

Archive

Archive for the 'Uncategorized' Category

BEST AND NOTABLE RELEASES OF 2013

December 19, 2013 Royal

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Nota bene: All of my choices are in alphabetical order by artist or name of group and are to be counted equally as to points, rank, etc.

TEN BEST ALBUMS OF 2013

Jane Ira Bloom, *Sixteen Sunsets* (Outline)
Roberta Donnay & The Prohibition Mob Band, *A Little Sugar* (Motéma)
Tommy Flanagan and Jaki Byard, *The Magic of 2* (Resonance)
Lisa Hilton, *Getaway* (Lisa Hilton Music/Ruby Slippers Productions)
Vijay Iyer and Mike Ladd, *Holding It Down: The Veterans' Dreams Project* (PI)
Nicole Mitchell's Ice Crystal, *Aquarius* (Delmark)
Carline Ray, *Carline Ray — Vocal Sides* (Carlcat)
Enrico Rava & Parco della Musica Jazz Lab, *Rava On the Dance Floor* (ECM)
Wadada Leo Smith & Tumo, *Occupy The World* (TUM)
Tierney Sutton, *After Blue* (BFM Jazz)

TOP THREE REISSUES

Bunny Berigan, *Swingin' & Jumpin'* (Hep)
Paul Bley Trio, *Closer* (ESP)
Earl Hines, *Classic Earl Hines Sessions 1928-1945* (Mosaic)

BEST VOCAL ALBUM

Carline Ray, *Carline Ray — Vocal Sides* (Carlcat)

BEST DEBUT ALBUM

Carline Ray, *Carline Ray — Vocal Sides* (Carlcat)

BEST LATIN JAZZ ALBUM

Luis Muñoz, *LUZ* (Pelín Music)

BEST BLUES ALBUM

Dayna Kurtz, *Secret Canon Vol. 2* (M.C.)

BEST BEYOND ALBUM

Mobtown Moon, *Mobtown Moon: Classic Pink Floyd Reimagined in Baltimore* (Mobtown Moon)

BEST JAZZ DVDS

Judy Chaikin, *The Girls in the Band: The Untold Stories of Female Jazz and Big Band Instrumentalists and their Journeys from the Late 1930's to the Present Day* (Artist Tribe/One Step Productions)
Woody Herman: *Blue Flame: Portrait Of A Jazz Legend* (Jazzed Media)
The Savoy King: *Chick Webb and the Music That Changed America* (Floating World Pictures)

BEST JAZZ BOOK OF 2013

Terry Teachout, *Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington* (Gotham/ Penguin Group)

NOTABLE RELEASES of 2013

NOTABLE INSTRUMENTAL JAZZ CDs OF 2013

John Abercrombie Quartet, *39 Steps* (ECM)
Howard Alden/Andy Brown Quartet, *Heavy Artillery* (Delmark)
The John La Barbera Big Band, *Caravan* (Jazz Compass)
Geoff Bradfield, *Melba!* (Origin)
Joshua Breakstone, *With The Wind And The Rain* (Capri)
Randy Brecker & Włodek Pawlik Trio, *Randy Brecker Plays Włodek Pawlik's Night in Calisia* (Summit)
Dewa Budjana, *Dawai in Paradise* (Moonjune)
Dewa Budjana, *Joged Kahyangan* (Moonjune)
Francisco Mora Catlett & Afrohorn, *Rare Metal* (AACE)
Joe Clark Big Band featuring Jeff Hamilton, *Lush* (Jazzed Media)
The Claudettes, *Infernal Piano Plot . . . Hatched!* (Yellow Dog)
Cecilia Coleman Big Band, *Who Am I?* (Pandakat)
Steve Coleman and Five Elements, *Functional Arrhythmias* (PI)
George Colligan, *The Endless Mysteries* (Origin)



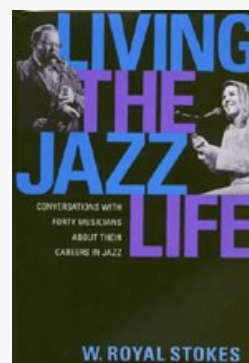
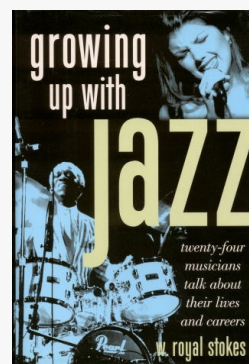
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Books



George Cotsirilos Trio, Variations (OA2)
 Davell Crawford, My Gift To You (Basin Street)
 Anne Drummond, Revolving (Origin)
 Amir ElSaffar, Alchemy (PI)
 Kahil El'Zabar Quartet, What It Is! (Delmark)
 Jonathan Finlayson & Sicilian Defense, Moment and the Message (PI)
 The Five Play Jazz Quintet, Five & More (Auraline Music)
 Mimi Fox, Standards, Old & New (Origin)
 Inbar Fridman, Time Quartet Project (Origin)
 Satoko Fujii, Gen Himmel (Libra)
 Roby Glod, Op Der Schmelz Live (Nemu)
 Andy Goesling & Lindsey Horner, Heyday Maker (Upshot)
 Ghost Train Orchestra, Book of Rhapsodies (Accurate)
 Brad Goode, Chicago Red (Origin)
 Ken Hatfield, For Langston (Ken Hatfield/Arthur Circle Music)
 Thomas Heberer & Achim Kaufmann, Knoten (Red Toucan)
 Steve Heckman, Born to be Blue (Jazzed Media)
 Fred Hersch & Julian Lage, Free Flying (Palmetto)
 Marsha Heydt and The Project Of Love, Diggin' the Day (Blujazz)
 Brad Hoyt, Far Away From Everyday (Harp Guitar Music)
 Hush Point, Hush Point (Sunnyside)
 I Know You Well Miss Clara, Chapter One (Moonjune)
 The Kandinsky Effect, Synesthesia (Cuneiform)
 Tom Kennedy, Just Play (Capri)
 Marty Krystall, Quartet, Moments Magical (K2B2)
 B. D. Lenz, Ready or Not (Jade Buddah)
 Joe Locke, Lay Down My Heart: Blues & Ballads, Volume 1 (Motéma)
 Mike Longo and the New York State of the Art Jazz Ensemble, Live From New York
 (Consolidated Artists Productions)
 Joe Lovano & The Brussels Jazz Orchestra (Halfnote)
 Roberto Magris, Cannonball Funk'n Friends (JMood)
 Roberto Magris, One Night In With Hope and More . . . Vol.2 (JMood)
 Roberto Magris, Sam Reed Meets Roberto Magris (JMood)
 Bob Mazurek Octet, Skull Sessions (Cuneiform)
 Brian McCarthy, This Just In (Brian McCarthy)
 Tom McDermott, Bamboula (Minky)
 Cava Menzies & Nick Phillips, Moment To Moment (Nick Phillips Music)
 Pete Mills, Sweet Shadow (Cellar Live)
 Dom Minasi & Hans Tammen, Alluvium (Straw To Gold)
 Meg Okura and the Pan Asian Chamber Jazz Ensemble, Music of Ryuichi Sakamoto (Meg
 Okura)
 Nicholas Payton, #BAM Live at Bohemian Caverns (BMF Music)
 Ken Peplowski, Maybe September (Capri)
 Ivo Perlman, One (Rare Noise)
 Frank Potenza, For Joe (Capri)
 Noah Preminger, Haymaker (Palmetto)
 The Dave Rempis Percussion Quartet, Phalanx (Aerophonic)
 The Kim Richmond Concert Jazz Orchestra, A Tribute To Stan Kenton (MAMA)
 RJ & The Assignment, The Stroke of Midnight (JK Melody Productions)
 Scott Robinson & Frank Kimbrough, Afar (ScienSonic)
 Frank Rosaly , Cicada Music (Delmark)
 Kermit Ruffins, We Partyin' Traditional Style (Basin Street)
 Ali Ryerson's Jazz Flute Big Band, Game Changer (Capri)
 Wolfgang Schalk, The Second Third Man (Frame Up Music)
 Maria Schneider, Winter Morning Walks (ArtistShare)
 Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, In the Spirit of Duke (Spartacus)
 Mansur Scott's Harlem Quartet, Sometimes Forgotten, Sometimes Remembered (Blujazz)
 Bryan Shaw and the Hot Shots, The Bluebird of Happiness (Arbors)
 The Sign of Four, Hammer, Anvil and Stirrup (Jazzman)
 Simak Dialog, The 6th Story (Moonjune)
 Asaf Sirkis Trio, Shepherd's Stories (Asaf Sirkis)
 Spyro Gyra, The Rhinebeck Sessios (Crosseyed Bear Productions)
 Norbert Stein, Pata On the Cadillac (Pata Music)
 Steve Swallow Quintet, Into the Woodwork (ECM)
 Natsuki Tamura, Dragon Nat (Libra)
 3 Cohens, Tighrope (Anzic)
 Tiger Hatchery, Sun Worship (ESP)
 The Michael Treni Big Band, Pop-Culture Blues (The Bell Production Company)
 Fernando Ulibarri, Transform (Fernando Ulibarri)
 Hristo Vitchev & Liubomir Krastev, Rhodopa (First Orbit Sounds Music)
 The Wammies, The Wammies Play the Music of Steve Lacy Vol. 2 (Driff)
 The Wee Trio, Live at the Bistro (Bionic)
 Frank Wess, Magic 201 (IPO)
 Wheelhouse, Boss of the Plains (Aerophonic)
 Matt Wilson Quartet + John Medeski, Gathering Call (Palmetto)

NOTABLE JAZZ VOCAL CDs OF 2013

Clipper Anderson, Ballad of the Sad Young Men (Origin)
 Marc Bernstein & Good People, featuring Sinne Eeg, Hymn For Life (Origin)
 Kenny Blake featuring Maria Shahee, Go Where the Road Leads (Summit)
 Tina Bruhn & Johnny O'Neal, Nearness, (Burner)



Philip Chaffin and others, Noël and Cole: Celebrating the Songs of Coward and Porter (PS Classics)

Philip Chaffin, Somethin' Real Special: The Songs of Dorothy Fields (PS Classics)

Chicago Jazz Orchestra, featuring Cyrille Aimée, Burstin' Out! (Origin)

Barbara Levy Daniels, Love Lost and Found (Bldproductions Inc)

Les DeMerle Band, featuring Bonnie Eisele, Feelin' Good (Origin)

Lisa Engelken, Little Warrior (e13 music/Little Angel)

Nancy Harms, Dreams in Apartments (Gazelle)

Nicole Henry Live, So Good, So Right (Banister)

Jitterbug Vipers, featuring Sarah Sharp, Phoebe's Dream (Jitterbug Vipers)

Eugenie Jones, Black Lace Blue Tears (Open Mic)

Lisa Kirchner, Umbrellas In Mint (Verdant World)

Annie Kozuch, Mostly Jobim (Annie Kozuch)

Deborah Latz, Fig Tree (June Moon Productions)

Rebecca Luker, I Got Love: Songs of Jerome Kern (PS Classics)

Pete McGuinness, Voice Like A Horn (Summit)

Beata Pater, Red (B&B)

Miki Purnell, Swingin' To The Sea (Sweet and Lovely Music)

Ed Reed, I'm a Shy Guy: A Tribute to the King Cole Trio & Their Music (Blue Shorts)

Barbara Rosene, Nice and Naughty: Sweet & Saucy Songs From The 1920s & '30s (Stomp Off)

Cathy Segal-Garcia and The Moment, Live at the Blue Whale (Dash Hoffman)

Gary Smulyan and Dominic Chianese, Bella Napoli (Capri)

Marlene Ver Planck, Ballads . . . mostly (Audiophile)

Judy Wexler, What I See (Jazzed Media)

Nicole Zuraitis, Pariah Anthem (Nicole Zuraitis)

NOTABLE LATIN JAZZ CDs OF 2013

Gabriel Alegria Afro-Peruvian Sextet, Ciudad De Los Reyes: Música AfroPeruana Para El Mundo (Saponegro)

Sérgio Galvão, Phantom Fish (Pimenta Music)

David Manson, A Kiss for Rio: O Som Do Jazz (Isospin Labs)

Sofia Rei, De Tierra Y Oro (Lilhouse Music)

Pete Rodriguez, Camunando Con Papi (Destiny)

Michele Rosewoman, New Yor-Uba: A Musical Celebration of Cuba in America (Advance Dance Disques)

Salsa De La Bahia: A Collection of SF Bay Area Salsa and Latin Jazz (Patois)

Manuel Valera & New Cuban Express, Expectativas (Mavo)

Wayne Wallace Latin Jazz Quintet, Latin Jazz/Jazz Latin (Patois)

BEST DEBUT JAZZ CDs OF 2013

Gabrielle Agachiko, Yes! (Accurate)

Molly Holm, Permission (Rinny Zin)

Billy Mintz, Mintz Quartet (Thirteenth Note)

Matt Parker, Worlds Put Together (BYNK)

Jussi Reijonen, Un (Unmusic)

Rotem Sivan, Enchanted Sun (SteepleChase)

10³²K, That Which Is Planted: Live in Buffalo and Rochester (Passin' Thru)

NOTABLE JAZZ REISSUES OF 2013

Ran Blake, Plays Solo Piano (ESP)

Art Hodes, I Remember Bessie (Delmark)

Roscoe Mitchell Quartet, Live At "A" Space 1975 (Sackville/Delmark)

Zoot Siims, Compatibility (Delmark)

Chick Webb & Ella Fitzgerald Decca Sessions 1934-41 (Mosaic)

NOTABLE BLUES & BEYOND CDs OF 2013

Arborea, Fortress of the Sun (ESP)

Sandy Carroll, Unnaturally Blonde (Catfood)

Copernicus, L'Éternité Immédiate (Moonjune)

Copernicus, Worthless! (Nevermore)

Guy Davis, Juba Dance (M.C.)

Dialetto, The Last Tribe (Moonjune)

Chris Grant, It's Not About War (359 Music)

Fiction Family, Reunion (Rock Ridge Music)

Tina Thing Helseth, 10 by Tenthing (Warner Classics)

Sara Hickman, Shine (Kirtland)

The Howlin' Brothers, Howl (Readymade)

Infectious Garage Disease, Igo (Negative Reaction)

Sarah Jarosz, Build Me Up From Bones (Sugar Hill)

Kulcha Shok Muzik, Reggae Kulcha Volume 1 (Kulcha Shok Muzik)

John Lennon McCullagh, North South Divide (359 Music)

Mineral, Plastic Ekphrastic (359 Music)

Angeline Morrison, Are You Ready Cat? (Freestyle)

Mumpbeak, Mumpbeak (RareNoise)

Mark Orton, Music From the Motion Picture Nebraska (Milan)

Johnny Rawls, Remembering O. V. (Catfood)

Soft Machine Legacy, Burden of Proof (Moonjune)

Soul Spectrum, Volume 1: 21 Cuts of Dancefloor Soul, Rare Boogie and Soulful Disco (Jazzman)

Cassie Taylor, Out Of My Mind (Yellow Dog)

Hope Wechkin, Leaning Toward the Fiddler: Music For Voice and Violin (Ravello)

Nicole Willis & The Soul Investigators, Tortured Soul (Timmion)

The Wrong Object, After The Exhibition (Moonjune)

NOTABLE MUSICAL CAST CDs OF 2013

Scott Frankel and Michael Korie, *Far From Heaven* (PS Classics)
Stephen Sondheim, *Passion: New York Cast Recording* (PS Classics)

BEST CHRISTMAS JAZZ CDs OF 2013

Jack Furlong & Sean Gough, *Charity* (Bridge and Tunnel)
Lynne Jackson & Mike Palter, *Christmas In Your Heart* (Cabaret Consortium)
New York Voices, *Let It Snow* (Five Cent)

NOTABLE JAZZ AND POPULAR MUSIC DVDs OF 2013

Randy Becker, *The Brecker Brothers Band Reunion* (includes Live Concert DVD) (Piloo)
The Clash, Judas Priest, Stevie Nicks, and others, *'83 US Festival: Days 1-3* (MVD Visual)
Europe, *Live At Sweden Rock: 30th Anniversary Show* (MVD Visual)
Iggy & The Stooges + Special Guests, *Tribute to Ron Asheton* (MVD Visual)
Rob Mazurek and His Exploding Star Electro Acoustic Ensemble, *The Space Between* (Delmark)
Scissor Sisters, *Live In Victoria Park London 2011* (Wienerworld)

W. Royal Stokes has been observing the jazz, blues, and popular music worlds since the early 1940s. He was editor of *Jazz Notes* (the quarterly journal of the Jazz Journalists Association) from 1992 to 2001 and has participated in the annual *Down Beat Critics Poll* since the 1980s. He hosted his weekly "I thought I Heard Buddy Bolden Say . . ." and *Since Minton's* on public radio in the 1970s and '80s. He has been the *Washington Post's* jazz critic and editor of *JazzTimes* and is the author of *The Jazz Scene: An Informal History from New Orleans to 1990* (Oxford University Press, 1991), *Swing Era New York: The Jazz Photographs of Charles Peterson* (Temple University Press, 1994), *Living the Jazz Life: Conversations with Forty Musicians about Their Careers in Jazz* (Oxford University Press, 2000), and *Growing Up With Jazz: Twenty-Four Musicians Talk About Their Lives and Careers* (Oxford University Press, 2005). His trilogy of novels *Backwards Over* will see publication in early 2014. He is currently at work on a memoir and *A W. Royal Stokes Jazz, Blues & Beyond Reader*.

