, Piano; Esperanza Spalding, Vocals; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Joey Alexander With Strings - Pianist Joey Alexander Performs With A 20-Piece String Section Under The Direction Of Music Director/ Arranger Richard Derosa; 8PM, Rose Theater; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Robert Glasper: Miles Davis Tribute "Everything's Beautiful" w/ Bilal; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Monday, October 22
- Monday Nights With WBGO - Emilio Solla Tango Jazz Orchestra; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Mingus Big Band; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Josh Evans Quintet; Lucas Pino Nonet; After-Hours Jam Session; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Cory Henry: The 4 Deacons Sharay Reed, TaRon Lockett & Isaiah Sharkey; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Renee Rosnes & Bill Charlap - Duo Piano; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Tuesday, October 23
- Under One Sun; Dizzy's Club; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Jakob Bro Trio; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Ravi Coltrane, Saxophone; Gadi Lehavi, Piano; Scott Colley, Bass; Johnathan Blake, Drums ; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Robert Edwards Quartet; Frank Lacy Group; After-Hours Jam Session; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper: Mulgrew Miller Tribute ft Derrick Hodge & Rodney Scott; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Edwards: "After-Hours" Jam Session; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper: Miles Davis Tribute "Everything's Beautiful" w/ Bilal; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Ron Carter's Great Big Band; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Wednesday, October 24
- Rodney Whitaker Sextet; Dizzy's Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 8th Ave.
- Jakob Bro Trio; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.

(Continued on page 17)
Robert Glasper: Mulgrew Miller Tribute ft Derrick Hodge & Rodney Green; Tigran Hamasyan @ Sony Hall; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Ron Carter Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

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Monday, October 25

- Ravi Coltrane, Saxophone; Gadi Lehavi, Piano; Scott Colley, Bass; Johnathan Blake, Drums ; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Vocal Masterclass With Marion Cowings; Al Murakami Quartet feat. Sacha Perry; Tardo Hammer Trio; Brandon Sanders Quartet; After-Hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper: R+R=NOW; Taylor McFerrin with Marcus Gilmore; Ron Carter Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

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Friday, October 26

Mostly Monk: Mike Lemesne Trio; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way

Christian Sands Trio with Special Guests Caio Afiune and Keyon Harrod; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.

Ravi Coltrane, Saxophone; Gadi Lehavi, Piano; Scott Colley, Bass; Johnathan Blake, Drums ; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.

Wayne Tucker Sextet; Harold Mabern Trio; Isaiah J. Thompson “After-Hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Mostly Monk: Mike Lemesne Trio; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way

Monday, October 29

- Josh Lawrence & Color Theory; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Mingus Big Band; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Monday, October 29
- Cory Henry & Friends; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Tuesday, October 30

- David Chesky; Jazz In The New Harmonic; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Camille Bertault; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Jon Batiste & Friends - Jon Batiste, Piano/Vox/Harmonabord; Joe Saylor, Drums; Phil Kuehn, Bass; Tivon Pennicott, Tenor Sax; Patrick Bartley, Alto Sax; Giveton Gelin, Trumpet ; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Michel Camilo Trio; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Ron Carter’s Golden Sticker Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Wednesday, October 31
- Cristina Pato Quartet
- Scott Robinson’s Helotines: A Halloween Spectacular
- Jon Batiste & Friends - Jon Batiste, Piano/Vox/Harmonabord; Joe Saylor, Drums; Phil Kuehn, Bass; Tivon Pennicott, Tenor Sax; Patrick Bartley, Alto Sax; Giveton Gelin, Trumpet ; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.

Wednesday, October 31

- Michel Camilo Trio; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Ron Carter’s Golden Sticker Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Saturday, October 27

- Mostly Monk: Mike Lemesne Trio; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Smokestack Brunch: Michael Kanan Trio; Christian Sands Trio with Special Guests Caio Afiune and Keyon Harrod; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Ravi Coltrane, Saxophone; Gadi Lehavi, Piano; Scott Colley, Bass; Johnathan Blake, Drums ; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- The Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra Plays Monk - Wynton Marsalis Performs Brand New Thelonious Monk Arrangements With Music Direction By Saxophonist Ted Nash; 8PM, Rose Theater; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way

Thursday, October 25

- Rodney Whitaker Sextet; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Christian Sands Trio with Special Guests Caio Afiune and Keyon Harrod; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Ravi Coltrane, Saxophone; Gadi Lehavi, Piano; Scott Colley, Bass; Johnathan Blake, Drums ; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- The Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra Plays Monk - Wynton Marsalis Performs Brand New Thelonious Monk Arrangements With Music Direction By Saxophonist Ted Nash; 8PM, Rose Theater; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Thelonious Monk Festival - Monk’s Dream Featuring Bassist Russell Hall, Pianist Barry Harris, Drummer Jeff “Tain” Watts; Vocalist Vuyo Sotashe, Tap Dancer Michela Marino Lerman, And More; 7PM & 9:30 PM, The Appel Room; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Dave Stoler Quartet; Stafford Hunter & Continuum; Corey Wallace Dublet “After-Hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper: R+R=NOW; Taylor McFerrin with Marcus Gilmore; Ron Carter Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Sunday, October 28

- Alexander Claffy Quartet; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Christian Sands Trio with Special Guests Caio Afiune and Keyon Harrod; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Ravi Coltrane, Saxophone; Gadi Lehavi, Piano; Scott Colley, Bass; Johnathan Blake, Drums ; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Vocal Masterclass With Marion Cowings; Al Murakami Quartet feat. Sacha Perry; Tardo Hammer Trio; Brandon Sanders Quartet; After-Hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Robert Glasper: R+R=NOW; Kendallae Springs @ Sony Hall; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St

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Some people’s idea of free speech is that they are free to say what they like, but if anyone says anything back that is an outrage.”
- Winston Churchill

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“a system of morality which is based on relative emotional values is a mere illusion, a thoroughly vulgar conception which has nothing in it and nothing true.”
Richard Wyands

(Continued from page 11)

are written out note-for-note. But I knew that he could tell that I was paying attention to what he was doing and what he wanted to do. I tried to listen to everything he said. He wasn’t that easy to play with, he had his own thing, and he knew that I understood what he was trying to do and paid attention to it. That’s one reason why we got along fine. I saw one drummer— we were in a club—and Kenny started to play an intro and this drummer was sitting up there reading a newspaper! He wasn’t paying attention. I didn’t like that myself. Come on, reading a newspaper on the bandstand? I said, ‘No, no, this isn’t going to work with this guy.’ Sometimes Kenny didn’t write any music so I had to pay attention and not sit there reading a newspaper. [Laughs] Kenny and I became pretty good friends and worked together a long time, and then he moved to California and that was the end of it.