 [Uncategorized](#)

W. Royal Stokes' Roundup of 135 Jazz, Blues, and Beyond Books Published in the Past Year or so.

 March 4, 2013  [Royal](#)

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- 1) Locale-based histories of jazz
- 2) Collections of jazz, blues, and popular music photographs
- 3) Essay collections
- 4) Reference books
- 5) Biographies
- 6) Fiction
- 7) Social histories and interpretations
- ☺ Coffee-table books
- 9) Scarecrow Press
- 10) Blues, Gospel, etc.
- 11) Folk music, etc.
- 12) Biographies and autobiographies of pop musicians

- 1) Locale-based histories of jazz

Here are some histories of jazz activity in specific locales.

Richard Vacca's *The Boston Jazz Chronicles: Faces, Places, and Nightlife 1937 1962* (Troy Street Publishing) makes the case for Beantown as a thriving center of jazz, focusing its attention on the quarter-of-a-century that straddles the Swing Era and post-World War II. The genesis of the book was Vacca's plan to create a walking tour of jazz sites but, upon finding that most of them had vanished, he decided to make it an "armchair walking tour." Thus the volume is oriented around four maps and the venues contained within each: "Downtown and the Theater District"; "Huntington Avenue and the Ballroom District"; "The South End"; "Copley Square and Park Square." Deeply and widely researched, *The Boston Jazz Chronicles* traces the city's jazz history in a lively and informative manner. Many famous players surface along with the less familiar names of those who remained in their hometown. Photographs and other illustrations, bibliography, discography, source notes, and index.

There have been histories, and partial histories, of jazz in Chicago, including William Howland Kenney's *Chicago Jazz: A Cultural History, 1904-1930* and *Destination Chicago Jazz* by Sandor Demlinger and John Steiner. There are also two basic chapters in *Esquire's 1946 Jazz Book*, Paul Eduard Miller, editor. Now we have *Paramount Serenaders, Chicago, 1923-1932: A Discography* by Christopher Hillman and Roy Middleton with Richard Rains (Cygnet Productions), which deals with the "small African American pick-up jazz and blues groups featuring trumpet, trombone and reed instruments . . . recorded by Paramount and issued on their 1200 'race' series" during the period cited. Some of the players' names will be familiar to someone knowledgeable of the era, for example, Jelly Roll Morton, Freddie Keppard, Johnny Dodds, Richard M. Jones, Tiny Parham, Lovie Austin, Jimmy Bertand, Cow Cow Davenport, Blind Blake, Ma Rainey, Ethel Waters, Ida Cox, and Monette Moore. However, a great many others will not ring a bell and that is one of the fascinating aspects of this 129-page thoroughly documented study that can serve as a model for discographical research. Acting as musical "archaeologists," the authors seemingly have unearthed all available information about the subject of their investigation. Photographs and illustrations of record

labels, bibliography, index, and a CD of 25 examples of Paramount's releases.

I've read a number of books on the Harlem Renaissance as well as some of the works of the great novelists and short story writers who came out of that cultural and artistic phenomenon. However, I cannot recall experiencing the sort of understanding of either the movement or of Harlem itself that I gleaned from Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts' ***Harlem Is Nowhere: A Journey to the Mecca of Black America*** (Little, Brown and Company). Named among the ***New York Times Book Review's*** 100 Notable Books of 2011, nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award, and short listed for the 2012 Dolman Best Travel Book Award, ***Harlem Is Nowhere*** is several things. First of all, it is a memoir of a Texan-born-and-raised and Harvard-educated African American woman who arrived in Harlem in her mid-twenties a decade ago determined to be a writer. It is also part social history and part reflection on the meaning of Harlem. "Like Zora Neale Hurston, [Rhodes-Pitts] is 'tour-guide and interpreter' of a Mecca cherished and feared, a place enduring and threatened," says ***Publishers Weekly***, adding that the author, "weaves a glittering living tapestry of snatches of overheard conversation, sidewalk chalk scribbles, want ads, unspoken social codes, literary analysis, studies of black slang — all of it held together with assurance and erudition." That's a good description of the content, form, structure, and spirit of this remarkable book. A dozen or so well selected photographs, source notes, and an index.

Carl Van Vechten (1880-1964) has received a bad rap and so it is gratifying to have Emily Bernard's ***Carl Van Vechten & the Harlem Renaissance: A Portrait in Black & White*** (Yale University Press), which, with some necessary qualifications, sets the record straight about this, for some, controversial mover and shaker of the Harlem literary and social scene beginning a century ago and continuing into the 1960s. It did not help that he, "a white man with a passion for blackness," titled his 1926 novel ***Nigger Heaven***. Yet a number of prominent African Americans, for example, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Walter White, were untroubled by the novel's title. White, in fact, in a letter to W. E. B. Du Bois, opined that it was "unfortunate" that "people who will never read a line of what you or I or other Negroes may write . . . should reveal themselves as so narrow-minded as to resent a frank and honest picture of [them] whether they like this picture or not." In addition to his many writings, founding and editing literary monthlies, and general efforts to enhance the acceptance of African American writers and artists and their work, Van Vechten was a prolific photographic documenter of the era. The volume contains a number of his studio portraits of luminaries of the time, including the four named above. Author Emily Bernard, a professor of English and African American Latino Asian-American Native American (ALANA) Studies at the University of Vermont, has made a major contribution to the further understanding of the Harlem Renaissance and those who fueled this vital movement of American arts and Twentieth Century social progress.

I acquired Samuel Charters' ***Jazz: New Orleans, 1885-1963*** (Oak Books) a half-century ago and have frequently consulted its brief biographical entries of the city's black musicians. Now we have Sam's ***A Trumpet Around the Corner: The Story of New Orleans Jazz*** (University Press of Mississippi), surely the definitive account of New Orleans traditional jazz, and by one of the leading authorities on the subject (as well as on the blues) and he also wrote ***The Roots of the Blues: An African Search*** and co-authored (with Leonard Kunstadt) ***Jazz: A History of the New York Scene***. In ***A Trumpet Around the Corner*** he takes us from the early settling of the area that became New Orleans through all the stages of New Orleans-style traditional jazz development to the New Orleans Revival of the 1940s to the post-Katrina "musical scene that still was exploring new sounds and directions — and at the same time bringing along a sense of the styles and musical directions that New Orleans had already given us." Charters, having devoted six decades to the subject, is completely at home with his material and brings the history alive. This a treasure of a book. Photographs, source notes, a bibliography, and index.

Thomas W. Jacobsen's ***Traditional New Orleans Jazz: Conversations With the Men Who Make the Music*** (Louisiana State University Press). By way of disclaimer, be it known that I wrote a jacket blurb for this book and shall quote it here: "***Traditional New Orleans Jazz: Conversations with the Men Who Make the Music*** is a thoroughly absorbing and impressively informative collection of musicians' profiles by a seasoned and perceptive interviewer. An authority on early jazz and its makers, Thomas W. Jacobsen has provided incisive accounts of nearly twenty musicians, all of whom have been active into the 2000s, the careers of several reaching back to the 1920s through the '40s. An especially valuable, and moving, feature of this book is the author's updating of these interviews, which were done over the past fifteen years, to the post-Katrina era. This volume is packed with history and should be read by all who are interested in both the evolution of the New Orleans sound and in jazz itself." Photographs, index.

I saw Tommy Sancton in performance at the 2002 Jazz Ascona festival in Switzerland with the New Orleans Serenaders as they celebrated the 90th anniversary of the formation of trombonist Kid Ory's first band. Among my observations of the evening was, "A bonus for this observer was clarinetist Tommy Sancton's playing, which thrilled both in solo and in descant above the ensemble." In his autobiography ***Song for My Fathers: A New Orleans Story in Black and White*** (Other Press LLC), Sancton tells of growing up in New Orleans in the 1950s and '60s and, in his early teens, taking clarinet lessons from George Lewis. Into his twenties, he was a regular at Preservation Hall, playing with legendary musicians most of whom had been born around the turn of the century. Tommy, who was Paris bureau chief for ***Time*** magazine in the 1990s and in 2007 was named Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Tulane University, is again active as a musician in his native city. His a warmly told coming-of-age story of a talented and respected player's love for the music that surrounded him in his youth and to which, after a distinguished career in journalism, he has returned. Vintage photographs take one back a half-century.

For a magisterial, sweeping history of the first century or so of The Big Easy, go to Lawrence

N. Powell's *The Accidental City: Improvising New Orleans* (Harvard University Press), which begins in September 1700 when Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne "bluffed an English sea captain into turning around and sailing out to sea," thus paving the way for French planting of the village that became New Orleans, "a city that shouldn't exist." Powell takes us from there through its Spanish times to acquisition by the U. S. and Louisiana statehood in 1812 and the beginnings of it becoming a thriving port, hub of commerce, and cultural center. One hopes that a second volume, bringing the story up to the present, is in preparation. Photographs, source notes, index.

The subtitle of Douglas Henry Daniels' *One O'Clock Jump: The Unforgettable History of the Oklahoma City Blue Devils* (Beacon Press) may seem to some presumptuous, especially to those unfamiliar with the pre-bebop decades of jazz, but they may well find themselves doing a double take at the list on the back of the dust jacket. It points out that, among the key players in the Blue Devils' history were Count Basie, Lester Young, Hot Lips Page ("the only African American in Artie Shaw's band"), Eddie Durham (a pioneer of the electric guitar), writer Ralph Ellison (who in his teens sat in on trumpet with the band), singer Jimmy Rushing (an early musical associate of Jelly Roll Morton), and Buster Smith (alto saxophonist and mentor to Charlie Parker). The Blue Devils played a seminal role in the Kansas City jazz scene and was the premier Southwest territory band throughout the 1920s. Active for a decade, it disbanded in 1933 and Basie took most of its musicians into his own band, which he had formed in 1931. Photographs, source notes, index.

Leta E. Miller's deeply researched *Music and Politics in San Francisco: From the 1906 Quake to the Second World War* (University of California Press) blends musical, social, and political history. The impact of the earthquake on the city's music and musicians makes for riveting reading. Opera, symphony, jazz in the nightclubs, musicians' unions, two world fairs, the Great Depression, the WPA, Chinatown and its music, racism, and more are examined in depth in this absorbing study. Photographs, source notes, index.

I am familiar with the 1950s Seattle jazz scene because I earned a B.A. and M.A. at the University of Washington during that decade and spent many an evening checking it out. Now I have learned the rest of the story from Kurt E. Armbruster's thorough exploration of its history in *Before Seattle Rocked: A City and its Music* (University of Washington Press). Seattle's "Logging and coal mining ... labor force . . . demanded food, shelter, and entertainment — lots of it," the author offers in explanation of the city's music scene in its beginnings. He goes on to examine the role of the musician's unions (one of which, as a bassist, he is a member of), newspaper coverage, racism, and diverse genres, including opera, folk and country music, pop, rock, blues, and jazz, taking the story to the end of the 1970s. One hopes for a follow-up volume, for Armbruster's research is deep and wide and his writing style, graceful, clear, and vastly entertaining, so carries the reader along that one doesn't want to put this book down. Photographs, source notes, bibliography, and index. (Another essential book on the Seattle-area's jazz life, available on Amazon.com in used copies, is the 1986 *Jazz West 1945-1985: The A-Z Guide to West Coast Jazz Music* by K. O. Eckland and Ed Lawless.)

Minneapolis and St. Paul get their due in Jay Goetting's *Joined at the Hip: A History of Jazz in the Twin Cities* (Minnesota Historical Society Press). "The fascinating history of jazz is not just a matter of New Orleans, Chicago, Kansas City, and New York." says Dan Morgenstern in a jacket blurb. "It's good to find out . . . just how much of note has happened (and still is happening) in the Twin Cities." Yes, and too many locales with significant jazz history still deserve such books as Goetting, a bassist, journalist, and broadcaster, has so well put together from interviews and other sources. Photographs, source notes, index.

Then there is Larry Stempel's *Showtime: A History of the Broadway Musical Theater* (W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.), which deals not with a city or an area but with performances that took place on a famous street and off that street. Twenty-five years in the making, it is a comprehensive account that takes the story from Civil War days to now, bringing together the immense cast of characters onstage and off who comprise the players in the history of Broadway as the "geographic epicenter . . . of a system of musical theater in the United States." Photographs, bibliography, discography, and index.

2) Collections of jazz, blues, and popular music photographs

Collections of jazz, blues, and popular music photographs, with commentary thereon, continue to find publishers.

Gail Buckland's *Who Shot Rock & Roll: A Photographic History, 1955-Present* (Knopf) contains "More than two hundred spectacular photographs, sensual, luminous, frenzied, true . . . that catch and define the energy, intoxication, rebellion, and magic of rock and roll." Those who shot these color and b/w images are not the well-known and celebrity photographers whose work graces so many volumes published over the years, but talented artists who happened to be on the scene at the occasions represented. Here is Denis O'Regan, shooting from above and capturing David Bowie on the stage of Milton Keynes Bowl, England, in 1983 as he faces a sea of thousands with arms raised in greeting. A standing, bare-chested Huey Newton holding Bob Dylan's LP *Highway 61 Revisited* is caught by Stephen Shames at his home in Berkeley, California, in 1970. Cover photographer Andy Earl is behind the camera for a stunning 1981 color shot of the group Bow Wow Wow at picnic by a brook and done as a "re-envisioning of *Manet's Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, prominently positioning nude fourteen-year-old Annabella Lwin, lead singer of the quintet. Björk, clad in three oversized leaves, poses as Eve in the Garden of Eden for Laura Levine in 1991 in a backyard of friends, Woodstock, New York. Even more intimate is Jürgen Volimer's unidentified early 1960s nude young couple somewhere in Europe *in flagrante delicto*. David Gahr shot Bruce Springsteen, in a Red Bank, New Jersey, storefront doorway surrounded by seven gleeful teenage girls in 1971. Led Zeppelin's Robert Plant and Jimmy Page, the latter leaping with guitar three feet above the stage, were Pennie Smith's subject in May 1975 at Earls Court, London. The New

York Dolls, shot from the rear, walk toward the Arc de Triomphe, Paris, in a nicely framed 1973 b/w by Alain Dister. Compiler of the volume Buckland "looked through the archives of one hundred photographers, selecting pictures not on the basis of the usual suspects, but on the power of the images themselves." Buckland did her work well, for this is a vastly entertaining and moving collection spanning the rock era. The captions provide brief bios of the photographer and the setting's circumstances.

Benjamin Cawthra's *Blue Notes in Black and White* (University of Chicago Press) "makes us see the sounds, the social relations, and the myths of jazz as [it] ably uncovers the networks of musicians, writers, magazines, and record companies in which jazz photography developed," says John Gennari, who undertook a study of the written record of jazz in his 2006 *Jazz and its Critics*. Cawthra clarifies that his approach "is about jazz culture's interactions with larger artistic, commercial, and political worlds at specific points in time." Analyzed from an aesthetic perspective, and reproduced in the volume, are images by Herb Snitzer, Charles Peterson, Gjon Mili, Herman Leonard, William Gottlieb, William Claxton, Francis Wolff, Roy DeCarava, and others. The author commands, as evidenced in his more than fifty pages of source notes, a comprehensive familiarity with the history of jazz, its recordings, and its literature. This is a landmark contribution to jazz scholarship.

The late Herman Leonard (1923-2010) long ago became a member of the pantheon of jazz photographers. He began photographing jazz musicians in the late 1940s and was still doing so in the final years of his long life. *Jazz: Herman Leonard* (Bloomsbury) brings together "scores of previously unseen photographs" with "his most famous and widely recognized images." It is truly a grand production of portraits, unguarded backstage moments, and stunning action shots of performing musicians captured from 1948 into the 1990s. Here are Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, Art Tatum, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Roy Eldridge, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Lester Young, Sarah Vaughan, Dave Brubeck, Billie Holiday, Anita O'Day, Dexter Gordon, Lennie Tristano, Johnny Hodges, George Shearing, Clark Terry, Buddy Rich,, Lena Horne, Stan Getz, Miles Davis, Gerry Mulligan, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Max Roach, and other iconic figures. I hung out with Herman in July 2000 at Umbria Jazz and can attest to the care with which he prepared for a shoot of performing or at-repose musicians. The volume's six-page "Smoke and Music: Herman Leonard at work," an interview by documentary filmmaker Leslie Woodhead, fills in the blanks of what I didn't see during those too few Italian days and nights that Herman and I shared.

K. Heather Pinson's *The Jazz Image: Seeing Music through Herman Leonard's Photographs* (University Press of Mississippi) explores "readings from critics, musicians, and educators on jazz, image, and photography." Pinson delves into the artistic instinct guiding Leonard's camera and "how the image of the musician found in his photographs has had an effect on mainstream jazz." Similar, in some ways, to Benjamin Cawthra's *Blue Notes in Black and White*, Pinson's book "is a compelling model for more jazz studies in which the visual is front-row-center," says Sherrie Tucker, co-editor and contributor to the 2008 *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies*.

Keystone Korner: Portrait of a Jazz Club (Indiana University Press) by Kathy Sloane — whose magnificent photographs grace many of the volume's pages — can serve as a template for jazz club profiles, of which there are all too few. It is edited by Sascha Feinstein, who also contributed the liner notes for the accompanying sampler CD; the preface is by Al Young; and there is a discography by Stuart Kremsky. The chapters are spliced together from interviews with two dozen individuals who were associated with or have firsthand knowledge of the club, including owner Todd Barkan, producer Orrin Keepnews, publicist Terri Hinte, club cook and artist manager Ora Harris, drummer Eddie Marshall, saxophonist Dave Liebman, photographer Sloane, and others, who offer moving memories of the club and the musicians who played there, among whom were Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Bill Evans, Betty Carter, Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon, Chet Baker, Art Blakey, Miles Davis, and Ornette Coleman.

I'm familiar with the accounts by some others from abroad of their early and subsequent passion for jazz, namely, author, editor, and educator Dan Morgenstern, historian Eric Hobsbawm (aka Francis Newton, his jazz *nom de plume*), poet Philip Larkin, and novelist John Wain, but until the charming *Jazzpaths: An American Photomemo* (Princeton Architectural Press), by English architect David Wild, was sent me I had never read such an extended narrative of a very jazz-centered life led by someone whose occupation was other than musician, writer, or some other pursuit connected full-time with the music. After thoroughly checking out the jazz scene in the UK since his teens, Wild's profession brought him, wife Heinke, and four-year-old son Mark to Chicago for two years in the mid-1960s and they set about checking out as much jazz and blues as they could find, in clubs and concert halls, at private parties, on the street, and on records, which he avidly acquired. Camera in hand, Wild shot musicians, street scenes, and cityscapes in the Windy City and during stopovers in New York and on side trips to St. Louis, Detroit, and New Orleans. Some of his encounters with musicians — among them were Earl Hines, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Pharoah Saunders, Roswell Rudd, Big Joe Williams, Dave Brubeck, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and Roscoe Mitchell and the other members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago — provided opportunities for photographing them in performance and at leisure. Many of his images form the elements of montages, some of which, along with many photographs, are included in the volume. Descriptions of performances, anecdotal asides, and some stern commentary vis-à-vis the racial politics of the 1960s make for a very interesting read, and the visual aspect of the book is of the highest quality.

3) Essay collections

Some essay collections are interspersed with pieces on jazz as well as on rock and blues. It is refreshing to read the authors' respect, even reverence, for these genres in as much that they are generalists in their interests, not music critics.

Geoff Dyer, in his *Otherwise Known As the Human Condition* (Graywolf Press), titles one article, "Is Jazz Dead," in which, pondering Keith Jarrett's contraction of chronic fatigue syndrome in 1996, he asks, "Was it not appropriate — inevitable, almost — that one of the greatest living jazz musicians should have succumbed to exhaustion when the medium in which he was working had utterly exhausted itself?" John Coltrane's 1961 "Ole" ("one of the first tracks on which [he] can be heard moving east"), Jan Garbarek's collaborations with Pakistani singer Ustad Fateh Ali Khan, the respective debilities of Django Reinhardt and Bud Powell, Don Cherry ("the embodiment of all that is best in the 'world music'"), the first Detroit Electronic Music Festival, and Norwegian trumpeter Nils Petter Molvaer's 1997 album *Khmer* figure in the argument. Dyer also explores aspects of the singer Ramamani, who was trained in south India, Trane's numerous recordings of "My Favorite Things," and his own late-1970s introduction to jazz via the ECM record label. His wide-ranging knowledge and eclectic interests fills out the volume with pieces on, to cite only a few of the subjects he treats, Richard Avedon, Don DeLillo, F. Scott Fitzgerald, the 2004 Olympics, "Comics in a Man's Life," photographer Robert Capa, John Cheever, D. H. Lawrence, and Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*.

You won't come across the word "jazz," or for that matter, "music," in Brooke Gladstone's "media manifesto in comic book form," *The Influencing Machine* (W. W. Norton), the graphics for which were penned by Josh Neufeld. But that is not to say it shouldn't be read by journalists who cover jazz, blues, and popular music forms. In fact, anyone who writes for publication will profit and learn from this book. Gladstone is the co-host of NPR affiliate WNYC's *On the Media* and senior editor of *Weekend Edition* and *All Things Considered*. She examines such concepts as Objectivity, Disclosure, Fairness, Bias, and Commitment, beginning with Mayan scribes and Julius Caesar's "Acta Diurna" ("Daily Acts") and cruising through the centuries to the Internet and beyond, citing futurist Ray Kurzweil's speculative *The Singularity Is Near* as her source for what we may encounter down the road. She quotes and discusses Plato, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, G. K. Chesterton, Walter Lippmann, Albert Camus, Marshall McLuhan, Daniel Ellsberg, journalist Helen Thomas, media theorist Neil Postman, muckrakers Lincoln Steffens and Ida Minerva Tarbell, and many others who opine on one or another aspect of Free Speech and a Responsible Press. Gladstone's text is lively and informative and Neufeld's illustrations are a gas.

Jonathan Lethem's *The Ecstasy of Influence* (Doubleday) is equally all over the map. Many of his pieces are short, two or three pages, while others run to ten or so, such as his examinations of the writers Philip K. Dick and Bolaño, the artist Fred Tomaselli, and Spiderman comics. Lethem spent a decade and a half clerking in bookstores in Brooklyn, San Francisco, and Berkeley and his account of this is amusing, as are many other of the essays based on personal experiences that shaped him as a writer. Of especial interest to the reader of this round-up is his section "Dylan, Brown, and Others," which contains: a quite fascinating 40-page account of the three days he spent hanging out with James Brown and his band in an Augusta, Georgia, recording studio in 2005; a 2006 interview with Bob Dylan; and pieces on Rick James, Otis Redding, and the Go-Betweens. Lethem also drops into pieces otherwise unconcerned with music interesting observations that support a literary argument, for example, in his title essay (it initiates the section on "Plagiarisms"), which deals with "cryptomnesia" (i.e., the recasting of familiar themes), he devotes two paragraphs to Muddy Waters conceding to folklorist Alan Lomax that, in addition to other sources, he used the tune of Robert Johnson's "Walkin' Blues" for his own "Country Blues." I've much enjoyed several of Lethem's novels and profited from exploring his varied interests as represented in this volume. A footnote: I recently read Donna Tartt's 1992 blockbusting, and critically well received, novel *The Secret History* and, as a bonus for me, learned in Lethem's essay "Zelig of Notoriety" that he and Tartt (and Bret Easton Ellis and Jill Eisenstadt) were classmates at Bennington College in the 1980s.

Novelist Rick Moody, who grew up in a home that was "musically passionate" and has played piano, violin, and guitar, believes that "There is a link . . . between literary writing and music," citing Samuel Beckett (pianist), James Joyce (singer), Allen Ginsberg (harmonium player), Nicholas Baker ("studied music composition"), and several others as supporting evidence. His *On Celestial Music* (Little, Brown and Company) collects fourteen of his essays on music and goes far toward, in his case, verifying his thesis. "Against Cool" takes the word "cool" from its figurative use connoting mood in the nineteenth century to the present, when it is mostly a synonym for "neat" and, worse, "Cool is a trick to get you to buy garments." For him, "cool" lost its value after the 1950s, when, as Cool Jazz, it was a style associated with, first, Miles Davis' and Gil Evans' collaboration on the LP *Birth of the Cool*, and then such West Coasters as Chet Baker and Dave Brubeck. It's a fascinating survey and one that may somewhat inhibit you from mouthing the word "cool." "The Problem of Impairment" takes issue with the claim that musicians perform better while under the influence of drink or drugs, using the Pogues' singer and songwriter Shane MacGowan as a case in point and bringing in the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia and Pigpen McKernan as other examples of "impairment." There are also pieces on Pete Townshend, the Lounge Lizards, Wilco, Magnetic fields, and Danielson Famile, an evangelical rock band.

John Jeremiah Sullivan's *Pulphhead: Essays* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) is culled from his contributions to *Harper's*, *The Paris Review*, and other magazines. My favorite of his music pieces is "Unknown Bards," in which he relates a series of telephone calls he made to John Fahey a couple of years before the death of the great guitarist. Sullivan was on a fact-checking assignment to clarify a phrase in an early 1930s blues recording. His essay also explores Fahey's life, art, recordings, and some aspects of blues history. I have been since the 1960s an admirer of Fahey's artistry and in the 1970s I interviewed and twice caught him in performance. (See my "John Fahey (1939–2001)" profile on my blog (wroyalstokes.com/2011/10/30/john-fahey-1939-2001/). In "The Last Wailer" Sullivan tells of tracking down Bunny Wailer (Neville O'Riley), singer songwriter, and percussionist of Bob Marley's band, for an interview about his erstwhile musical mate. The narrative of "The Final

Comeback of Axl Rose" is based on Sullivan's longtime membership in the Guns N' Roses fandom, some instances of exposure to G N' R in concert over the years, and a hang in Lafayette, Indiana, with Dan Gregory, one of the oldest friends of Axl Rose. Also included are an account of Sullivan's visit to a Christian rock festival; profiles of Michael Jackson, Tennessee novelist, dramatist, essayist, and professor of literature Andrew Nelson Lytle (1902-1995), and the eccentric Nineteenth Century French/American polymath scientist Constantine Samuel Rafinesque-Schmaltz (1783-1840); "At a Shelter (After Katrina)"; and diverse other selections, making of the volume an ideal reading-chair companion.

Most welcome is ***Out of the Vinyl Deeps: Ellen Willis on Rock Music*** (University of Minnesota Press), edited by her daughter Nona Willis Aronowitz. Ellen Willis (1941-2006), "a groundbreaking radical leftist writer and thinker," as the book's jacket describes her, was the ***New Yorker's*** first popular music critic, her pieces running in the magazine from 1968 to 1975. All but seven of her fifty-six ***New Yorker*** articles (performance and album reviews) plus several ***Village Voice*** pieces, liner notes, and encyclopedia entries (Janis Joplin and Creedence Clearwater Revival); a 2001 ***Salon.com*** essay on latter-day Bob Dylan CDs; a preface to Barbara O'Dair's 1997 ***The Rolling Stone Book of Women in Rock: Trouble Girls***; and the introduction to her own 1981 ***Beginning to See the Light: Sex, Hope, and Rock-and-Roll***. The ***New Yorker*** selections in ***Out of the Vinyl Deeps*** read as a veritable history of rock in the late 1960s and early '70s. Willis' writings, as her daughter Nona phrases it in her expansive introduction to the volume, "brought forth a voice that was sharp, thoughtful, and ecstatic, a voice that later moved on to contemplate not simply music but politics, culture, religion, war, and social movements."

Alex Ross covers the waterfront in his latest collection of reflections on the music scene here and abroad, past and present. Want an hour or two of varietal reading? Keep his ***Listen To This*** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) close by. Ross therein cruises on the highways and byways of classical music, jazz, blues, and pop, offering his thoughts and opinions on and analyzing in depth the music of Mozart, Schubert, Marian Anderson, Skip James, Cecil Taylor, Bob Dylan, Björk, Radiohead, Led Zeppelin, and more. In a prefatory "Where to Listen" (for examples of the music he discusses), Ross provides Internet links to his websites containing an iTunes play list and a free audio companion. Source notes, an appendix of "Suggested Listening," and index.

Nature's sounds were explored (and recorded) by musician and naturalist Bernie Krause's for his ***The Great Animal Orchestra: Finding the Origins of Music in the World's Wild Places*** (Little, Brown and Company). The songs of humpback whales and birds, the mating and alarm calls of animals, and the sounds of shrimp, insect larvae, anemones, bubbling streams, crackling glaciers, and storms are grist for Krause's intriguing argument that "nature's rich chorus [of] myriad voices and rhythms . . . formed a basis from which our own musical expression emerged." Audio pattern images, source notes, bibliography, an appendix of "Main Bioacoustic Websites and Chat Groups," and index.

4) Reference books

Reference books can be entertaining reads along with being informative compilations of data and this is certainly the case with the three titles I describe here.

The Anthology of Rap (Yale University Press), edited by professors of English Adam Bradley and Andrew DuBois, is a "collection showcasing the diversity and poetic depth of rap since its beginnings." Along with the lyrics are bios with critical assessments of the performers and there are indexes of "Songs, Albums, Movies, and Books" and of "Artists, Authors, and Labels," a Foreword by historian Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Afterwords by rappers Chuck D and Common. Included in the volume are three raps of the Fugees, one of whose members, Wyclef Jean has told his life story (with Anthony Bozza), in ***Purpose: An Immigrant's Story*** (Itbooks/Harper Collins), "a revelation-filled memoir that touches on the universal themes of poverty, immigration, religion, father/son relationships, and the heights of celebrity." Photographs.

Ted Gioia's ***The Jazz Standards*** (Oxford University Press) devotes a couple of pages apiece to the 250 tunes, in alphabetical order, that he sees as serving as "the cornerstones of the jazz repertoire as it exists today," introducing each song with commentary on several versions and listing eight or ten recordings covering it. No reader will find all of his favorite standards in the book but Gioia does not disappoint, for many of the most familiar are included, those that "a fan is most likely to hear — and a musician is most frequently asked to play — nowadays." I looked up "Do Nothin' till You Hear from Me" and there in the list was my favorite version of it, the 1972 one by Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Al Hibbler. ***The Jazz Standards*** is a deep mine of information and is good for endless, and very enjoyable, browsing. The table of contents of song titles and an index of names are handy navigational aides.

An alphabetical table of contents of all artists featured in the volume introduces vocalist authority Will Friedwald's ***A Biographical Guide to the Great Jazz and Pop Singers*** (Pantheon Books). In a way, it can serve as a companion to Ted Gioia's book above. Comprised of entries — "illuminated, opinionated, . . . provocative, funny, and personal," says the jacket description — of more than 300 singers, this will long be an essential reference work.

Another alphabetically organized volume, Cicily Janus' ***The New Face of Jazz: An Intimate Look at Today's Living Legends and the Artists of Tomorrow*** (Billboard Books), provides one-paragraph bios followed by "His Story" or "Her Story" several-paragraph accounts by each of the 194 musicians selected. Limited in scope — you'll find that many, many who should have been included were not and likely will, as I did, draw a blank on many of the names who were — ***The New Face of Jazz*** nevertheless contains a wealth of information and provides considerable insight into the artistic personas of the artists. Photographs, three appendices (jazz organizations, selected readings, and jazz education programs), index.

5) Biographies

In biographies of Louis Armstrong, the final quarter-of-a-century of his life and career has too often been slighted or, at best, minimized as to its significance. Ricky Riccardi, project archivist for the Louis Armstrong House Museum in Queens, New York, determined to rectify that neglect. His ***What A Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong's Later Years*** (Pantheon) succeeds splendidly in making the case that the twenty-five years when Armstrong led his All Stars septet proved to be chock full of artistic triumphs. The trumpet player and singer, whom many believe to be the greatest musical figure of the Twentieth Century, traveled the world with his combo, often drawing audiences in the tens of thousands. He maintained a grueling schedule of crisscrossing the U. S., appearing at major venues for one-nighters and weeks-long stands. Of particular importance in Riccardi's absorbing chronicle of these years is his citation and analysis of the many recording highlights of this period of Armstrong's career. It turns out that there are a great many, even some of classic stature, such as the ***Satchmo at Symphony Hall*** and ***Louis Armstrong Plays W. C. Handy*** albums. "Hello Dolly" and "What a Wonderful World," both as singles and albums, met with astonishing commercial success. The relationship between Pops and his manager Joe Glaser, a workable one if sometimes economically questionable as to the latter's share of the take, is fully explored, as are the failures of three marriages before, in 1942, he wed Lucille Wilson, a dancer in the Cotton Club chorus line. She remained with him until his death in 1971. The origins, in 1947, of the All Stars is covered as are the many personnel changes as the years rolled on and band members went on to other projects. Illuminating attention is devoted to such issues as the notion that Armstrong was an Uncle Tom and that, as critic Gunther Schuller would have it, he was nothing more than an entertainer. Riccardi presents sufficiently strong evidence to dismiss both of these canards, which are now generally discredited in appraisals, respectively, of Armstrong's political stance and artistry. Suffering from failing health in his last years, Pops continued to tour, his nightly presence on the stage being the only life he had ever known. "Armstrong always put his audience first," says Riccardi, and offers Armstrong's explanation of this strongly held principle: "So I found out, the main thing is to live for that audience. What you're there for is to please the people — I mean, the best way you can. Those few moments belong to them." The volume contains many photos taken here and overseas, thirty pages of notes providing sources, and an index. It is a major addition to the shelf of Louis Armstrong studies, as well as a wonderfully entertaining account of a very important period in this musician's continuing development as a great artist.