J: As a leader, you’ve only made seven records. Why so few?

RW: I guess I wasn’t really asked to do any more than that as a leader. I was more sideman than leader. I don’t know.

J: Do you prefer to be a sideman more than a leader?

RW: Not necessarily. I like to do my music, the things I want to play, but I also want to be a good sideman. It’s not easy to be a good sideman, to play with various people, various styles. It’s not easy, that’s all I can say.

J: On the seven recordings under your name, you only included six original compositions. Why not include more of your own work?

RW: I don’t know. Maybe I didn’t really have anything that I really wanted to record? I wasn’t so crazy about some of my compositions.

J: Does composing come easily for you? Have you spent a lot of time on it?

RW: I didn’t do that much composing. I think that’s the reason. I’ve written a lot of stuff that I’ve never completed because I wasn’t satisfied with the outcome of the work. It seems that I can’t complete my compositions, there’s always something wrong with them, a few bars here and a few bars there. I wondered about that myself. I have some that I wrote many years ago, but they’re kind of ancient, I guess, at least that’s the way I hear things now.

J: During your career you’ve played in very diverse settings. Have you had interest in free jazz?

RW: Hmm, not crazy about it. I wouldn’t play in a free-type jazz group, I know that. I have but it’s not easy. I’d rather have things in a more organized, or at least what appears to be a more organized setting. I’ve been in all kinds of groups where the bandleader just stumps the tempo off and says, “Okay, one, two, one,” and you go for yourself, [Laughs] which is not my idea for something musical. I have to have it more organized. I wouldn’t think about playing in a musical group like that. No, no, no, no. I like organization. There’s certain styles in music I don’t like. I’ve played with somebody who had four or five different styles, all in one composition. The tempos changed and all sorts of things like that. I don’t like that so it’s better that I don’t even play in a group like that. I could do it, I guess, but I’d rather not. Everybody has their own thoughts on the music they want to play.

J: Pianist Cecil Taylor passed very recently. He frequented many of New York City’s jazz clubs. Did you have a relationship with him?

RW: No, I knew him, but we never talked about music. I didn’t see him that often. In fact, I don’t remember the last time I saw him play live. I wasn’t crazy about his thing at all.

J: Do you feel he’s a part of the jazz tradition? Do you see where he fits into it?

RW: Yeah, but why or how, I don’t know because I never heard him play that much or have even heard his records. The last time I saw him I was working in town somewhere a few years ago and he came in to listen and we talked a little.

J: Did you have any involvement with New York City’s loft-jazz scene in the ‘70s?

RW: What do you mean, what’s that? Oh, okay, I heard about that but I wasn’t a part of it.

J: What are your interests outside of music?

RW: I love sports, I wanted to be an athlete. I played tennis and golf, although I had to give golf up because my game was so poor. Standing out there all day looking for balls. It was too much for me. It would take me a long time to play 18 holes. I’d spend most of my time looking for lost balls.

J: By time this interview is released you will have turned 90-year-old and had some celebrations to mark the event. Do you like a big fuss being made about you?

RW: Not really. I can take it or leave it.

J: The last questions have been given to me by other artists:

Leroy Williams (drums) asked: “How is it that your music is so beautifully melodic while still keeping a strong sense of swing?”

RW: I don’t know, I never thought of that. I don’t want to play like other people, I always try to have my own little style. I started to dislike the idea of being compared to other people or to sound like them. People would ask, “How come you don’t sound like Barry Harris?” I just picked his name, but I don’t want to sound like other people. Certainly in this day and age, that’s hard to do. Some people want you to sound like other people, that’s what they want to hear. They want to hear a certain style, but I don’t want to do that. I understand that you have to work with people, you’ve got to sound like somebody that they’ve heard of, some kind of style. I realize that and I don’t think my style, when I listen to my records, sounds strange. As long as it’s pleasant. I played a lot of music that was very difficult to deal with, to get any kind of a feel for. You gotta make a living, sometimes you gotta play something that other people like. And if they dislike it, then what? You’ll starve to death. I think about Cecil Taylor, who you just mentioned. His style? I wouldn’t want to sound like that, no, really. I’m not saying that it’s bad. He can play other ways, I’ve heard him play other ways. I think about Cecil Taylor, who you just mentioned. His style? I wouldn’t want to sound like that, no, really. I’m not saying that it’s bad. He can play other ways, I’ve heard him do it. Some people can get away with playing like that but I’ve got to be listenable. That’s all I can say, and that’s hard to do too. I listen to some of my older records that I played on with groups and I say, ‘Wow! Was that you? Really, what? Man, that was good.’ Some of those Prestige records I’m on were pretty good.

Peter Bernstein (guitar) asked: “The Gentle Jug record [a reissue of two previously issued albums including Nice an’ Cool which featured Wyands] is one of my all-time favorites. I’ve always wanted to ask you about that session and working with Gene Ammons. Did you play with him regularly around that time? Did he just call tunes and go? What was Jug like?”

RW: That was recorded in 1961 at Rudy Van Gelder’s studio but I don’t really remember the session for Nice an’ Cool, it was so long ago. I think I knew in advance what songs were to be covered. I think Esmond Edmonds, who was in charge of the session as the pro-

(Continued on page 21)
Richard Wyands

ducer, told me what songs to expect. There were a few songs that I didn’t know, there were a couple tunes I’d never even heard of. Gene Ammons didn’t have any quirks, he knew exactly what he wanted to do, what tunes he wanted to play, what keys they were to be in, how long we were gonna play on each tune, and how many solos. He knew all of that before we got there. Esmond Edmonds had a lot to do with it too. I don’t think the session took us very long, there weren’t a lot of takes done. I can’t say that I knew Gene Ammons well. I never worked with him, except on the recordings. That’s all. I never even made a job in a nightclub with him. I made the records with Gene Ammons because Esmond Edmonds liked the way I played and hired me. All I know is that I like Gene Ammons. I like the way he played.

Peter Bernstein also asked: “What do you feel are the most important elements of “comping”? You are one of the greatest ever and I wonder what your approach is to it?”

RW: Peter Bernstein said that? Whooa, I don’t know if I can explain it. I pay attention to comping. I used to like the way that John Lewis comped, not on everything, but I like his comping. Some pianists are too busy. You can’t be too busy, they’re just filling up every beat in each bar. That’s not my idea of comping. It’s hard to explain what I do but you’ve got to leave some space. Not too much space, but a little, and don’t try to copy exactly what the soloist is doing. Play in there but not copy it. Some piano players copy everything the soloist is trying to play. No. It’s hard to explain. Nobody’s ever asked me what I thought about comping.

JI: How did you get so good at comping?

RW: Am I good at it?

JI: Peter Bernstein says you’re the best.

RW: That’s what he said, huh? I didn’t know I was that good at it really. I just did something with Peter a few weeks ago. I’m glad he likes it. I especially tried to concentrate on comping during my early career. I’ve played with people who’ve said, “You’re over playing, you’re filling in too much,” I’ve heard that. But I don’t play too many fill-ins, it all depends with who I’m playing with too. I’m inspired to play different ways with different people. I try not to overplay. Sometimes I’m not successful. I’ve played with singers that have said, “Richard, you’re not playing enough, enough!” I don’t want to fill up every thought. Not playing the way he plays by himself or with a rhythm section, but he overplayed, for my taste, comping.

Monty Alexander (piano): “Who were the pianists that were your main influences/inspirations?”

RW: Oh, wow, my friend Monty. Well, Count Basie, believe it or not, when I was a kid but not when I finally got into the serious business [of performing]. I liked the simplicity in Basie’s playing. I just liked the way he played. Duke Ellington was second on my list. If you noticed, both of these people were bandleaders—not that I was interested in becoming a big band bandleader. That’s the way I thought about it at the time as a youngster. I had a lot of their records and saw them play with my mother in San Francisco and Oakland. I used to try to play like Count Basie. Duke Ellington was a little bit more difficult for me, at that age, but Basie had a simple style and I became the “Kid Basie,” that’s what I got called. I used to have a band with a couple of friends of mine, we tried to play jazz, tried to play some of Basie’s songs that were popular at the time. As I got older, I played differently. I loved Duke Ellington and still play some of his compositions. That’s how it started for me. That was a very long time ago but I have to thank my mother for trying to help me belong with music, jazz especially. My father wasn’t exactly a jazz fan, by any means. Nat King Cole was one of my favorites, especially when he had his early trios. I liked his singing but he was an outstanding pianist.

How I Stole Richard Wyands
By Lenora Wyands - his wife

Lenora Wyands: How we met was that he was playing in Harlem at Minton’s Playhouse and I used to go and flirt with him, me and my girlfriends. In those days, you went to the different clubs and we made sure we sat at the end where the bandstand was, and I used to wink and blink at him and I got his attention. One day my older brother and I went to an afternoon session. We went to the bar for a drink and Richard came off the bandstand and asked my brother if he could talk to me. So that’s where it’s started and it’s been, this year it’ll be 57-years that we’ve been married.

JI: Did you have any reservations about starting a relationship with a musician?

LW: My mother did! She said, “What? A musician? [Laughs] Are you kidding me?” And then she met him and she cooked some good dinners for him. So he was in, he passed the test. He loved her cooking. Yeah, we’ve had a very good relationship.
By Ken Weiss

City Parks Foundation's SummerStage presented trumpet veteran Charles Tolliver and young award-winning vocalist Brianna Thomas leading groups on August 24 at Harlem’s Marcus Garvey Park as part of the 26th Anniversary celebration of the Charlie Parker Jazz Festival, New York City’s free annual salute to the legendary late saxophonist.

Tolliver’s star-laden quintet paid tribute to his debut album, 1968’s *Paper Man*, a stirring work that bridged the gap between hard bop and the avant-garde. All-star groups often don’t live up to their billing but that wasn’t the case with Tolliver’s crew, not with DeJohnette’s rambunctious percussion driving the music constantly forward.

Vocalist Brianna Thomas opened the evening with her sextet (Conun Pappas, piano; Marvin Sewell, guitar; Ryan Berg, bass; Alvin Atkinson, Jr., drums; Fernando Saci, percussion) and some powerhouse vocals.
Steve Wilson
Appearing at Jazz Standard
September 6--9

Gary Bartz
Charlie Parker Festival 2018

Photo © Ken Weiss
Buster Williams, Charles Tolliver
Charlie Parker Festival 2018

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Brianna Thomas
Charlie Parker Festival 2018

Photo © Ken Weiss
Cyrus Chestnut
Appearing at Jazz Standard
August 30–September 2

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Jack DeJohnette
Charlie Parker Festival 2018

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Jason Moran
Charlie Parker Festival 2018

Photo © Ken Weiss
Jason Moran, Gary Bartz, Charles Tolliver, Buster Williams, Jack DeJohnette
Charlie Parker Festival 2018

Photo © Ken Weiss
Scott Robinson

“I like doubling. I like playing all the different sounds.”

**Ji:** Who and what were your initial inspiration to focus on baritone sax?

**Sr:** Well that’s an interesting question. I actually don’t focus on the baritone sax although a lot of people think I do. I never played much baritone until I came to New York. I started getting some calls from people that needed a baritone sax player. So I started playing it more and then I started getting more calls to play it, and I played it with a lot of big bands. Most of that has come to an end. I’m still playing it with Maria Schneider’s band, and I was playing it with Bob Brookmeyer. I actually really do love the instrument and I think I managed to develop a personal sound and approach to it which helps to get me a lot of attention. The problem is that there’s something about the baritone that once you start playing it and you get good at it and you get a reputation for being good at it. Nobody wants to know that you do anything else - and the tenor has always been my primary voice. I found myself faced with a situation where people weren’t calling me to play tenor anymore. Then it became even worse. After a few years of this, if people did see me somewhere playing tenor, I started hearing comments like, “Wow, you sound really great. I didn’t even know you played tenor.” This became kind of disturbing to me and troublesome. I began to feel that I was losing my identity and my personal voice. I never wanted to back off from the baritone because I love the instrument. But I was kind of forced to back off of it because of the reality that if I didn’t, my voice on the tenor would just become lost. So I started taking fewer jobs on baritone and focusing more on tenor and telling certain people to call me for tenor and call somebody else for baritone.

**Ji:** When I used to go to hear Thad Jones’ band, Pepper Adams played the woodwind doubles that were written for bass clarinet on baritone sax – transposing on the spot.