I have seen many of the films that Fred Astaire danced in but until I read Kathleen Riley's elegant and authoritative ***The Astaires: Fred & Adele*** (Oxford University Press) I only knew that he had a sister and was unfamiliar with the history of their performing together. Two-and-a-half years older, Adele Astaire performed onstage with Fred until she retired in 1932 in her mid-thirties. Their teamwork, on stages throughout the nation and in the UK, sadly never made onto film, not even a minute of it. Riley observes on the last page of her brilliant and thoroughly researched account of their performing partnership, "Those who were lucky enough to see the Astaires onstage . . . are now very scarce." Fred and Adele were five and eight when they first mounted the boards, both of them from the beginning exemplary "Terpsichorean talents" and she "a born clown" with a "magnetism, an energy and irresistibility memorialized by various revered men of letters as little short of a fifth force of nature." For one critic, there had been "Nothing like them since the Flood." Riley takes their career and personal stories from their growing-up-years in Omaha to their final stage performance together, the 1932 ***The Band Wagon***. The volume contains a splendid selection of photographs, notes on sources, and two chronologies, "The Shows" and "Notable Events in Theater, 1917-1933." ***The Astaires*** is a fascinating story of a unique brother-and-sister act that took theater audiences here and abroad by storm for a quarter of a century.

Todd Decker's ***Music Makes Me: Fred Astaire and Jazz*** (University of California Press) takes a more technical approach, with detailed analyses and description of the choreography of and musical accompaniment to Astaire's dancing as captured in film and television, replete with anecdotal lore. The author's final sentence sums up his take on Astaire's importance: "[T]he links between Fred Astaire and jazz are many, and [provide] manifold and meaningful evidence for a rethinking of this unique creator's lifetime making music and dance in the racially segregated, but sometimes integrated, world of American popular culture." This is a volume to have on hand when viewing Astaire's films. It will increase both your understanding and enjoyment of his sublime art. Photographs, source notes, index.

David Baker: A Legacy in Music (Indiana University Press) by Monika Herzig has chapters by Herzig (a pianist and educator), John E. Hasse, Willard Jenkins, Nathan Davis and several others in this definitive biography of trombonist, cellist, and conductor Baker's youth and training, close association with the Smithsonian, composing, stature as a jazz educator, and other aspects of his life and career. Photographs, bibliography, discography, and a track listing for the accompanying CD.

RJ Smith's ***The One: The Life and Music of James Brown*** (Gotham Books). I saw James Brown in performance at a huge outdoor venue cum picnic grounds at Finland's Pori Jazz Festival a decade ago and was astonished at the reverence that the thousands-strong audience — rising to its feet and remaining so for his entire hour-long set — held him in. Reading ***The One*** will clarify why he held his fans in thrall — he was a charismatic presence on stage. Drawing from more than 100 interviews with Brown's friends and his musical associates, Smith presents him as the "dazzling showman" he was, one who not only lived an extraordinary life but "transformed American music." Photographs, List of Interviewees, Notes, Index.

Alyn Shipton's ***Hi-De-Ho: The Life of Cab Calloway*** (Oxford University Press) not only brings this legendary performer to life, blurbs Marian McPartland on the book jacket, it "makes the reader understand the era in which he lived." Indeed it does, and I can attest to the awe that

singer and dancer Calloway caused in his audience, for I caught him several times in performance during the last years of his long life and he was still swinging to beat the band. Photographs, "Suggested Selected Recordings," bibliography, discography, and index.

I find it very difficult to tie Leonard Cohen down as to public role, artistic category, and musical genre, so chameleon-like is his personality and so varied have been his pursuits. He is clearly, for many, a guru and spiritual guide (he became a Buddhist monk in his early sixties), a widely read and admired poet, as well as an inspiration to many who create verse or aspire to do so; he is poet, songwriter, singer, performer on several instruments, and novelist; and his music courses over pop, folk, jazz, blues, world and ethnic music, and classical forms. Sylvie Simmons' *I'm Your Man: The Life of Leonard Cohen* (Ecco/Harper Collins) explores all of these aspects of the life, career, artistry, recordings, films, publications, and world tours of this remarkable individual, interviewing both him and a hundred or so of his family, friends, former lovers, and professional and musical associates here and abroad. Because she has done so thorough a job of presenting Cohen in his many diverse aspects, making him come quite alive on her more than 500 pages, I found it to be one of the more satisfying and rewarding biographies I have recently read. Forty-two photographs take Cohen from babyhood — in Montreal, where he still maintains a home, along with one in L.A. and on the Greek island of Hydra — to 2007, most of them with folks he has been close to. Sources are identified in the Notes and there is a. *I'm Your Man* is an outstanding contribution to North American cultural history.

A reader of *I'm Your Man* will be fascinated by Alan Light's *The Holy or the Broken: Leonard Cohen, Jeff Buckley & the Unlikely Ascent of "Hallelujah,"* which tracks the history of Cohen's best-known and most loved song. Not only did Cohen struggle with the writing of it for four years or so, "Hallelujah" was at first turned down by his record label, Columbia, and appeared in a Cohen album on an independent label, PVC Records, in 1984. "Hallelujah" had virtually disappeared from sight when Jeff Buckley recorded it a decade later in a version that many consider to be the definitive cover. The history of the song since then is truly astounding. Hundreds of artists have recorded and performed it; several hundred million fans have watched performances of it on YouTube; and it has served as the theme song for hundreds of high-profile public occasions. "It has reached a place," says author Light, "where, for better or worse, it is universal — even, as Paul Simon noted, immortal." The book also provides an account of "the fast rise of the gifted, gorgeous, and ultimately doomed Jeff Buckley," who, in 1997 at the age of thirty, accidentally drowned in the Wolf River, Memphis. There is a Selected "Hallelujah" Discography, an appendix of bar codes that one can scan to bring up some of the performances of the song discussed in the book, and an index.

There are a half-dozen biographies of John Coltrane and a *John Coltrane Companion*. Now Chris Vito has edited the collection *Coltrane On Coltrane: The John Coltrane Interviews* (Lawrence Hill Books), which besides the interviewers by Ira Gitler, Nat Hentoff, Barbara Gardiner, Ralph Gleason, Ray Coleman, Mike Hennessey, Randi Hultin, and others, also contains some of Trane's writings in the form of letters and liner notes, a Blindfold Test by Leonard Feather, biographical and critical essays, and some reminiscences of friends. *Coltrane On Coltrane* is an indispensable addition to Coltrane literature. Photographs and index.

Harvey G. Cohen's *Duke Ellington's America* (University of Chicago Press) combines cultural and musical history for a truly fascinating approach to the life and career of the great bandleader, pianist, and composer. Cohen explores both how the society and the culture affected Ellington and how he affected them. "Ellington represented a singular, groundbreaking force in music over the course of a half-century. At the same time, as one of the most prominent black public figures in history, Ellington demonstrated leadership on questions of civil rights, equality, and America's role in the world." Photographs, an "Index of Duke Ellington Music," source notes, and a general index.

By my count, prior to 2012 there were three books on pianist Bill Evans: Keith *Shadwick's Bill Evans- Everything Happens To Me: A Musical Biography*; Peter Pettinger's *Bill Evans: How My Heart Sings*; Hanns E Petrik's *Bill Evans: Sein Leben, Seine Musik, Seine Schallplatten*. The most incisive appreciation and analysis of Bill Evans' art that I have read is Martin Williams' essay on him, "A Need to Know," in his *The Jazz Tradition* (Second Revised Edition, 1993). We now have to add to this list Laurie Verchomin's self-published *The Big Love: Life & Death with Bill Evans* (Laurieverchomin.com), a coming of age memoir that chronicles the author's love affair with Evans for the last sixteen months of his life (he died in September 1980). When they meet in May 1979 she is twenty-two, he four months shy of fifty. The book was compiled from the diary she kept at the time, her letters to Evans and those from him in response, poetry by her, and her recollections of and musings upon their time together in Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver, and London as she accompanied him on tours, and in his Fort Lee, New Jersey, apartment when he had residencies at the Village Vanguard. Verchomin's very personal and, frankly, moving account touches upon, among other aspects of their brief time together, their close friendship and erotic relationship, his struggles with his addictions and failing health, and her attendance at gigs where he astonished audiences with his sublime artistry and uncanny ability to communicate his emotions via the keyboard. This is definitely a one-of-a-kind document that provides the kinds of insights not only into Bill Evans' creative process but what he was made of, both as a human being and a jazzman, that we are unlikely to see the equal of.

A decade and a half in the making — which entailed a number of interviews with its protagonist and interviews and conversations with about two-hundred individuals who knew him — Tad Hershorn's *Norman Granz: The Man Who Used Jazz for Justice* (University of California Press) is not simply an account of a life, it is, in part, a documentation of a period in American history one of the glaring aspects of which was racial injustice. Hence the book's title, for concert and record producer Norman Granz (1918-2001) wrote the manual on how to treat black musicians justly vis-à-vis audiences, accommodations, food service, and other

aspects of life and performance venues that white musicians take for granted. As Nat Hentoff says in an endorsement of Hershorn's book, Granz "broke the color line dividing jazz audiences by mandating the end of segregated seating" at the concerts he produced. "Any book on my life" Granz told Hershorn at the outset of the conversations they would conduct for the last five years of his life, "would start with my basic philosophy of fighting racial prejudice. I loved jazz, and jazz was my way of doing that." Hershorn relates in detail Granz's history, beginning in his teens, of fighting discrimination. An invaluable feature of the book is its survey of the jazz concerts that were precursors to Granz's popular Jazz at the Philharmonic. The roster of those whom Granz took on tours here and abroad as participants in JATP, those whom he produced on several record labels (including his own Verve, Norgran, Clef, Down Home, and Pablo), and those whom he managed is immense. It includes such giants of the Swing Era and modern jazz as Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Lester Young, Roy Eldridge, Benny Carter, Ben Webster, Nat King Cole, Herb Ellis, Jo Jones, Art Tatum, Billie Holiday, Charlie Barnet, Meade Lux Lewis, Shelly Manne, Fats Navarro, Ray Brown, Bill Harris, Slim Gaillard, Clark Terry, Anita O'Day, Coleman Hawkins, Louie Bellson, Johnny Hodges, Lionel Hampton, Buddy Rich, Oscar Peterson, Charles Mingus, Max Roach, T-Bone Walker, Helen Humes, Count Basie, Gene Krupa, Illinois Jacquet, Flip Phillips, Charlie Parker, Barney Kessel, J. J. Johnson, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, and The Modern Jazz Quartet, some of whom he had close friendships with. Hershorn's deep and wide research has resulted in one of the most thorough biographies of an American musical figure, in this case, in Dan Morgenstern's words, of "one of the most significant nonmusicians in jazz history." Hershorn supplies a full accounting of Granz's personal life as well, for one learns about his love of food, expensively tailored clothes, custom built cars, and art (he was a close friend of Pablo Picasso, for whom he named his major record label); his relationships with various women; and his marriages, the first two of which were brief and the final one lasting from 1974 until his death a decade ago. The volume contains a splendid set of photographs, a Chronology, Selected Bibliography, and Index and reads like a page-turning novel.

Jo Jones, who died in 1985 a month before his seventy-third birthday, was among the several most influential drummers of jazz. **Riff tide: The Life and Opinions of Papa Jo Jones** (University of Minnesota Press), as told to Albert Murray and edited by Paul Devlin, tells why. "Jo loved to talk," says fellow drum master Roy Haynes (still performing worldwide at eighty-eight), "and when he spoke it was almost as if he was playing the drums." A member of the so called All-American Rhythm Section of the Count Basie band, Jones also played and recorded with many more of the greats of the Swing Era. As his **Riff tide** proves, Jones is also one of the great raconteurs of jazz, reminding me of Jelly Roll Morton in his effusiveness and convictions. There is a wealth of information in Jones' meandering monologue through several eras of jazz history. He has seen it all and, as Ray Haynes says, loves to talk — about himself and all that he has seen. Photographs, Editor's Notes, an Afterword by Phil Schaap, and index.

Artists often suffer, whether they are writers, painters, or as in the case of the subject of Gary Marmorstein's **A Ship Without a Sail: The Life of Lorenz Hart** (Simon & Schuster), those who put words to music. Lorenz Hart was a closeted gay, a depressive, and alcoholic who never sustained a love relationship, lived with his mother, and felt he was unappreciated and unrecognized. Yet Hart was the brilliant lyricist to Richard Rodgers' composing, a collaboration that endured for two decades and gave us nearly thirty Broadway shows and such classics of the American songbook as "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," "It Never Entered My Mind," "The Lady is a Tramp," "My Funny Valentine," and "Ev'rything I've Got Is Yours." **A Ship Without a Sail** recounts an important period of American musical theater along with detailing the collaboration of two masters of song writing and the ups and downs of the checkered personal life of Hart, who died at forty-eight after a week-long binge. Photographs, source notes, bibliography, "Selected (and highly idiosyncratic) Discography," and index.

Lest anyone without music-reading skills be put off by the many scores reproduced and detailed analysis thereof in Jeffrey Magee's **The Uncrowned King of Swing: Fletcher Henderson and Big Band Jazz** (Oxford University Press) be advised that both the personal and career history of this seminal figure in jazz, as well as the period in which he led his own orchestra, played piano in Benny Goodman's, composed and arranged, and lived a life on the road, are fully documented. As to the historical context in which Henderson excelled in the activities listed, take as an example the capsule survey on page 171 of the Savoy Ballroom's early years (it opened in 1926) and Henderson's frequent appearances there. Of playing at the Savoy, trombonist Dicky Wells recalled, "It was always inspiring having people dancing in front of you. . . . We wouldn't have played that music the way we did if we hadn't gotten the spirit of things from watching those girls dance. . . . Lots of times the dancers more or less dictated what the bands played. . . . There was more soul when jazz and dancing went together." The first two chapters, devoid of transcriptions, begin with an account of Henderson's forebears, who were public servants and educators, and carry him to the mid-1920s. Throughout the volume, major players in Henderson's career are given their due, including Louis Armstrong, Don Redman, Benny Carter, Rex Stewart, John Hammond, and Benny Goodman. To clarify, I do not wish to do anything but praise the musicological character of Professor Macee's work, for it is masterful, nothing less than Fletcher Henderson, a giant player in the evolution of the jazz art, deserves, and a major contribution to jazz history and its musical values. This will certainly long remain an important record of this great bandleader's life and music, an update to Walter C. Allen's 1973 **Hendersonia: The Music of Fletcher Henderson and his Musicians, a Bio-Discography**. There is a bibliography, discography, twenty pages of notes citing sources, an appendix of "Fletcher Henderson's Arrangements for Benny Goodman," and a splendid set of photographs.

If you think you have not heard much of the music of Henry Mancini, consider this, that he composed the jazz themes to the **Pink Panther** film series and the **Peter Gunn** television series and the scores for dozens of other movies and wrote songs for **Breakfast at Tiffany's**, **Days of Wine and Roses**, **Sometimes a Great Notion**, **The Glass Menagerie**, and many

other films. In all, he was the major composer for about 150 films and nearly fifty television productions. Mancini songs have been recorded by Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee, Johnny Mathis, Julie Andrews, Connie Francis Tony Bennett, Julie London, Pat Boone, Perry Como, Liberace, Mantovani, Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra, and many others and he himself recorded ninety or so albums, in styles across the spectrum from big band to pop to light classical. All of this, along with his life and career story, is brought together in John Caps' **Henry Mancini: Reinventing Film Music** (University of Illinois Press). Photographs, source notes, bibliography, an appendix of all the films and television shows for which he was the major composer, and index.

Here and Now: The Autobiography of Pat Martino (Backbeat Books/Hal Leonard) by Pat Martino. Co-written with Bill Milkowski, who has known Pat since the 1970s, **Here and Now** takes one from the guitarist's 1940s and '50s youth in South Philadelphia through his teen apprenticeships with the likes of Willis "Gator Tail" Jackson and Jack McDuff to recovery from a nearly fatal brain aneurysm in 1980 and the surgery that left him with amnesia in the recovery that enabled him to play again and his comeback years since. Essential reading not only for its account of a master jazz musician but for its confirmation of the indomitable spirit of an individual who would not admit defeat in the very worst of near-death circumstances that threatened to leave him helpless. Photographs, appendices of interviews and a Pat Martino Master Class, discography, and index.