**Sr:** There’s a logic to that transposition that makes it doable, at least in a certain register. When I started playing in Mel Lewis’ band, I became Gary Smulyan’s number one sub back in the days. I played many, many times in that band and went to Japan with them. I always brought the bass clarinet and the guys were like, “Wow, nobody ever does that.” But for me it was kind of fun, and fun to hear those parts played as they were intended, on a bass clarinet. I like doubling. I like playing all the different sounds. I have great respect for specialization. Some people really specialize and hone a particular skill and really get it to a very, very high level and part of me wishes I were more that way. But I have to be true to my nature. It seems to be my nature to have a thousand interests and to get all excited about a million different things and add them all into what I do - so it quickly spirals out of control and I end up with these big complicated projects in various stages, full of instruments that I have to haul around. But it’s all part of the fun.

**Ji:** What is your “laboratory” like?

**Sr:** Well, you know, I’m attracted to science. I’m not any kind of scientist and I never went to school for any of that but I’m attracted to the aesthetics of science and I use that in my music. I use it a lot. I like taking scientific materials and looking at them from an aesthetic viewpoint, and using them in composition and in performance. If you came into my lab, you’d see a lot of amazing instruments, all kinds of unbelievable sound sources and strange devices. You’d also see some actual laboratory equipment, some chemical, glassware and stuff like this. Strange beakers and vials kind of hanging around the room and that’s just part of the vibe out there. I have a round disc that lights up. It looks like lightning sort of, and it responds to sound - and they used these in Star Trek when the board is recharging. They use these weird plates that describe these strange electrical arcs. I just like to turn it on and it really puts a vibe in the room - puts a kind of science meets music-of-the-future feeling in the room.

**Ji:** Let’s talk about some of the artists with whom you’ve played who have made an impact on your artistry and/or your perspectives about music. You’ve played with such a wide variety of artists, including those whose roots are in another era, the Swing Era - like Buck Clayton and Lionel Hampton.

**Sr:** My earliest heroes in this music were Lester Young, Ben Webster, Louis Armstrong, Albert Ayler, Rahsaan Roland Kirk. These are people that I listened to when I was a boy. I don’t get caught up in the debates over whether the music of the 20s is more or less valid than the music of the 30s or whether bebop was somehow the end of jazz. We call Bebop modern jazz. Well, it’s from the 1940s, you know? It’s a long time ago now. It’s splitting hairs really to me to argue about Bebop versus Swing or others. But there are a lot of people out there that are ready to go to the mat over these kinds of distinctions. I love the music. To me, it’s a big river. The music is all connected. Every part of it feeds on every other part of it and it moves together with a purposefulness all of its own. What appears to us to be part of the river is more a reference to the landscape around it because the water is moving. The river itself has already moved on. I love the music, if it’s good creative music. If it’s part of that great continuum, then I love it with all my heart and to be able to play with the masters of...
Scott Robinson
Appearing at Jazz Standard
October 31

By Eric Nemeyer
this music from different eras is one of the great treasures of my life. It’s one of the great opportunities of what I do. In baseball, kids grow up idolizing Mickey Mantle for example. If they’re fortunate enough to get to a point where they can actually become a major league player, Mickey Mantle is long gone. But I get to play with “Mickey Mantle.” I grew up listening to Frank Wess – and I reached a point where I can go play at the Vanguard with Frank Wess. That is such an incredible thing. I’m so grateful for that. I got to play with Buck Clayton in his band, and record with him. I got to play with Illinois Jacquet.

**SR:** I’ve worked for some pretty tough people. I’ve worked for some people that are not very nice and I’ve worked for some people who are really great leaders. Maria Schneider is very demanding in a certain way. She really knows what she wants to get out of the music. It’s never sufficient to just play the written notes and snore your way through parts. You’ve got to really bring it to life. She’s always asking for dynamics and emotion - and you’ve got to put a lot of feeling into it. You’ve got to understand the intent of the music, and really give it what it needs to come to life. She’s very specific about these things. But at the same time, she loves spontaneity. She loves the creative people that she’s brought into the band and she loves to wind them up and let them go - and when they go, she just revels in it. She’s very grateful to her musicians for what they do. She does what a lot of band leaders never do – she sends cards or calls up the next day and leaves a message saying, “Oh, Scott, that was just so incredible what you played last night. I can’t believe it. I’m still flying.” Not everybody does that. She really is communicative and she’s just a great, great gal. She’s got everyone’s respect - and I’ve worked for plenty of people that are not that way. They know who they are.

**JI:** Could you elaborate a bit about how she communicates some of the things that she wants during a rehearsal?

**SR:** She’ll gesture with her hands, and she’ll say, “That part needs to rise up. Think of yourself as flying. Think of yourself as flying through the clouds and you’re soaring over everything and you’re a little bit afraid.” She’ll give you ideas like that - emotional things, almost programmatic considerations that inform how the music is supposed to sound ... how it’s supposed to be realized. Much of her music tells stories - and the players need to understand the type of story that’s being told so that they can …. we’re actors in a way, aren’t we? We’re playing a role. We’re playing a role in some larger drama. So as actors, we need to find the voice and the mannerisms that bring the drama to life. Her music is very dramatic. There’s a lot of story in it - so it places those types of demands on a performer where somebody else’s music might not.

**JI:** By comparison, how does that compare to someone like Anthony Braxton for example?

**SR:** Working with Anthony Braxton ... there’s another great example of somebody that I idolized from boyhood and eventually found myself performing with. He is a real treasure. He’s something very, very special - very powerful work ethic, incredibly productive person, also very demanding in a certain way. Of course, his music is very different from Maria Schneider’s. Much of the music I played with Braxton was highly notated and very, very complex. I did one quintet performance with him where we played standards, actually, interpreted in a very free-wheeling manner.

**JI:** I remember an album of his from the 1970s on ECM where he played Charlie Parker’s harmonically developed “Donna Lee.”

**SR:** Yeah, right, right. He did a couple of albums like that. One of them was with Hank Jones. I asked Hank about that. I said, “What did you think of that?” He said, “That cat has a very individual sound and approach to music, and I respected that and I really enjoyed the sessions.”

[Anthony Braxton said] “‘You know, we’re in a difficult cycle right now. There are a lot of problems in the world. But the important thing is that people like you and I keep on playing music like our lives depend on it.’”

**JI:** Over the years I have read attacks on Anthony Braxton by some well known players.

**SR:** Yeah, Anthony Braxton gets thrown into the slop bucket termed “free jazz” - which is kind of ludicrous. He’s certainly capable of playing in a free, improvised manner. He does a lot of that but the bulk of his work is compositional. His are highly original compositions. He’s much more interested in that then in just a lot of free, open blowing. When you play in his ensemble, you have a certain amount of freedom to make personal statements. But you must heed to the intent of the music and the arc that’s being described compositionally. That’s what’s important. Braxton is an amazingly hard working person, incredibly prolific. He’s written all this music … and all these operas. A term like free jazz becomes very silly when you’re speaking of someone like Braxton. You asked what I appreciated about Braxton. The strongest comment I could make is that he’s a great example - maybe the greatest living example - of someone who has really created his own world in this music. As much as he loves standards, and he loves Lester Young, and he loves the whole spectrum of the music … but within the genre, he’s beyond it really. He’s managed to create a world all of his own. I keep an Anthony Braxton file, a Sun Ra file, a Mel Lewis file.

**JI:** Did he provide you with any particular direction or suggestions that you found particularly noteworthy?

**SR:** Well, I know you like motivational kinds of comments. I met him again after I moved to New York. This might have been 1985. My first album came out in 1984. It was an LP. I saw Braxton at Sweet Basil and I brought him a copy of the LP. He was incredibly enthusiastic about it. He looked at it and all the different instruments, and wow. He was really grateful for it and incredibly friendly. He started saying, “You know, we’re in a difficult cycle right now. There are a lot of problems in the world. But the important thing is that people like you and I keep on playing music like our lives depend on it.” He said that very emphatically and with great passion. That stuck in my mind. He’s very enthusiastic about other people’s work. Years later he started talking to me about that record and I realized wow, he really did go and listen to it and pay attention – so that years later he can come back and talk to me about it. It was amazing. He loves music. I don’t know how he finds the time to listen to all the stuff he loves listening to, and write all the stuff that he writes. Another guy that I used to speak with a lot was Sun Ra. I used to see Sun Ra all the time - any chance I got. He was very friendly to me and we would sit and talk for hours sometimes. He was very giving of his time, very encouraging. He gave me his book, signed it for me and everything and wouldn’t take any money for it. He was a really nice guy to me. He was another amazing person who created his own world.

Scott Robinson

(Continued from page 27)

Matt Wilson
Appearing at Dizzy’s Club
October 12-13
Matt Wilson
“*I learned with my ears and not my eyes*”

By Eric Nemeyer

**JI:** What are your top five desert island drum records that you couldn’t possibly live without, and please state why? The leader doesn’t have to be a drummer, but please choose albums based on the role of the drums.

**MW:** Off the top of my head: (1) *Study in Brown* - Max Roach – Clifford Brown Quintet. This was a serious band and the way Max sings on these tunes is astounding. (2) *Out of the Afternoon* - Roy Haynes - Wow! Roy is a prime example of playing melody and conveying *The Song* in what ever he plays. He is always playing the song. Incredibly creative and you feel everything he plays. (3) *But Not for Me - Ahmad Jamal Trio Live at the Pershing* - Vernel Fournier plays gorgeous transparent time on this record that allows Ahmad to dance over the feel. I can listen to this everyday and still marvel at its simplicity. His brush sound is awesome also. (4) *Coltrane- John Coltrane Quartet w/ Elvin Jones* - I am always drawn to this recording for it is so clear. I loved Elvin because his touch was so amazing. I never thought of Elvin as loud, his sound was warm and would just wash over you like a wave of warm water. (5) *Moanin’* – Art Blakey (6) *It Might as Well be Swing* - Basie with Sinatra, Sonny Payne. (7) *Go* - Dexter Gordon with Billy Higgins. Okay, this is seven CDs - but what the heck. Swing is a great beat! These are proof!

**JI:** When you first embarked on the sophisticated journey of becoming an improvising drummer, or a jazz drummer, what were some methods that you found extremely useful to achieving your goals?

**MW:** I was fortunate to always be playing music with musicians so my development was not sitting in a practice room and working out something that I would lay on the music when I did get a chance to play. I always liked to play to play the song. I also was improvising all of the time because I did not know any better. I did not read music until later which was, as I look back, a blessing. I learned with my ears and not my eyes.

**JI:** As an artist, your state of mind and ability to dig deep is important. Outside of playing, what do you do to re-center and find peace of mind? What do you do to break through all of the surface stress in our contemporary world?

**MW:** Laugh often and enjoy my kids. They re-center me and drive me crazy at the same time. That is great! We have been trying as a family to get out and experience the world in activities that are as technology-free as possible. Appreciate what is right with world instead of always stressing about what is wrong. Eat good food made with love and offered with pride. Take walks, do yoga and help people.

**JI:** What is it about musical improvisation that you find so valuable? What does it offer you and drives you forward?

**MW:** I love music that is occurring in the moment when the musicians are welcoming and allowing what is supposed to happen to happen. It is risky business and the vulnerability is what, to me, allows a jazz performance to be so exhilarating. I am constantly marveled by how a group of musicians can do this and I do it almost everyday. I want to be naive, I don’t want to know what it is but just celebrate that it is a vital part of my life.

**JI:** What motivated you and drives you forward?

**MW:** As a musician, what do you feel your role or responsibility is in our society? Is what you do something only for you and the musicians you are sharing the stage with, or are you trying to achieve something outside of that microcosm?

**MW:** Play some music that helps folks escape for a bit. Improvised music is shared in the moment so the audience is a vital part of the experience. They want to be included in the journey so welcome them and take them somewhere. Let. Let them laugh, let them cry and let them know you.

**JI:** What is the greatest compliment that you can receive as a musician?

**MW:** *From players:* It sure is fun to play with you. *From an audience:* It sure is fun to hear you. *From a promoter:* It sure is fun to have you here.

**JI:** What is the most rewarding facet of your life as an artist?

**MW:** Playing music with a community of amazing musicians that I love dearly as people.

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"**Appreciate what is right with world instead of always stressing about what is wrong.**"

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”In the beginning of a change the patriot is a scarce man, and brave, and hated and scorned. When his cause succeeds, the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a patriot.”

- *Mark Twain*
Clifford Brown
His Life & Music — Part 1

Jazz Loves Its Heroes, And Loves To Tell Stories About Them - In Time, These Stories Acquire The Appearance Of Mythology.

By John Barrett, Jr.