Paul de Barros does an estimable job presenting the story of a remarkable individual in **Shall We Play That One Together?: The Life and Art of Jazz Piano Legend Marian McPartland** (St. Martin's Press). Pianist, bandleader, and broadcasting veteran — her award-winning NPR show **Piano Jazz** was on the air for thirty-three years — McPartland, who will be ninety-five in March, has had one of the longer and more varietal jazz careers, commencing during World War II when she waded ashore at Normandy Beach in combat boots and a helmet as part of a USO unit sent to entertain troops on the front lines. Photographs, source notes, bibliography, "Selected recordings," and a general index.

Mingus Speaks (University of California Press), a collection of interviews done by John F. Goodman and others several years before its subject died is like an extended jam session. Known for his facility on his instrument (he was arguably the most musical of jazz bassists), his creativity as a composer, and his skills as a bandleader, Mingus was also a verbal perfect storm once a microphone was put in his hand. He expatiates upon his music and how it comes about, musicians past and contemporary whom he admires, social ills (racism among them), the Mafia, nightclubs, women, junkies, and many, many other subjects. **Mingus Speaks** is vastly entertaining as well as providing insight into the mind of a genius. Photographs, Chronology, index.

The subject of David Kastin's **Nica's Dream: The Life and Legend of the Jazz Baroness** (W. W. Norton), Kathleen Annie Pannonica Rothschild, is one of the more bizarre, and significant, individuals in what may be called the support network of the jazz idiom. Raised in wealth and splendor and privately educated, Nica spent her childhood in Great Britain being "moved from one great country house to another in the germless immunity of reserved Pullman coaches while being guarded day and night by a regiment of nurses, governesses, tutors, footmen, valets, chauffeurs and grooms." Introduced to jazz via the recordings of older brother Victor, the Baroness, in 1953 at age forty, took up residence in a suite in the Stanhope Hotel on New York's Upper East Side. She bought herself a sporty Rolls Royce and settled in as a major patroness of, for the most part, the bebop era's star musicians. Among her favorites were Thelonious Monk, Art Blakey, Barry Harris, and Charlie Parker. The last named died in her Stanhope apartment in 1955. Whether the stunning Nica's relationships with the musicians whom she championed always fell short of the amorous is unknown, but Monk, who lived in seclusion in her New Jersey home for the last several years of his life, imparted the following advice to a fellow musician: "Be sure that you want to have her for a girl or have her for a friend, because if you make love to a girl she ain't gonna be your friend. Because you can have a friend, like Nica's my friend, and I wouldn't touch her. She's the best friend I ever had." Nica maintained her enthusiasm for jazz and her support, often material, of jazz artists until her 1988 death two weeks short of her seventy-fifth birthday. "What she really provided was belief in them," says Monk's son Toot. "She brought a credibility that musicians really needed and appreciated." The author observes that "the validation from a Rothschild heiress and member of the upper echelons of Europe's cultural elite was particularly potent." Music historian and educator David Kastin provides not only Nica's quite absorbing story but that of her family background, all of it in the context of the social, political, and cultural movements of the times. It is a fascinating account and a discography, photos, and index are included.

Nica's polaroid photographs of her musician friends accompany statements of their major desires in her 2008 **Three Wishes: an Intimate Look at Jazz Greats** (Abrams Image), an outstanding collection of two-hundred or so informal and intimate images with an introduction by her grandniece Nadine de Koenigswarter and a foreword by Gary Giddins.

Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr.'s **The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History, and the Challenge of Bebop** (University of California Press) places the pianist not only in the bebop tradition but in culture and society, making the point that "his exceptional talent is often overshadowed by his history of alcohol abuse, mental instability, and brutalization at the hands of white authorities." It truly is "the first extended study of the social significance of Powell's place in the American musical landscape" and it "details the collision of two vibrant political economies: the discourses of art and the practice of blackness." Photographs, musical examples, notes, bibliography, and index.

That Old Black Magic: Louis Prima, Keely Smith, and the Golden Age of Las Vegas (Chicago Review Press) by Tom Clavin is both a biography of Prima (and, very briefly, of Smith) and, as Clavin says in his Introduction, "a showbiz success story with a love interest . . . or is it a love story against a background of showbiz success?" As one of the earliest and most

successful of Las Vegas acts, as well as an enduring marriage (at least for almost a decade-and-a-half), Prima and Smith went on to perform around the nation with their appealing stage presence and jazz-tinged pop and they recorded a number of hit records and big-selling albums. Photographs, bibliography, and index. ***That Old Black Magic*** takes its place alongside Manone's 1948 autobiography, ***Trumpet on the Wing*** (Doubleday) and Garry Boulard's 2002 ***Louis Prima*** (University of Illinois Press) as an essential source for the life and career of this often overlooked New Orleans trumpet player. Mosaic Records' 2002 ***The Complete Brunswick and Vocalion Recordings of Louis Prima and Wingy Manone*** (1924-37) collects his small combo recordings, with an excellent booklet written by collector/historian Lloyd Rauch.

In the riveting ***Princess Noire: The Tumultuous Reign of Nina Simone*** (University of North Carolina Press), Nadine Cohodas "weaves the story of [this singer and pianist's] contentious relationship with audiences and critics, her outspoken support for civil rights . . . and the sense of alienation that drove her to live abroad" for the final decade of her life. Photographs, source notes, a summary of her recordings, bibliography, and a general index.

James Kaplan's ***Frank: The Voice*** (Doubleday), which reads like a novel, takes the singer from his difficult 1915 Hoboken birth to his 1954 Oscar for Best Supporting Actor in ***From Here to Eternity***. Kaplan has done his homework, conducting hundreds of interviews with Sinatra's family members, former wives, friends, musical and business associates, and fellow actors, as well as combing through mountains of journalism and the other books on his subject and consulting with Sinatra scholars Will Friedwald and Michael Kraus. The book fully presents Sinatra as both supreme artist and the human being with many faults that we know him to have been. I found it utterly gripping, all 718 pages of it, and much look forward to the second volume, ***Sinatra: The Chairman of the Board***, to be published in 2014. Many photographs, thirty-two pages of "Notes and Sources," and a bibliography.

Patti Smith's award-winning memoir ***Just Kids*** (Ecco/Harper Collins) became a bestseller upon publication in 2010 and now it's in paperback. In it singer, song writer, poet, and visual artist Smith recounts her relationship with photographer Robert Mapplethorpe from their meeting in 1967 until his death in 1989. Among its many scenes, ***Just Kids*** touches on bookstores Scribner's, Brentano's, and Strand, which provided Smith with day jobs as clerk; Max's Kansas City, where Andy Warhol held court; and the Hotel Chelsea and its community of influential artists of that time, including William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Johnny Winter. In short, the book delineates the worlds of poetry, fiction, rock, and sexual politics that defined the period and in the context of which these two "kids" determined to devote themselves to art and swore to take care of each other, which is what they did through some very lean years. It's quite a story and one that will deeply move anyone who is committed to the importance of art, and artists, in our lives.

Patti Smith's 80-page ***Woolgathering*** (New Directions) is a dreamy, introspective, impressionistic, sometimes stream-of-conscious reflection on the author's childhood and early life that reads like poetry and even includes some verse here and there. As an augmented version of its original 1992 publication, one assumes that it has been adjusted to some degree to Smith's later-life sensibilities. An hour or two's reading, it has one — to borrow one of its deeply-felt metaphors — floating on a cloud at some points.

Judy Lynn and Patti Smith met in 1968 and soon became good friends and partners in an artistic project that endured for seven years. ***Patti Smith 1969-1976: Photographs by Judy Lynn*** (Abrams Image) movingly documents their collaboration, Patti as model, Judy behind the camera. "I took these photographs before I knew how," says Lynn in an afterword. Well, she knew how to capture the moment and the essence, that's for sure. Here are Patti and painter Howie Michels seated, the latter eyeing the cluttered table between them, the former gazing at some inner space; Patti, in dark glasses, holding a print of this very photograph, peeking over her shoulder at the camera and looking away from a window that reveals an array of outdoor restaurant tables with folded umbrellas below; Patti in her apartment in various guises and nude or bare breasted; headshots of her with a variety of expressions from thoughtful to clowning; Patti with wet stringy hair and in sport jacket and striped t-shirt, a body of water in the background; Patti and Robert Mapplethorpe in a pair of effectively out-of-focus shots looking into one another's eyes, Robert serious, Patti amused; a number of shots of Patti on the street, in one a stark and still scene, empty except for the sidewalk and bare wall of the building behind her, in others the city action leaping off the page with traffic in flow and pedestrians passing her and her companion. "Ever present within these images," writes Patti in her afterword, "is our relationship as artist and model. The trust, the openness, the lack of guile between us. Our shared desire to invoke Juliette Gréco, a shy chorus girl, or the killer bee. All the facets of our envisioned selves set as the precious stones of youth."

I learned a lot from Marc Dolan's ***Bruce Springsteen and the Promise of Rock 'N' Roll*** (W. W. Norton), both about the life and, most especially, the music of its rock star subject, and I intend to follow up my reading of this very interesting biography by listening to some of the songs he wrote and recorded, for I confess that my acquaintance with his oeuvre is sadly lacking. One learns that Springsteen's political awareness took form gradually over the course of the more than four decades that he has been touring the world and that today he is considered a major spokesman for liberalism and the working man and woman. At the age of twenty-six, Bruce sang that he "had got this guitar/And learned how to make it talk." Dolan opines, "[T]elling the story of his life in rock 'n' roll is a slantwise way of telling the history of our times, how we have come together and divided over the last half century, how we have changed what we think of each other as a people." Deftly maintaining a balance between the personal factors and external influences that shaped Springsteen's outlook, Dolan seemingly listened to virtually every available recording of Bruce Springsteen, both the commercially released and the bootlegged. In addition, he studied the many websites devoted to his subject. Photographs, source notes, index

The Autobiography of Clark Terry (University of California Press), with Gwen Terry, takes us from the trumpeter, flugelhorn player, composer, and bandleader's 1920s youth in St. Louis through his world travels, a career that spans seven decades. Wikipedia says that he is "one of the most prolific jazz musicians in history, having appeared on 905 known recording sessions, which makes him the most recorded trumpet player of all time." In addition, he is an innovator in jazz education and, for Nat Hentoff, "a living history of much of jazz." It's all here in his own words with a Preface by Quincy Jones, Foreword by Bill Cosby, Introduction by David Demsey (Curator of the Clark Terry Archives), "Honors and Awards" (five short of 200!), "Original Compositions," selected discography, photographs, and index.

Saxophonist Sweet Sue Terry, excerpting paragraph-long postings from her blog (it ran from 2005 to 2009), fills **Greatest Hits of the Blog that Ate Brooklyn: Inside the Mind of a Musician** (Q1 Note Book) with her pithy observations "of the world from the bandstand [from which she] has watched the antics of kings, paupers, and middle class humanity on five continents." It all adds up to a thoughtful, introspective, sometimes profound, and always entertaining view onto and into the jazz life from the perspective of a well-traveled and impressively talented musician who has been on that bandstand with score upon score of the greats of modern jazz. An index of names will lead you to her comments on many of these.

Ethel Waters packed a lot into her eighty years and seven-decade career. She began her career in black vaudeville in the 1910s as a blues singer and went on to perform jazz and gospel in clubs and concert halls here and abroad. By the mid-1930s she was on the Broadway stage and in film. She was the second African American, after Hattie McDaniel, to be nominated for an Academy Award. Donald Bogle's **Heat Wave: The Life and Career of Ethel Waters** (Harper Collins) does her justice and then some. It is hard to argue with the jacket blurb's opening sentence, "Almost no other star of the twentieth century reimagined herself with such audacity and durable talent as did Ethel Waters." Photographs, source notes, and index.

6) Fiction

I have read a number of novels set in a jazz or blues context, beginning in my early teens in the 1940s with Dorothy Baker's 1938 **Young Man with a Horn**, and I have come to the conclusion that they work much better when the music is a light motif rather than the dominant theme. And that is why I so enjoyed William Kennedy's **Chango's Beads and Two-Tone Shoes** (Viking Press). A scene from the 1930s opens the book and introduces legendary fictional pianist Cody accompanying a scattling Bing Crosby at a hastily convened late-night gathering. The story touches down in Cuba, where the novel's protagonist Quinn meets Castro and Hemingway, and, at the time of Robert F. Kennedy's assassination, in Albany, New York, where local politics are in flames. Then there is Quinn's love interest Renata, who runs guns for the Cuban revolutionaries. Cody surfaces both in Quinn's memories of that 1930s party when he was eight years old and in person. **Chango's Beads and Two-Tone Shoes** kept me up late several nights.

7) Social histories and interpretations

Insights into the world of jazz and popular music forms are provided by a number of new books, each of which has its own way of looking at the idiom's history and character.

A broad perspective is applied in **Jazz/NotJazz: The Music and its Boundaries**, edited by David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark (University of California Press), which contains a dozen wide-ranging essays by the editors and nine others. It "explores some of the musicians, concepts, places, and practices that, although deeply connected to established jazz institutions and aesthetics, have rarely appeared in traditional histories of the form." Sherrie Tucker challenges "the familiar account of jazz history as a logical march from one style to the next, forged by a procession of great men (and I do mean men)" while Jessica Bissett Perea's chapter is subtitled "Locating Pacific Northwest Vocal Ensembles Within Jazz Education." Others deal with jazz historiography, humor in jazz, Latin jazz, jazz with strings, composition-improvisation, "Black Revolutionary Nationalism and Asian Jazz," and jazz education. There are notes at each essay's end and musical examples with some. This collection will get you thinking along paths that perhaps it did not previously occur to you to follow.

Andrew S. Berish's perspective is narrower, yet incisive, in his **Lonesome Roads and Streets; Place, Mobility, and Race in Jazz of the 1930's and '40s** (University of Chicago Press). He focuses his laser beam on four musicians of the Swing Era — bandleaders Jan Garber, Duke Ellington, and Charlie Barnett and guitarist Charlie Christian — two of them white, two black. With an emphasis on touring, he outlines and details the experiences of the four while on the road in the U.S. Interspersed are analyses of tunes seemingly tied to the bands' excursions, e.g., Duke's "Magnolias," perhaps intended as an ironic evocation of the South, and Barnett's "Drop Me Off in Harlem" and "Pompton Turnpike," which Berish interprets as "about possibilities for social change." Garber, who started out as a classical violinist and then a jazz combo leader, eventually formed a big band that displayed "just a hint of the rhythmic drive, exciting arranging, or improvisational skill that we now associate with the great swing bands." As for Charlie Christian, "Between the two fixed points of his life — his early life in Oklahoma City and his confinement at [the Staten Island tuberculosis sanitarium] Sea View — [he] was in almost constant motion." In many ways a fresh approach to "swing's larger societal meanings," Berish's study broadens our understanding of the era and its music.

David Byrne, co-founder of Talking Heads, is a musical omnivore. In his **How Music Works** (McSweeney's), Byrne is all over the map, touching on, among myriad other subjects, Bach; Wagner; pianist Glenn Gould, who "embraced tape technology"; "a tablet found in Ugarit, present-day Syria, with the oldest bit of complete music on it"; Duke Ellington; Scott Joplin; Brian Eno; guitarists Charlie Christian, Les Paul, and Jimi Hendrix; the theremin's use in

cinema; Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer*; the cylinder recording, 78rpm, LP, cassette, reel-to-reel tape, and CD; dance and its choreographers; and his own musical experiences ("what music and performance are about" and "what it means to go on stage"). *Kirkus Reviews* describes the book as "an exploration of the radical transformation . . . of music from the beginning of the age of mechanical reproduction through the era of iTunes and MP3s." There are more than forty photos (including the only one of the Buddy Bolden band) and illustrations (charts, ads, etc.), notes of sources, Suggested Reading, but no index. It is an endlessly entertaining and richly informative volume.

Let's include here author (*Motherless Brooklyn*, *The Fortress of Solitude*, and other novels and the essay collection *The Ecstasy of Influence*, which is reviewed above) Jonathan Lethem's *Fear of Music* (33 1/3/Continuum International Publishing Group), one of a series of pocket-size paperbacks devoted to analyses of individual albums. *Rolling Stone* praises the project as "Ideal for the rock geek who thinks liner notes just aren't enough." Lethem begins his 140-page appreciation, *Fear of Music*, "In the summer of 1979, in New York City, a fifteen-year-old boy sitting in his bedroom heard a voice speaking to him over the radio. The voice said: 'Talking Heads have a new album. It's called Fear of Music.' The voice was that of David Byrne, the lead singer of the band." Identifying it as a concept album, Lethem examines it song by song, player by player, instrument by instrument, you name it.