A common theme is the Tragic Ending: a player emerges from nowhere, dazzles the crowd for a few years, and then dies or disappears or somehow escapes notice. For whatever reason, most of these tales are told of trumpeters. There is Bix Beiderbecke, a hot stylist whose best years were spent in a much-maligned dance band. There is Fats Navarro, whose amazing energy was destroyed by narcotics and fad diets. There is Dupree Bolton, a brilliant hard-bopper who made two albums and spent much of his remaining life in prison.

And at the head of the list we have Clifford Brown...who has little in common with the others. He recorded often, worked tirelessly at his craft, had a stable home life, and was riding a wave of hard-earned success. His demise was not self-inflicted, and it came without warning: the car slid out of control, as the wife of a bandmate was driving it. He accomplished all of this in four years, and there is no telling what more he could have done. You can hardly get more tragic than that.

Clifford Brown’s style has two distinct elements, which are opposite yet complimentary. His pace is typically fast; notes zigzag as they climb upward, and the intensity always grows. In this aspect he resembles Roy Eldridge—a constant competitor, full of fight. At the same time, his tone rarely slurs, no matter how fast he goes. The notes are clearly separate from each other, usually pure in tone. It is rare to hear him raspy, or short of breath. This trait he shares with classical trumpeters, and with Rafael Mendez, a man he admired greatly. (This admiration was mutual; according to Chris Powell, Mendez gave Brown his trumpet when they first met.)

When asked to name his influences on a 1954 questionnaire, Clifford cited one man: Fats Navarro. While both travel similar lines, Fats has a slightly rougher tone, and a simpler approach to solos. While Navarro charges forward, Clifford will go on quote-filled excursions—if Fats’ solos are diagonal lines, Brown’s are elegant, finely-wrought curves. Each phrase is part of the big picture; every note has its purpose. It is a very competitive style, demanding concentration and discipline. Clifford Brown had these traits in abundance, and it might be from the way he was brought up.

He was born in Wilmington, Delaware, a town not too far from Philadelphia. His mother Estella helped run an employment agency; Joe Brown worked as a porter, a fireman, and at one time a deputy sheriff. They were married in 1913, and later found a house on Poplar Street; when Clifford was born in 1930, the house was full of success stories. Marie Brown graduated high school at the age of 15, the first in school history to do this; Ellsworth was a chess instructor at the Wilmington YMCA, and later taught Clifford the game. Three of the Brown children went to college, an amazing achievement for the era; both parents found a way to stress education. As one child put it, if someone said “Where’s the jelly at?” the answer would be “Right in back of the preposition.”

As the youngest, Clifford was babied a bit. Joe Brown would buy used toys for the kids and refurbish them; not so for Clifford, whose playthings were new. He could read before he entered school, and rode a girl’s bike at the age of two. (He couldn’t reach the seat, so he’d sit on the bar between the wheels!) He would discover his favorite toy a few years later...even before he had any interest in music. Father owned several instruments (piano, violin, trumpet); he’d play these in his spare time, and would try to teach the kids. He was showing the trumpet to Eugene Brown when Clifford got excited. “When I was too little to reach it, I’d climb to where it was (in a closet) and I kept on knocking it down.”

Joe got the message: he gave his son an old bugle, and after messing around with it, Clifford joined the school band. That was how he got his first trumpet—by age twelve he was taking lessons with Robert “Boysie” Lowery. Using no book, no formal program, Lowery taught Clifford how to recognize chord changes, and how to improvise around them. Lowery calls his system “the classes”; it helped Clifford, but Boysie was modest about it. “He really knew what he wanted to do as far as music was concerned. All he needed was the right person, and I think I was the one at the time.”

While still in junior high, Clifford was playing in The Little Dukes, a boys’ band organized by Robert Lowery. He’d occasionally replace Lowery in his own group, The Aces of Rhythm. He couldn’t do it often, as he was too young to get in the clubs. In 1946, he entered Howard High School, where his music teacher was Harry Andrews, a Columbia graduate and former Army bandmaster. “Many times I’d be cleaning up my desk after school, and he’d stick his head in and ask if I had time for another lesson. And we’d go at it. But he was ahead of me. He knew polytonality. He played all those little grace notes.” Even at this stage, much of his style was already established.

Brown’s schedule never let up. In addition to The Aces of Rhythm, he played in the Howard High marching band—and was writing arrangements for it. He was a frequent participant at YMCA jam sessions, and played...
Clifford Brown

with the Wilmington Elks Club band. (They also jammed at the Brown household; among the participants was Rashied Ali.) He graduated in the spring of 1948; that fall he enrolled at Delaware State College, where his playing was already known. (At that time the school had no music department; Clifford’s scholarship was for mathematics.) On weekdays he took classes and played at school functions; every weekend he’d go to Philadelphia and jam with the pros. This is where his real education took place; he practiced with Red Rodney and duelled on stage with his idol Fats Navarro. Benny Golson describes one of these encounters: “…Fats played the first solo, and then Clifford began to play. Fats held his horn in his hands the way trumpet players do, and sort of stepped back—not in awe, but sort of like in respect. And I’ll tell you, Clifford was really holding his own.” Not bad for a fresh-man.

Clifford did well at Delaware State; early on he was nicknamed “The Brain.” His original plan was to teach math if a jazz career didn’t pan out. But he was increasingly pulled to music. The deciding factor arrived in the summer of ’49, when Clifford was home for vacation. The Dizzy Gillespie big band was playing in Wilmington, and the hall was packed. One of the trumpets (Benny Harris) didn’t make it to the show. In the audience was Robert Lowery, who had jammed with Clifford’s band, and led him to the stage, and told Dizzy that here was Robert ‘Boysie’ Lowery. Using no book, no formal program, Lowery taught Clifford how to recognize chord changes, and how to improvise around them. Lowery calls his system ‘the classes’; it helped Clifford, but Boysie was modest about it. “He really knew what he wanted to do as far as music was concerned. All he needed was the right person, and I think I was the one at the time.”

Near the end of the school year, on June 6, 1950, Clifford and three others were driving home from a gig. A deer ran across the road; the car swerved and flipped over. The driver and his girlfriend were killed. Brown and another musician were rushed to a hospital. Clifford was placed in a full body cast, and another musician were rushed to a hospital. Brown arrived at Maryland State and found a seat on the 14-piece college band. He wrote charts for the group and was also composing, at his most serious level to date. Besides the band’s regular concerts, they were often hired for dances and parties, which sent the group throughout Maryland. A separate car accident. And on July 7, the life of Fats Navarro ended with tuberculosis. Clifford’s body and spirit were wracked, in all ways possible. Thankfully, his parents were nearby, and he received a hospital visit from Dizzy Gillespie. The advice he gave was simple: “You’ve got to keep it going.”