In order to create a social history of the idiom, "approaching jazz from the outside in," Marc Meyers, in *Why Jazz Happened* (University of California Press), investigates such "non-music event[s]" that "dramatically alter[ed] the evolution of jazz" as the 1942-44 recording ban by the American Federation of Musicians (AFM); the G.I. Bill that was passed in 1944 and provided veterans with the opportunity to register in schools with music programs; the attraction, for musicians, of cheap housing developments in the post-WW II suburbs of Los Angeles; the advent of the LP and tape recording technology; the civil rights movement, which "helped inspire more spiritual and freer forms of jazz that had deep roots in the black church"; a "dramatic shift in music tastes among black and white teens in the mid-1960s"; and "the rise of electronic instruments and powerful concert speaker and lighting systems in the late 1960s," which made possible the attraction of huge audiences. These phenomena are explored in chapters with such titles as "Suburbia and West Coast Jazz"; "Bias, Africa, and Spiritual Jazz"; "Invasion and Jazz-Pop"; and "Lights, Volume, and Fusion." Myers answered a lot of questions for me, increasing my understanding of significant aspects of jazz vis-à-vis American social history that had, until his book came along, frankly been only minimally grasped by me.

The subtitle of Ellen Noonan's *The Strange Career of Porgy & Bess: Race, Culture, and America's Most Famous Opera* (University of North Carolina Press) only hints at the breadth, depth, scope, and thoroughness of the author's research into all aspects of the first African American opera, which was based on the 1925 novel *Porgy* by DuBose Heyward, composed by George and Ira Gershwin, and first performed in 1935. Noonan's eighty-five pages of source notes flesh out the lengths to which she went in order to present not only a complete account of the opera and its place in our culture but a history of the times during which it came into being. This is a major work of scholarship and it comes in a very handsome volume with photographs, illustrations of posters, etc., a bibliography, and an index.

This seems the appropriate place to include Michael Feinstein's *The Gershwins and Me: A Personal History of Twelve Songs* (Simon & Schuster). In fact, one of the Twelve Songs, "I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'", is from *Porgy & Bess*. So gorgeous is *The Gershwins and Me*, it could well have been included in the coffee table section (8) below. "[A]ward-winning pianist, singer, and educator [Feinstein] offers a lavishly illustrated tribute to the lives and music of these genius brothers." It is indeed that and more, "Combining personal memories with thoughtful exploration of [their] creative output . . . around twelve indelible Gershwin songs." Photographs galore and a CD of the author performing the twelve songs accompanies this magnificent volume.

A social phenomenon that I observed during my teens is the subject of Kathy Peiss' *Zoot Suit: The Enigmatic Career of an Extreme Style* (University of Pennsylvania Press). In fact, not only did I in the 1940s observe up close on occasion this bizarre attire, I had a jazz drummer friend who, until he died a decade ago, still sported some of the elements of the dressing habits he had assumed in his twenties in that same decade. *Zoot Suit* is a cultural history laced with the eye of ethnography, showing how an original African American sartorial style carried substantial symbolic power into the lives of Mexican American *pachucos*, Jewish tailor trumpeters, and all who wear 'the drape' as a statement of hipness.," says Nick Spitzer, host and producer of *American Routes*. Photographs, source notes, and index.

Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to its Own Past (Faber & Faber) is Simon Reynolds' acknowledgement of, and concern about, rock's obsession with "the cultural artifacts of its own immediate past." Buttressing his argument that the present sounds do not have their own identity with the observations, for example, that "the biggest hit of 2011, Adele's "Rolling in the Deep," is "basically 1960s rhythm and blues tightened up with modern production" and that "on Top 40 radio you'll hear a lot of brash, pounding songs that sound like '90s club music," Reynolds laments that, while pre-2000 pop had "epoch-defining sounds" and "took their sources in striking and fresh directions," today's displays nothing that indicates it wasn't made in previous decades. An interesting read, with a bibliography and an index in which you'll find listed many of your pop music favorites from Elvis to the present.

Darkest America: Black Minstrelsy from Slavery to Hip-Hop (W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.) by Yuval Taylor and Jake Austen, "is the first book devoted exclusively to the history and lasting influence of black minstrelsy." Living up to the promise of its subtitle, this study begins at the minstrel tradition's 1840s origins and in its concluding chapters deals with what they see as its continuing existence in popular music, film, and television. It's a disturbing story and one that deserves wide dissemination. Photographs, source notes, and index.

The Trumpet (Yale University Press), by Scottish trumpet players and educators John Wallace and Alexander McGrattan, takes a necessarily cross-spectrum approach, its first chapter dealing with "The trumpet in the ancient and non-Western World" and its final one covering "Jazz and the image of the trumpet since 1900." Between these bookends the reader is introduced to the instrument's role in "Europe and its environs to 1600" and then how it was utilized by Handel, Telemann, Bach, Haydn et alii through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. Attention is also given to the piccolo trumpet and the penultimate chapter is "Repertoire, techniques and performance idioms since 1900." There are more than fifty photos (Louis Armstrong's graces the dust jacket) and illustrations, about eighty musical examples, several tables listing Bach's use of brass instruments, an appendix of "A selective list of twentieth-century solo works," twenty-six pages of notes of sources, a fourteen-page bibliography, and an index. Crammed with the lore of the trumpet, this work is a treasure and a treasure house and the volume itself is a very handsome production.

More limited in scope than the other titles in this section, Jason Weiss's **Always in Trouble: An Oral History of ESP-DISK, the Most Outrageous Record Label in America** (Wesleyan University Press), tells the story of how ESP-DISK came into being. Its founder and producer Bernard Stollman's guiding principle was, "You've never heard such sounds in your life." First, there is a 75-page interview with Stollman that is very interesting, not least for his autobiographical account and stories about his dealings with musicians whom he recorded. He also speaks of his personal encounters with musicians of other genres, for example, Janis Joplin, Emmylou Harris, Yoko Ono, and Jimi Hendrix. This is followed by several-page accounts by forty musicians and others who contributed to the making of the ESP-DISK sounds, including trombonist Roswell Rudd, bassists Henry Grimes and Gary Peacock, poet Amiri Baraka, author Ishmael Reed, saxophonists Roscoe Mitchell and Marion Brown, drummer, percussionist, and educator Warren Smith, and singer, songwriter, and documentary filmmaker Erica Pomerance. The book combines musical and social history in riveting fashion. There are photographs and an index.

The back-cover publisher's blurb of poet and Emory University professor of writing Kevin Young's **The Grey Album: On the Blackness of Blackness** (Graywolf Press) says that it "resonates like a spasm band," combining essay, criticism, and bits and pieces of the author's autobiography in its examination of the "African American tradition of lying — telling tales, fibbing, improvising, jazzing up, 'storying'" and is "a persuasive argument for the many ways that African American culture is American culture." Young bolsters his argument with substantial and well documented essays that discuss — among other aspects and figures of this nation's culture — postmodernist literature and structuralism, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, Ezra Pound, Billie Holiday, scat, bebop, blues, soul, hip-hop, and jazz. Young has a far reach across "the grey areas of our history, literature, and music." I keep rereading parts of this stimulating collection. There are a handful of photographs, notes of sources (sometimes expatiating at length on a point), and an index.

Dipping into — as I enjoy doing — these collections, as well as the volumes of essays above in section 3, will keep you busy until my next round-up adds a few more.

☺ Coffee-table books

As so-called coffee-table books go, **Carnegie Hall Treasures** (Harper Design), by Tim Page and Carnegie Hall, is one of the most enthralling I have spent an evening with for some time. Not, strictly speaking, a history, it is nevertheless chock full of history, along with anecdotes and hundreds of photographs and illustrations of playbills, correspondence, performance programs, musical scores, tickets, and other memorabilia. As companion to the slip-cased volume there is a folder containing almost thirty "Carnegie Hall Treasures," facsimiles of such items. Carnegie Hall was conceived by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and his wife Louise. Its cornerstone was laid in 1890 and its opening night, on which Tchaikovsky conducted his **Marche Solennelle**, was on May 5, 1891. It wasn't long before it became the goal of artists to appear on one or another of the stages of "the greatest concert hall in the world." Following an Introduction that summarizes the hall's construction, its early years, and the campaign, spearheaded by Isaac Stern, to save it from the demolition ball in 1965, there are chapters that celebrate the composers, conductors, musicians, actors, and others who essentially made Carnegie Hall the centerpiece of the performing arts that it has been for a dozen decades. Although the chapters on jazz, popular music, and rock and folk music will be of particular interest to readers of these pages, one should not neglect the remainder of **Carnegie Hall Treasures**, for it documents a major part of American and worldwide cultural history. In all of its sections, which survey the entire spectrum of musical genres, there are profiles of the performers. Paderewsky, Dvořák, Vladimir Horowitz, and Rachmaninoff were among the hall's early bookings, followed in later decades by Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo, Marian Anderson, Glenn Gould, Yehudi Menuhin, Yo-Yo Ma, Lang Lang, and countless other classical eminences. Isadora Duncan's and Martha Graham's dance programs, Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts, and the 1997 premier of Ellen Taffe Zwilich's **Peanuts Gallery**, with cartoonist Charles M. Schulz and Snoopy in attendance, were highlights. There were events promoting women's suffrage, a fundraiser for the Tuskegee Institute, an evening honoring Albert Einstein, readings of poetry and prose, lectures, and even a demonstration of telepathy and hypnotism in 1933. The chapter "All that Jazz" provides accounts of the 1938 Benny Goodman concert, Duke Ellington's 1942 hall debut with his **Black, Brown, and Beige**, one of Fats Waller's three times there, a Billie Holiday concert, the Mary Lou Williams and Cecil Taylor face-off in 1977, and appearances by, among others, Count Basie, Miles Davis, Keith Jarrett, Pat Metheny, Bobby McFerrin, and Diana Krall. The sections devoted to pop, world music, rock, and folk showcase Judy Garland, Edith Piaf, Miriam Makeba, Johnny Cash, Harry Belafonte, Muddy Waters, Big Maybelle, Barbara Cook, Chuck Berg, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Leadbelly, the Beach Boys, Bruce Springsteen, and Björk. Among the many impressive illustrations in the volume is one that stood out for me. It is a

1968 drawing of Sixth Avenue a few blocks from where Carnegie Hall would rise two decades later. It is a scene of very undeveloped land, with shacks, clotheslines, and horse-drawn busses and carts on a country lane.

With an informative and perceptive text by Bob Blumenthal, a premier jazz journalist and author of other books on jazz, and arresting photographs by John Abbott, who is in the first rank of jazz photographers working today, **A Portrait of Sonny Rollins** (Abrams), published as its subject celebrated his 80th birthday after more than six decades on bandstands and stages, is a splendidly fitting tribute to a musician whose contributions to the art form have put him securely in the pantheon of jazz greats. Abbott's superb images catch Sonny at home, in the studio, on the gig and in sound checks, during his world travels, at repose with fellow musicians, and in posed portraits. Structuring his text upon Rollins' 1956 **Saxophone Colossus**, hailed by many as one of his finest albums, Blumenthal assigns each of its five tunes a chapter and discusses therein "many other memorable Rollins performances," which are also listed in an appendix. This handsome volume is a feast for both the eyes and the intellect.

Reed player, composer, producer, educator, and community leader Harold Battiste Jr. tells (with Karen Celestan) his life story (he was born in 1931) in **Unfinished Blues: Memories of a New Orleans Music Man** (The Historic New Orleans Collection), and a far-ranging and moving story it is. A lot of New Orleans history, musical and social, from the Great Depression on unfolds in **Unfinished Blues**, and Harold grew up in and was a part of it. From his mid-twenties, he was a Los Angeles-based producer, helping to launch and guide the careers of Dr. John, Sonny and Cher, and Sam Cooke. Returning to New Orleans in 1989, he helped Ellis Marsalis found the jazz studies department of the University of New Orleans. Photographs by many hands fill this volume and there is an index as well as appendices of Harold's arrangements, productions, and compositions and another of brief biographical accounts of the musicians who recorded for All For One (AFO), "the nation's first African American owned and operated record label," which Harold founded.

Record collectors and fans of blues, country, and other popular genres have long been familiar with the outrageous caricatures that R. Crumb illustrated album covers with. In **R. Crumb: The Complete Record Cover Collection** his drawings can now provide, again and again, the amusement experienced upon acquiring 78rpm, LP, and CD albums graced by his art. Outlandish though they are, they express self-confessed obsessive collector Crumb's love of the music and its creators. Here are cartoonish renderings of his own bands, R. Crumb & his DeLuxe String Band and R. Crumb and his Cheap-Suit Serenaders; Robert Johnson and Charlie Patton and B. B. King; Kansas Joe and Memphis Minnie; Alan Seidler, "The Duke of Ook"; The Wild Family Orchestra; "Roots of the Grateful Dead"; "The Bal Musette"; "Dans Les Bayous De LA Louisiane"; "Roy Smeck Plays Hawaiian Guitar Banjo Ukulele and Guitar." In short, a treasure trove of rib-ticking humor, as one of his characters' might quip in a dialogue balloon.

I remember the term being around in the 1960s and I even attended one or two, but until Mildred L. Glimcher's **Happenings: New York, 1958-1963** (Monacelli Press) arrived in the mail, I was not hip to their significance in the world of art and its development in the twentieth century. As defined by the author, happenings are "performance or theater pieces undertaken by a group of young artists in the late 1950s and early 1960s." The "Happening movement," by its very nature "ephemeral," was no less than a precursor and major inspiration to performance art. In her massive volume Glimcher provides historical background about how the movement came about and includes testimony by many of its founding members and subsequent practitioners. It is quite an interesting story of individuals determined to give both choreographed and spontaneous expression to their creative impulses. Fortunately, photographer Robert R. McElroy was often on hand to record the events as they took place and the book is filled with his (and several others') intriguing images. One can confidently say that **Happenings** will remain the basic and definitive account of this exciting art form. There are notes of sources, a Selected Chronology, a bibliography, and an index of names.

Miles Davis: The Complete Illustrated History (Voyageur Press) has assembled between its covers the most complete collection of photographs and art work representing the life and career of an artist who, for the nearly five decades during which he performed, crossed boundaries of style and approach to a degree that no other jazz musician has. With a main text by British author and journalist Garth Cartwright and substantial contributions from Clark Terry, Sonny Rollins, Herbie Hancock, Ashley Kahn, Francis Davis, George Wein, Vincent Bessières, Karl Hagstrom Miller, Nalini Jones, Gerald Early, Nate Chinen, Bill Cosby, Robin D. G. Kelley, Lenny White, Dave Liebman, Ron Carter, and Greg Tate, **Miles Davis** provides a wide-ranging biographical account of a trumpeter, band leader, and composer who became a major Twentieth Century artist. Davis was an enigmatic personality, iconic cultural figure, beloved folk hero, and the best-selling jazz artist ever. Included are chapters on "The Young Artist 1926-1948," **Kind of Blue**, his Cool, Hard Bop, and Jazz Fusion stages, the illnesses and addictions that he suffered from, "Miles and Women," "Miles in the 1980s," and "Miles Davis in the Ring: The Boxer as Black Male Hero." Beautifully produced, **Miles Davis: The Complete Illustrated History** is a magnificent pictorial treasure trove as well as one of the major places to go for information on and insight into one of the major luminaries of the jazz idiom. An index of names, tune titles, and album titles closes the volume.

The Crescent City's musical sounds and lore have from my early teens been dear to me. Now, the city's musical story is depicted in **Historic Photos of New Orleans Jazz** (Turner Publishing Company), with text and captions by New Orleans-based historian and broadcaster Tom Morgan. Most of the 200 images are drawn from the Louisiana State Museum Jazz Collection, with a dozen or so from Morgan's and others' private archives. Cultural diversity has always been the trademark of New Orleans music and this volume confirms that truth, with its mix of those from the black, white, Latino, Jewish, Italian-American, German-American, and other

ethnic communities mingling on bandstands and stages, displaying beautiful comradeship and the very essence of the jazz idiom, democracy in action. From Buddy Bolden and King Oliver and the Original Dixieland Jazz Band in the early twentieth century to Allen Toussaint and Banu Gibson and Kermit Ruffins of today, we are treated to a century of the musicians whose artistic efforts made — and make — New Orleans the thriving musical scene for which it is known.

Pearl Jam Twenty (Simon & Schuster), with an introduction by Cameron Crowe (whose documentary film of the same title was released last year), “is a verbal and visual archive of the band that provides an unprecedented look inside the lives and music of these iconic rock superstars.” The list of almost forty contributors includes, along with Pearl Jam members and Crowe, Bruce Springsteen, Pete Townshend, and Neil Young. Sales of the book, a truly comprehensive account and a grand production, should be doing well, considering that Pearl Jam has sold an estimated sixty million records worldwide.