He was back in Wilmington, by the end of the summer, beginning a painful recovery. He could lift his arms with difficulty, but could not yet hold a trumpet. Instead he practiced with just his mouthpiece, and limbered his fingers from the familiar piano. He got good enough to play local gigs as a pianist, and made a short tour with Robert Lowery.

Clifford returned to the trumpet in the spring of 1951, and made frequent trips to Philly. In May of that year saxman Tom Darnall saw Charlie Parker at Club Harlem. “The band was playing without him, just a trio. He [Parker] was in the next room. Just sitting in this huge room by himself…He said ‘Well, go get your instrument. I fired my trumpet player.’ I happened to mention Clifford, and he said ‘Go call him!’ Darnall did, from the club’s phone; Brown played the evening show with Parker, who told him, ‘I hear what you’re saying, but I don’t believe it.’”

By this time Clifford had dropped out of Maryland State; recuperation took all his time. There were occasional gigs but no full-time employment—until November 1951. Chris Powell rolled into town with his band, The Blue Flames; they were an R&B group with jazz inclinations. (At the bass was Jymie Merritt, later of the Jazz Messengers.) Clifford went to one of their shows, blew a few bars for Chris Powell, and was offered a job on the spot. His parents weren’t crazy for the idea (“You left college to do this?”) but gave their reluctant blessing—and their son toured the country, while his body continued to recover.

It was with the Blue Flames that Clifford made his first recordings: four tunes on the Okeh label, made in Chicago on March 21, 1952. Clifford solos on two of these numbers; originally paired on a 45 single, they can now be heard on The Beginning and the End (Columbia/Legacy CK 66491).

These are typical jump blues, sung by Chris Powell; the musicianship is competent but undistinguished—except for Clifford: he blossoms on “I Come from Jamaica,” giving his one chorus the impact of ten. He ignores the tune’s Latin beat, and showers a fast succession of high, pure notes. At no point does Clifford “honk” in the R&B tradition; throughout he shows a bebop sensibility. Rich and brassy, he ends in a stunning swagger—and Powell shouts his encouragement. Brown then takes a mute on “Ida Red,” rolling a rhythm to match Eddie Lambert’s guitar. Each phrase is rounded, and the sound is warm… in

“The greatest day in your life and mine is when we take total responsibility for our attitudes. That’s the day we truly grow up.”

- John Maxwell

(Continued on page 34)
Clifford Brown

(Continued from page 33)

contrast to Dizzy, whose mute work could be piercing in tone. Unlike the band, Clifford took his role here quite seriously. He is practically the only reason to hear these tunes—and you can hear, even at this time, the genesis of his style to come.

During Brown’s stay, the Powell band grew in popularity—but Clifford was getting restless. He had to dance as he played, which was hard on his still-healing legs. As always, his first love was jazz, which he played whenever he got the chance. He wrote and arranged for the Powell group. One tune was called “Commercialized Utensils” for the Powell group. This men took no prisoners, but neither did Clifford: his power is evident on “Brownie Speaks,” his first recorded composition. Its theme is compact and busy, scaling up and down a few notes; the horns parallel on the theme and harmonize on the bridge. Brown’s solo is confident, mixing clear notes with slurred, brassy clusters—this is miles away from his work with Chris Powell. There’s a sly quote of “Swingin’ on a Redd Foxx. The Lionel Hampton band was in Atlantic City, where they played whose effort has a raspy kick.) slightly faster: Clifford’s solo is shorter, and the precision he normally has.) Take Two is better executed. (The same is true of Golson, relatively faster, though his tone sounds a little pinched. On the basis of this tune alone, the rookie had professed himself.)

Lou is much better on “You Go to My Head,” taking the first solo with creamy, vibrato-filled notes. He then follows with a double-time flurry, stunning in its intricacy and tunefulness. Clifford is strong with a three-note pattern, after which he goes racing: it’s a little muddy at first, but soon straightens out. The ending, where both horns weave around each other, is truly special—and Elmo ends the tune in a romantic flourish. The album, optimistically titled New Faces - New Sounds (Blue Note 5030), met every expectation.

In two days Clifford was back in the same studio, recording for Tadd Dameron; he was reunited with Percy and Philly Joe, and surrounded by a crop of young horns. Producing the session was Ira Gitler, who had heard of Clifford but hadn’t yet heard him. In the week before the session, Tadd boasted to Gitler of his new trumpeter—and still Ira was surprised. “When Brownie took his first solo on ‘Philly J.J.,’ I nearly fell off my seat in the control room…Brownie, although influenced by Fats, was not just an imitation of Fats—he little too loud, and obscure Brown’s soft moments.) He is relaxed, yet powerful; Benny Golson tries hard on his solo, a disjointed first chorus but a great second. “Philly” Joe then gets his chance, and the ensemble roars home.

“Dial ‘B’ for Beauty” offers a contrast: after Clifford’s proud fanfare, Tadd plays alone, accented by brushes. Though his piano work is often maligned, Dameron was capable of great delicacy; this solo tiptoes, and shows some Ellington mannerisms. Golson is gemlike on his short solo, and Oscar Estell has a choice phrase on baritone. Brown’s mute is sassy on “Theme of No Repeat,” yawning through a sweet chorus. (The open horn on the theme is likely the work of Idrees Sulieman.) Clifford stays in the middle register for the first take of “Choose Now” and spins a fast circle. (Here the notes run together, without the precision he normally has.) Take Two is slightly faster: Clifford’s solo is shorter, and better executed. (The same is true of Golson, whose effort has a raspy kick.)

Following this session, the Dameron band headed for Atlantic City, where they played the Paradise Club, opening for comedians like Redd Foxx. The Lionel Hampton band was in

was a new trumpet giant.” Grand praise from a seasoned critic…but listening proves this is not hyperbole.

Four tunes were recorded, with two takes of “Choose Now.” (After Clifford’s death, these tracks became Side Two of Clifford Brown Memorial—Prestige 7051/JOC-017.) “Philly J.J.” is as advertised: a feature for the drummer, he pours on the cymbals after the short theme. There are a few interjections of brass, then Clifford gets his first solo: calm and glassy, his notes hit the roof in varying a few simple ideas. (The backing horns are a

“one of the trumpets (Benny Harris) didn’t make it to the show. In the audience was Robert Lowery, who had jammed with Dizzy; he found Clifford (also in the crowd), led him to the stage, and told Dizzy that here was a substitute trumpeter. Clifford took a seat with the professionals, and played up a storm—Dizzy said, ‘Where did this guy come from?’ He even took the solo on ‘I Can’t Started,’ which was normally reserved for Dizzy. After the show, Gillespie urged the young man to pursue a life of music. Within two weeks Clifford had transferred to Maryland State College, where the music program was superb and the college band was beginning to make noise. With Clifford in their ranks, they’d be making a lot more.”

restless. He had to dance as he played, which was hard on his still-healing legs. As always, his first love was jazz, which he played whenever he got the chance. He wrote and arranged for the Powell group. One tune was called “Commercialized Utensils” - but none of these items were recorded. He found time for jam sessions wherever the band was playing, trading licks with Stan Getz and with John Coltrane, who at the time was also on the R&B circuit. When Getz’ wife was arrested for heroin, Brown organized a concert on Stan’s behalf, which raised five hundred dollars. And as Clifford played beside the jazz giants, word was getting around.

In Philly he ran into Tadd Dameron, who was re-organizing his band after a long absence. Tadd needed a trumpeter, and Brown was very interested—he’d be filling a chair once held by Fats Navarro. The group was set to record in early ’52 but the session was delayed, owing to Tadd’s drug problems. Clifford toured with Chris Powell for another year, then received two offers to record in June of 1953. (The parting with Powell was amicable; Chris wished him good luck, and Clifford sought his advice in later years.)

Brown hurried to New York, and was in Star,” while Hope jabs some sour notes; Donaldson works even faster, though his tone sounds a little pinched. On the basis of this tune alone, the rookie had professed himself.

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nearby Wildwood, New Jersey, playing the Surf Club. The two groups would jam together in their off-hours, and this would lead to the next chapter in Clifford’s career.

During the Dameron engagement, there was time for another recording session. In the WOR studios on June 22 (for the third time in two weeks), Clifford was back for Blue Note, this time in support of J.J. Johnson. Simply titled Jay Jay Johnson With Clifford Brown (Blue Note 5028), this had Percy’s brother Jimmy Heath on sax, and the rhythm section of the Modern Jazz Quartet. John Lewis rolls a fast start on “Get Happy,” and the horns sound modern on the reharmonized theme. Johnson’s solo is sculpted, with smooth flugelhorn notes; there’s almost none of the trombone’s rasp. Heath, on tenor, sounds alto-like as he twists through the heights of the instrument’s range. Clifford climbs in little steps, then hits a thrilling succession of high notes; at the end of his solo he joins in. Lewis’ playing is the intensity always grows. In this aspect he resembles Roy Eldridge—a constant competitor, full of fight. At the same time, his tone rarely slurs, no matter how fast he goes. The notes are clearly separate from each other, usually pure in tone. It is rare to hear him raspy, or short of breath.”

Clifford Brown

(Continued from page 34)

Clifford Brown plays a toy-soldier march as Art hits the “Topsy” drum riff. The resulting album (Blue Note 5032) was highly anticipated, and accurately titled: New Star on the Horizon.

Back at the Band Box, Clifford was proving his worth every night. Lionel Hampton loved horn battles, and would call on his sections for dueling solos. Art Farmer would usually take the first solo, and Brown would follow: “He would send Brownie after me, and then we would play choruses, halves, eights, and fours…I must admit I was more than a bit jealous of his ability to play so well. However, he was such a sweet and warm human being, I was forced to like him, even though he made things very difficult for me as a trumpet player.”

On September 2, 1953, the Lionel Hampton Orchestra boarded a plane for Oslo; for most of the group, it was their first time on the Continent. Those with ambition, like Gigi and Quincy, viewed Europe as an opportunity: small labels would record you there, and you could return home a star. (This had happened to James Moody, whose first hits were made in Sweden.) It was also a way to play your own compositions—the Hampton book largely consisted of standards and jam blues. It seemed like a great chance, and the young trumpeters were ready to take it.

Of course, Lionel Hampton saw it differently. If his sidemen made sessions for European labels, this could decrease the recording offers for the band as a whole. He may also have thought that the music could suffer if the men were distracted with side projects. As the group left home, he laid down a law: individual band members cannot record in Europe unless Hampton also participates. Violators will be fired on the spot, and will not receive passage back to America. The musicians listened; they agreed to the terms. And they figured out ways of getting around the rule.

The first stop was Oslo, with a week of concerts starting on September 6. The group was well-received, and Clifford got his share of solo time. By September 13 they had arrived at Stockholm, and Quincy Jones went to work. On the morning of September 15, Quincy made some sides for the Swedish Metronome label; he promised to return at midnight with other musicians. After Hampton’s evening concert, Jones, Farmer, and Brown returned to their hotel rooms, saying they were tired. Road manager George Hart was camped out in the hotel’s lobby, making sure no one left the building with their instruments. Hart never budge all night, so the three trumpeters snuck out the back door and headed for the Metronome studio.

Brown and Farmer were backed by a group called the Swedish All-Stars; some of them played behind Moody on his ’49 records. The best-known among them would be Arne Domnenerus on the alto sax, and baritonist Lars Gullin, who impressed Chet Baker when they first played together. This might not have been planned as a Clifford Brown session; on three of the four tunes the first trumpet solo goes to Art Farmer. (These also found their way on Clifford Brown Memorial - Prestige 7055/ OJC-017.) “Stockholm Sweetnin’” has since become a standard, largely on the strength of this version. Farmer and Gullin take the theme, with the whole group in response; Art’s tone is slightly sandy, and his solo style (a short phrase, varied often) resembles Clifford’s. Donnerus is gentle, with notes that lightly skip. You’d call him influenced by Paul Desmond…only Desmond wouldn’t be famous for another year! (Did Arne create this style of alto? The world may never know.) Brown’s solo sounds like Farmer’s—except the lines are more involved, the notes faster, and the tone much clearer. He only gets a chorus to prove his skill, but it is sufficient.

“Clifford Brown’s style has two distinct elements, which are opposite yet complimentary. His pace is typically fast; notes zigzag as they climb upward, and the intensity always grows. In this aspect he resembles Roy Eldridge—a constant competitor, full of fight. At the same time, his tone rarely slurs, no matter how fast he goes. The notes are clearly separate from each other, usually pure in tone. It is rare to hear him raspy, or short of breath.”

(Continued in the next issue)
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