I can’t remember when I have enjoyed spending a few hours browsing in an art book as much as I did with Jenny Jones’ **The Big Lebowski: An Illustrated, Annotated History of the Greatest Cult Film of All Time** (Voyageur Press). It convinced me that I must view the film again — perhaps a couple of times! Along with providing accounts of producers/directors the Coen brothers’ other films, the book explores “The Making of **The Big Lebowski**,” “Genre Bending,” “The Rise of the Cult of **The Big Lebowski**,” “The Coens after **Lebowski**,” and other themes. Inspirations for and allusions in the film are documented and many are illustrated, for example, Busby Berkeley, Westerns, noir cinema (**Bogart in The Big Sleep**), **Seinfeld**, and **The Wizard of Oz**. As for the musical connection, it has “One of the most inspired cobbled-together-from-a-stack-of-records soundtrack[s] since **Pulp Fiction**,” said the late Rickey Wright. Included on the CD **The Big Lebowski: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack** (this CD is not included with the book) are Bob Dylan, Captain Beefheart, Elvis Costello Yma Sumac, Piero Piccioni, Nina Simone, Moondog, Kenny Rogers And The First Edition, Meredith Monk, Gluck Das Mir Verblieb, Henry Mancini, the Gipsy Kings, Carter Burwell, and Townes Van Zandt. Suggestion: order the CD of the soundtrack and play it while browsing the volume.

Jazz: The Smithsonian Anthology (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings), a 200-page book and a six-CD set, was produced by Richard James Burroughs with an introduction by John Edward Hasse and Bob Blumenthal. Its roster of thirty eminent track notes writers includes historians, discographers, journalists, broadcasters, musicians, composers, producers, and educators, some of them combining several of these pursuits. Dick Hyman’s 1975 “Maple Leaf Rag” kicks off the 111-number collection, “In Gloryland,” rendered by Bunk [Johnson]’s Brass Band follows, and the Original Dixieland Jazz Band’s 1917 “Livery Stable Blues” is in third place. The final three tracks are Medeski Martin & Wood’s 1997 “Hey-Hee-Hi-Ho,” Martial Solal and Johnny Griffin with their 1999 “Neutralisme,” and Tomasz Stanko on “Suspended Night Variations VIII,” recorded in 2003. Quite a stretch across the jazz spectrum, with a broad and deep reach into the jazz idiom’s sonic history in between these bookends. There have been quibbles, and even attacks, in the jazz and mainstream press about the selections (everybody has a favorite recording that has been left out) but, all things considered, this is a masterful, meaty, very representative, and most enjoyable compilation with informed and authoritative commentary. Physically, it is a sturdy and easy-to-handle hard-cover volume in a protective hard-plastic see-through slipcase. It has a bibliography, Sources Cited, Contributors’ Bios, and index, and a photograph of the musician or musicians accompanies each track note. Just as I still dip into Martin Williams’ **The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz**, first released on LP in 1973 and reissued in a revised CD edition in 1987, I shall long be spinning the updated **Jazz: The Smithsonian Anthology**, for it is a gift that keeps giving.

The Graphic Canon, Volume 1: From the Epic of Gilgamesh to Shakespeare to Dangerous Liaisons and **The Graphic Canon, Volume 2: From “Kubla Khan” to the Bronte Sisters to The Picture of Dorian Gray** (Seven Stories Press), both of them edited by Russ Kick, are a gas. As youngster back in the 1930s, my brothers and I were forbidden, by a book-loving father, to bring comic books into our home, and he was most especially horrified by Classic Comics, which rendered Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, the Bible, Mark Twain, Louisa May Alcott, and other revered works into, as he deemed it, “funny papers.” How “The Times They Are a-Changin’”!, for the format has transmogrified into a very respectable and much respected genre. “We’re living in a golden age of the graphic novel, of comic art and of illustration in general,” Kick — who introduces each selection with a summary of its plot and its place in the literary canon — explains in his general introduction, “Legions of talented artists — who employ every method, style and approach imaginable — are creating such a flood of amazing, gorgeous, entertaining and groundbreaking material that it’s pretty much impossible to keep up with it all. What if a bunch of these artists used as their source material the greatest literature ever written?” Some of the dozens of artists included are Robert Crumb, Will Eisner, Molly Crabapple, Rick Geary, and Seymour Chwast. I’ve been grooving on, for example, Alice Duke’s **Iliad**, Valerie Shragg’s **Lysistrata**, Seymour Chwast’s **Canterbury Tales**, Declan Shalvey’s **Frankenstein**, and Ellen Lindner’s **Anna Karenina**. Both volumes have appendices of Further Reading, notes on the contributors, and index. I’m much looking forward to **Volume 3: From Heart of Darkness to Hemingway to Infinite Jest, which will be published in the spring**.

There have been many compilations of the lyrics of the great American songwriters and the major lyricists for musicals, but **Stephen Sondheim’s** *Finishing the Hat: Collected Lyrics (1954-1981 with Attendant Comments, Principles, Heresies, Grudges, Whines and Anecdotes* (Alfred A. Knopf Publishers), “titled after perhaps his most autobiographical song,” lives up to its subtitle, and is all the more enjoyable and informative for doing so. For example, in a sidebar on Alan Jay Lerner, he opines that his fellow lyricist “deadened the sexual insistence of his version of **Lolita**” and “smoothed out the raunchy Italian edge of **Carmelina**.” The text is chock full of autobiographical gems illustrating his musical development, such as: “[T]he moment I heard [Leonard Bernstein’s score for **On the Town**] sizzling out of the orchestra pit

when I was fourteen, it had given me that rush of excitement you rarely get from musicals: a fresh, individual and complex sound, a new kind of music." Photographs appear every few pages, there are many reproductions of "hand-written music and lyrics from the songwriter's personal collection," and the attractive volume has an appendix that provides the names of producers, book writers, score composers, musical directors, and casts of Sondheim's "Original Broadway Productions." Separate indices of subject matter and song titles make for ease of locating passages and are useful tools for research.

An update on The Big Easy is provided by David G. Spielman's **When Not Performing: New Orleans Musicians** (Pelican Publishing Company), which has text by Fred Lyon. Both reside in the city and their respective contributions to this book bespeak deep devotion to its musicians and its culture. The subtitle is operative, for the subjects of Spielman's camera pose, many with their instruments and mostly at home. Several are captured at work, including an erstwhile coffee shop owner, a festival producer, and the city's coroner. Of the more than sixty musicians, many are of national renown. Among these are Terence Blanchard, Evan Christopher, Fats Domino, Dr. John, Delfeayo, Jason, and Ellis Marsalis, Art, Cyril, and Charmaine Neville, Nicholas Payton, Pete Fountain, Irma Thomas, Kermit Ruffins, and Allen Toussaint. The names of some of the, presumably, local players are unfamiliar to me but the warmth of Spielman's images and Lyon's personable profiles make me want to check out their work. This is a stunning collection of photographs accompanied by biographical captions that truly bring out the personalities of the individuals depicted.

Alex Steinweiss: The Inventor of the Modern Album Cover by Kevin Reagan and Steven Heller (Taschen) is a hefty volume (weighing in at 7 lbs.) and gorgeous production that pays tribute to an artist of exceptional creativity and visionary outlook who died at 94 in July 2011 after an extraordinary career in the recording industry. His accomplishment was precisely what the book's subtitle claims. In 1939, as Columbia Records' first art director, Steinweiss introduced a new concept for album cover art, and he remained active in record cover design until the 1970s, when he retired and devoted himself to painting.

In his Introduction, Steven Heller points out that Steinweiss' contribution must be seen in the context of the Modernist principle "**Gesamtkunstwerk**" ("synthesis of the arts"), "which held that both fine and applied arts were equal . . . in the cultural hierarchy," adding that "designers were . . . bringing art into every home." That final point is exactly what Steinweiss intended and, across the decades, succeeded in doing, for "he pushed record-cover design beyond convention," in the process introducing the record-buying public to Modernism in pictorial art.

More than 400 pages of illustrations of Steinweiss's album covers, along with a sampling of his ads for pharmaceuticals and wine and liquor products, amply display his imagination and painterly expertise at work. He was assigned to create album covers for classical music, pop, jazz, Latin, ethnic music, Broadway shows, spoken word, you name it, and he also did book and magazine covers and editorial illustrations. For me, some of the album covers leap off the page with music, for example, the early 1940s reissues **Boogie Woogie** and **King Louis**. As a teenager I added these and other 78 rpm albums to my burgeoning (500 or so 78 rpm discs by the age of sixteen in 1946) collection as they were released. Steinweiss's musical tastes were quite eclectic. That he had a decided affinity for and knowledge of jazz is a given and is further confirmed by his being chosen, in 1999 a couple of years into his eighties, to be the featured speaker at **Jazz Grafico: Design and Photography for Jazz Records, 1940-1968**, an exhibition of about 180 record sleeves that show the evolution and different trends in the design of jazz record sleeves, at the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern Centre, Valencia, Spain. The book's text, dropped in throughout in several-page sections, is two-part, Steinweiss' memoir and Heller's summary of it, both of these translated into German and French. There is a five-page timeline of Steinweiss' long life and the many photos of him, along with his words, help personalize this singular individual.

As one who handled 78 rpm records thousands of times back in the day, I have to point out that an error occurs on page 33 (and is repeated on pages 40 and 125 and in the German and French translations), namely, that the 78 rpm disc played "for just four or five minutes" or "for about four-and-a-half minutes." Rather, the standard 10-inch 78 rpm actually could contain only about three-and-a-third minutes and it was the less frequently utilized 12-inch 78 rpm that accommodated five minutes. This distinction is not clarified.

But that is a very minor quibble. Uppermost in my thoughts about this marvelous tome is the pure enjoyment I experienced during the many hours I spent perusing it.

The title of Craig Hopkins' **Stevie Ray Vaughn Day by Day, Night After Night, His Final Years, 1983-1990** (Backbeat Books) well describes the format and content of this follow-up volume to the author's 2010 chronicle, **Stevie Ray Vaughn Day by Day, Night After Night His Early Years 1954-1982**, which took this blues guitarist and singer into his late twenties. Both books are exhaustive, detailed records of Vaughn's career with, in this second volume, several photographs or illustrations on virtually every page, a total of almost 1000 spread across the 341 pages. That super-star career was, sadly, cut short when Vaughan was killed in a helicopter crash following a performance in East Troy, Wisconsin, on August 27, 1990, at the age of thirty-five. This second part of Hopkins' project entailed seventeen years of research and was enhanced by interviews with a hundred or so musical and managerial associates of Vaughn, including Jackson Browne, B. B. King, Bonnie Raitt, Johnny Winter, and his widow Martha. It is a magnificent production.

UK-based John Watson has an eye, as the saying among photographers goes. However, his talents reside not simply in capturing his subject in repose and thus catching the essence of his or her personality, but in fixing in time that nanosecond that freezes the moment of truth in performance. Watson's **The Power of Jazz** (Blurb.com/bookstore) has the ratio of six color to one black-and-white photos and Watson is a master of both formats. This is a beautifully produced book, a very handsome volume indeed, and a pleasure to both browse through and closely examine in all of its fascinating details. The captions offer in several sentences the importance of the musician depicted. This was important to this reader and viewer since

two-thirds of the musicians are British or European and some of them were unknown to me. There are splendid impressionistic shots — employing such techniques as multiple exposure — of saxophonists Charles Lloyd and Sonny Rollins and guitarist Pat Martino. There is a marvelous image of a stubble-bearded and fiercely-blowing clarinet virtuoso Don Byron, here on tenor saxophone, and three stunning frames have Carla Bley passionately conducting. Nicely caught in action are saxophonists Lee Konitz, Johnny Griffin, Johnny Dankworth, Courtney Pine, and John Surman; clarinetist Kenny Davern; percussionist Trilok Gurtu; drummers Evan Jenkins, Jarle Vespestad, and Jack DeJohnette; singers Jane Monheit, Clare Teal, Kurt Elling, Mark Murphy, Roberta Gambarini, Dame Cleo Lane, and Sheila Jordan; trombonists Bob Brookmeyer, Kuumba Frank Lacy, and Dennis Rollins; trumpeters Roy Hargrove, Guy Barker, and Wynton Marsalis; pianists Oscar Peterson, Stefano Bollani, Zoe Rahman, and Esbjorn Svensson; guitarists Pat Metheny, Harold Arlen, John Abercrombie, John Scofield, and Jim Mullen; and bassists Henry Grimes and Dave Holland.

Of “personality” portraits I especially like a contemplative Arve Henriksen, gazing downward and lost in thought, his trumpet aside him vertically; saxophonist Carol Sudhalter, jumping with joy, horn in hand, with lovely expression of *joie de vivre*; and 92-year-old pianist Hank Jones at the mike in New York’s Jazz Standard addressing the 2009 Jazz Journalists Association Awards audience, expressing thanks for receiving the Pianist of the Year Award. He left us a year later.

Among the “more than 140 photographs of rising stars and jazz legends,” I find only a dozen that provide in their captions the location of the shoot and only one that gives a date, and that one only the year. “Locations for John Watson’s photography” are listed on page 4 as three-dozen sites, including clubs, concert halls, and festivals, none as of any specific photograph. And as I have too often observed, not only in photo collections but in magazines and newspapers, in Watson’s sublime collection of photographs, with few exceptions, band members other than the leader or soloist are left unidentified. In addition to the loss to the historical record, what must these musicians feel when they come upon their visages sans their names? I also am surprised that the volume lacks an index of names. Finally, where are the women? There are seven women singers but, except for Bley, Rahman, and Sudhalter, the strong presence of women instrumentalists in today’s jazz scene is conspicuous by its absence.

Sean **Wilentz’s 360 Sound: The Columbia Records Story** (Chronicle Books) celebrates the 125th anniversary of the label that initiated the recording of music with its introduction of musical cylinders in 1890. Priced at \$1 to \$2 each, a year later the Columbia catalogue of cylinders ran to ten pages. Wilentz’s tome — it weighs in at 5 lbs. — is a compendium of the history of musical performance as captured on cylinders, 78 rpm, LP, tape, and CD for the century-and-a-quarter of the company’s existence. Many performers of importance are noted herein, many with short bios and label illustrations of a release or two. This is indeed a collection and a history to treasure. My admiration for Princeton University Professor Wilentz for his achievement in compressing Columbia’s history in this beautiful volume. A prolific author of books on politics, he has also published **Bob Dylan in America**. Featuring more than 300 rare images from the Columbia archives, “**360 Sound** is indeed a “lavishly illustrated celebration” of the label that has played such an essential role in “technical and social change” and enhanced the artistic culture to a degree almost unimaginable. Here is a sampling of the cast appearing in this mammoth project: John Philip Sousa, Al Jolson, Paul Robeson, Louis Armstrong, W. C. Handy, Mamie Smith, Bessie Smith, Bix Beiderbecke, Robert Johnson, Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Erroll Garner, Gene Autry, Bert Williams, Igor Stravinsky, Benny Goodman, Pearl Bailey, Art Tatum, Thelonious Monk, Dave Brubeck, Vladimir Horowitz, Frank Sinatra, Mitch Miller, Isaac Stern, Rose Mary Clooney, Bruno Walter, Johnny Mathis, Barbra Streisand, Leonard Cohen, Aretha Franklin, Lefty Frizzell, Leonard Bernstein, the New York Philharmonic, Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, Weather Report, the Byrds, Grand Ole Opry, Bill Monroe, Bob Wills, Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Harry Connick Jr., Wynton Marsalis, Elvis Costello, André Kostelanetz, Tony Bennett, Bruce Springsteen, Destiny’s Child, Lauryn Hill, Dixie Chicks, Offspring, Jeff Buckley, Beyoncé, John Legend, Chris Botti, Nas, Maxwell, Wyclef Jean, Yo Yo Ma, Adele. Appendices of Grammy Awards and **Billboard** #1 Albums and an index of names conclude the volume.

9) Scarecrow Press

Just as the Library of America aims to keep classics of America’s literary heritage in print and Mosaic Records has returned to availability more than 200 long out-of-print classic jazz sessions, so has the **Studies in Jazz** series (General Editors: Dan Morgenstern and Edward Berger) of Scarecrow Press established itself as the leading locus of scholarly biographies and discographies in the field of jazz studies. Almost seventy volumes have seen print with its imprimatur. The past year or has seen publication by Scarecrow of a number of magnificent titles.

Because I saw Johnny Hartman twice in the early 1980s, at D.C.’s Charlie’s in Georgetown, I can attest to his sublime delivery of ballads. Both performances are mentioned in Gregg Ackerman’s **The Last Balladeer: The Johnny Hartman Story** (Scarecrow Press, Inc.), which takes us from the singer’s 1930s boyhood days in Chicago to his death in 1983. “[A] central question regarding [Hartman’s] stature [is] ‘Why was he not a bigger success in his lifetime?’” the author asks, and suggests that it may well have been that here was “a black artist who sang more like Pery Como than Joe Williams.” This first biography of Hartman will likely remain the definitive account of the Louisiana-born singer. It includes photographs, a discography, a bibliography, a list of songs he recorded, and an index.

What It Is: The Life of a Jazz Artist (Scarecrow Press, Inc.) by Dave Liebman in conversation with Lewis Porter, is exactly that, a 337-page dialogue between Liebman and pianist, author, and educator Porter. On the final page of this never flagging and informative conversation the saxophonist tells his interlocutor about Miles Davis showing him a picture of Louis Armstrong and him (Miles) together and telling him (Liebman), “From him to me to you.”

That Liebman respects that same sense of obligation to his musical forebears is made abundantly clear throughout the volume as he relates his own history, which included associations with Miles, Elvin Jones, Ravi Coltrane, Joe Lovano, Michael and Randy Brecker, and many others, the New York loft jazz scene, and a day job as a New York substitute teacher. Photographs, discography, an appendix of "Selected Educational Materials," index.

The first thing I did upon opening Thomas A. Hustad's magisterial ***Born to Play: The Ruby Braff Discography and Directory of Performances*** (Scarecrow Press, Inc.) was to see if it listed his quartet's two-week gig at the Maryland Inn's King of France Tavern in Annapolis in May of 1978, during which I taped an interview with Ruby for my radio show. Sure enough, there it was, on page 363. I aired the tape and a selection of his recordings the next morning on my "I thought I heard Buddy Bolden say . . ." on D.C.'s WGTB-FM. The interview was also the basis of a profile of cornetist Braff in my 1991 ***The Jazz Scene***. Hustad's book is much more than a compilation of recording session information and performance dates and locations, for interspersed with that data are biographical information, excerpts from reviews, and commentary by the author. For the Braff admirer — count me among them! — the volume serves not only as an essential reference but as a treasure house that provides immense pleasure and rewards in simply browsing in it.

Edward N. Meyer's ***Just Four Bars: The Life and Music of Kenny Davern*** (Scarecrow Press) is an exhaustively researched and very readable account that carries its subject from his earliest years to his final moments. Kenny Davern, who was born in 1935, was one of the most talented and respected jazz clarinetists of his time. He was active from 1953 when, right out of high school, he went on the road with the Ralph Flanagan big band, until a few weeks before he died in December 2006. A generation younger, Kenny played and recorded with many of his musical heroes, including Jack Teagarden, Wild Bill Davison, and Henry "Red" Allen, and developed close and long-lasting friendships with others, most notably Pee Wee Russell. Kenny's stylistic bag was traditional jazz through the Swing Era but he had wide-ranging tastes as a listener. It will surprise some, as it did yours truly, that he was an admirer of Ornette Coleman, whose concepts "knocked [him] out." In his early years Kenny played traditional jazz with soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy and in the 1970s made a free-form LP with this avant-garde convert. From the 1970s Kenny had a close musical relationship with Bob Wilber, co-leading with him Soprano Summit, which recorded many albums over the decades and, after it disbanded in 1979, got together for occasional reunions and recording sessions into the 2000s. From the 1980s until the end of his life Kenny led his own combo, as well as collaborating with Ruby Braff, Art Hodes, Scott Hamilton, Ken Peplowski, and many others. Meyer earlier published a biography of pianist Dick Wellstood. Davern and Wellstood were "inseparable musical and personal companions," in the words of Dan Morgenstern in his Preface to this volume. Meyer draws on his biography of Wellstood and on the autobiographical and biographical works of others, on his interviews with many musicians and others who knew Kenny, and on the public record as represented in magazines, newspapers, and other sources. There is a lengthy discography, a bibliography, photographic section, and index. This is truly an estimable and thorough contribution to jazz historiography.

Timme Rosenkrantz's ***Harlem Jazz Adventures: A European Baron's Memoir, 1934-1969*** (The Scarecrow Press, Inc.), adapted and edited by Fradley Hamilton Garner, provided me with a couple of evenings of unadulterated joy. Danish baron Timme (1911-69) made many visits to the U. S. during the period covered, some for only a year or two, and one, while his native land was occupied, was for the six years of World War II. He befriended virtually all of the New York-based jazz musicians of the time, photographed them, recorded many of them in his digs, wrote about them for publications here and abroad, produced concerts, hosted jazz parties, owned and ran clubs in New York and Paris, and was a jazz dj. All of his trips, most on ocean liners, were inspired by his love of jazz, and his enthusiasm for the art form is infectious. Here he is on Harlem's Savoy Ballroom upon his first experience of it, in 1934: "There were two bandstands, bathed in colored spotlights. The right stand . . . was for the big band, like Chick Webb's when he played there; the left stand usually held a smaller, seven- or eight-piece unit like the Savoy Sultans. . . . The bands took turns playing music so uplifting, the dance floor seemed to move up and down like the Atlantic Ocean I had just crossed." And here is his description, a decade later, of The Street that Never Slept: "The Onyx Club had started the trek to West 52nd, quickly followed by the Famous Door, Three Deuces, Kelly's Stables, Jimmy Ryan's, the Spotlight, Tondaleyo's. . . . Great were the nights when a trip to The Street . . . offered Billie Holiday, Art Tatum, Stuff Smith, King Cole, Count Basie, Roy Eldridge, Ben Webster. . . . Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie stirred up great wonder with their new sounds. . . . It was a moveable feast!" Preface by Dan Morgenstern, who knew Timme. Photographs, discographies, indices.

Peter J. Silvester's ***The Story of Boogie Woogie: A Left Hand Like God*** (Scarecrow Press/Rowman & Littlefield) took me back seven decades. Boogie woogie has since my early teens occupied a very special place in my heart. It was the gateway for me into jazz and blues and I still love those eight-to-the-bar rhythms! My introduction to the style came about via a half-dozen blue-label Decca 78 rpm records that my oldest brother Billy left behind when he went into the U. S. Navy at the outset of WW2. Before he departed I had paid no attention to the strange sounds coming from his room but, once he was gone, I spun the discs on his turntable and Meade Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons, and Pete Johnson quite simply just blew me away! Silvester's ***The Story of Boogie Woogie*** took me back to those recordings and others that I purchased as a teenager in the 1940s. It also brought me up to the present, for Silvester not only covers the roots and early developments of the style but takes us through the 1950s and '60s, when Lewis, Ammons, Johnson, and other veterans of the classic years in Chicago were still performing and recording, and then covers the decades since, which are filled with re-creators of boogie woogie here and abroad. It is truly a definitive account of this basic style of piano blues that, not incidentally, formed the basis of r&b and rock. The author not only provides LP and CD sources for titles he discusses as the text proceeds but closes the volume with a 30-page chapter on record labels that lists important releases from the

1920s to the 2000s. There are photos, including some marvelous scenes from the early years of boogie woogie, an appendix of bass patterns, a bibliography, and index.

With **Mr. Trumpet: The Trials, Tribulations, and Triumph of Bunny Berigan** (Scarecrow Press, Inc.), Michael P. Zirpolo has established himself as the major authority on this great musician. Access to the massive archive of Berigan materials that Bozy White spent a half century collecting served Zirpolo well, for he plumbed it thoroughly, compiling a definitive record of Bunny's professional life and using quotes from published reviews and interviews with those who worked with this trumpeter and bandleader to personalize his 520-page biography of a musician whom many, musicians and fans alike, would do well to familiarize themselves with. As the late Richard Sudhalter said of Berigan, "Among jazz trumpeters in 1930, only Armstrong and a very few others were working with such a span [of command on the instrument], and fewer still with such ease." The author adds, "an Armstrong disciple from childhood, [Berigan] had the rhythmic message of Louis in his bones." Bunny's personality and character are laid bare in Zirpolo's magnificent book with much attention given to his family life, love affairs, and the workaholic and functioning alcoholism that contributed to his death at thirty-three in 1942. There are photographs, notes of sources, an index, and several appendices of air check recordings.

Janice Leslie Hochstat Greenberg's **Jazz Books in the 1990s: An Annotated Bibliography** (Scarecrow Press, Inc.) is a useful guide to the decade's immense jazz literature. It's 700 or so titles, with brief descriptions of contents, are dispersed among chapters on Biographies, History, Individual Instruments, Essays and Criticism, Discographies, Pictorial, Reference Works, etc. In his Forward, Ed Berger describes the book as a "first volume of a projected decade-by-decade examination of the jazz literature." One hopes that in the 2000s volume there will be an appendix listing 1990s titles that were left out of Greenberg's book, for example my 1991 **The Jazz Scene: An Informal History from New Orleans to 1990** (Oxford University Press). Subject, title, and author indexes.

Don Rayno's **Paul Whiteman: Pioneer in American Music, 1930-1967 Volume 2** (Scarecrow Press, Inc.) follows by a decade his **Paul Whiteman: Pioneer in American Music, 1930-1967 1967 Volume 1** (Scarecrow Press, Inc.), the first clocking in at 840 pages, the second at 865. "Here finally is a remarkably accurate, equable, and impeccably researched assessment of the life and achievements of Paul Whiteman, for many decades the most maligned figure in jazz history. Bravo to Don Rayno for sorting out reality from myth, fact from fiction," says Gunther Schuller. Rayno, who has spent thirty years researching Whiteman's life and career, "illustrates in this second volume . . . how much of a dominant figure Whiteman remained." Picking up the Whiteman story from the early years of the Great Depression, Rayno carries it through the decades to the great orchestra leader's death at seventy-seven in 1967. The volume's 342 pages of text are followed by Notes (114 pages); 72 photographs; three appendices: A Gallery of Whiteman Musicians (34 pages), A Paul Whiteman Chronology (84 pages), and A Paul Whiteman Discography (148 pages); a bibliography (56 pages); and 75 pages of indices: a General Index, an Index of Songs and Concert Works, and a Discography Index of Composers and Lyricists. **Paul Whiteman: Pioneer in American Music, 1930-1967 Volume 2** (and its earlier Volume 1) is a major work of scholarship and a grand and spectacular contribution to American biographical letters.

10) Blues, Gospel, etc.

I have been impressed over past decades with the research forming the basis for a number of jazz and blues biographies, but in terms of actual field work I don't know if I have ever come across the equal of Michael Gray's **Hand Me My Travelin' Shoes: In Search of Blind Willie McTell** (Chicago Review Press). Blues and rock authority Gray, a Britain who has published books on Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan and Frank Zappa, interviewed score upon score of McTell's surviving relatives and friends (McTell died in obscurity in 1959) throughout Georgia and neighboring states, in the process not only piecing together the details of the guitarist, singer, and composer's itinerant life and career but presenting a compelling picture of the pre-WW2 South and its social and cultural history that served as the context of and inspiration for McTell's impressive creativity. Photographs, bibliography, discography, and index.

Marcel Ely II's **Ain't No Grave: The Life and Legacy of Brother Claude Ely** (Dust-to-Digital) is more than a biography, it is a model of oral history. As its author, a great-nephew of singer, guitarist, and charismatic preacher Brother Claude Ely, says in his Preface, "The beauty of oral history is that it is not from traditional textbooks or told from the viewpoint of historical scholars. Its beauty rests in the knowledge that the story is being told by eyewitnesses of the actual events." Ely goes on to explain that he took pains to validate the interviews he did with more than a thousand individuals throughout Appalachia's impoverished coal mining areas over the course of a decade "by finding records or other supporting documents" and, when recording "conflicting information" due to "different recollection[s]," he "sought the account most agreed upon." The book is an in-depth account of Appalachian mountain people's lives, the role that the Pentecostal-Holiness Church played in those lives, and the effect that Brother Claude Ely's emotional delivery had upon his congregations. Nearly 300 photographs are included plus a 10-track CD that features an electrifying 40-minute sermon by Brother Ely and congregations singing his and others' compositions, among which is Brother Ely's "There Ain't No Grave Gonna Hold My Body Down." An index is included.

Ted Gioia is all over the place as a music writer. We included his **The Jazz Standards** above and he has also authored histories of jazz and of work songs. His **Delta Blues: The Life and Times of the Mississippi Masters Who Revolutionized American Music** (W. W. Norton & Company) will long remain a basic account of the more than a century that it covers. Drawing on interviews, field work, and many written sources, Gioia puts together as close to a definitive history of the idiom as we are likely to see. Photographs, art work (by Neil Harpe), source notes, and appendices of "For Further Reading" and "Recommended Listening."

I remember when he appeared on LP as if out of the blue in the late 1950s and I found him to

be one of the most compelling blues musicians I had ever heard. Now we have Alan Govenar's **Lightnin' Hopkins: His Life and Blues** (Chicago Review Press), the amazing personal and professional story of one of the most recorded blues artists in history. That late '50s surfacing was actually only one of several "rediscoveries" of Texas-born Sam Hopkins, who had been playing gigs since his teens in the 1920s and first recorded in 1946, which is when he acquired his nickname. Photographs, bibliography, discography, source notes, and index.

Son House, besides being a blues legend and a pioneer of bottleneck guitar, became a major influence on a generation of young blues musicians the likes of Bonnie Raitt, Rory Block, Taj Mahal, and others who got to know him in the 1960s when, after two decades of obscurity, he was a prominent member of the blues revival. Now his life and career is there for all to read about in Daniel Beaumont's in-depth **Preachin' the Blues: The Life and Times of Son House** (Oxford University Press). Photographs, bibliography, and index.

In the 1970s and '80s William Ferris was doing the field work — i.e., interviews and recordings — for his **Give My Poor Heart Ease: Voices of the Mississippi Blues** (University of North Carolina Press), which, Publishers Weekly says, is "a great mix of stories from renowned blues greats alongside people known only in their neighborhoods." It is a deep and broad exploration not only of the blues life but of the culture and society of the South at a very creative, yet disturbing, time of its history. Photographs, bibliography, discography, filmography, list of websites, and both a CD and DVD.

The subtitle of John Szwed's **Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World** (Viking Penguin) pretty much describes what Alan set out to do with his portable recording equipment and cameras in the 1930s and continued through the '70s. Says Szwed in his introduction, "[Alan Lomax] might have thought of himself as spokesperson for the Other America, the common people, the forgotten and excluded, the ethnic, those who always come to life in troubled times." This is a life and career story rich in insight into both Lomax and his quest and that Other America, written by someone who knew the great folklorist well over the course of a half century. A single photograph of Lomax, source notes, and index.

Follow it up with Tom Piazza's **The Southern Journey of Alan Lomax: Words, Photographs, and Music** (W. W. Norton & Company). "Alan Lomax changed the way Americans and much of the world listen to music. He was one of the twentieth century's most prolific documentarians, as well as a singer, songwriter, broadcaster, and civil rights activist. His ethnomusicological theories are still debated in universities," says Piazza in his Foreword to this impressive volume, a verbal, visual, and aural journey into the life that Szwed writes about in his **Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World**. Photographs, source notes, discography, index, and a CD.

"[B]lues is infused with a subtlety and power of emotion that transcends even the listener's ability to understand the meaning of the words," says Alligator Records label founder Bruce Iglauer in his Foreword. It is a sentiment to well keep in mind when reading **Blues Philosophy for Everyone: Thinking Deep About Feeling Low** (Wiley-Blackwell), edited by Jesse R. Steinberg and Abrol Fairweather. The volume's twenty-five contributors, all blues lovers, are: professors or students of philosophy; several who practice psychiatry; and musicians, among whom are singer Meghan Winsby, guitarist, Nathaniel Langston, and pianist Ben Stolorow, who shares authorship of the chapter on Blues and Emotional Trauma with his father, psychoanalyst Robert D. Stolorow. The takes on the blues idiom by some of the others deal with Blues and Catharsis; Artistic Transformation of Trauma, Loss, and Adversity in the Blues; Suffering, Spirituality, and Sensuality; Even White Folks Get the Blues; A Woman's Perspective on Authenticity; The Transformation of Trauma and Loss in the Blues; Did Whites Rip off the Blues?; and Class, Race, and Gender in American Vernacular Music. It is a fascinating collection of mind-bending reflections on the blues. An appendix of blues songs that provided inspiration for the individual essays concludes the volume.

"I followed the blues ever since I was a young child . . . from a plantation way out in the middle of nowhere to the knife-and-gun concrete jungle of Chicago," says Buddy Guy in his **When I Left Home: My Story** (Da Capo Press), co-authored by David Ritz. Buddy is in the first rank of blues players and has been a major influence on such younger guitarists as Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Robert Cray, Jeff Beck, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Here is his amazing life story — and he is still going strong! Photographs, discography, and index.

"33 1/3 is a series of short books about a wide variety of albums, by artists ranging from James Brown to the Beastie Boys," says 33 1/3's website (<http://333sound.com/what-is-a-thirty-three-and-a-third>), which then lists others in this pocket-size paperback series, including Dusty Springfield's 1969 **Dusty in Memphis**, 1967's **The Velvet Underground & Nico**, and the Beach Boys' 1966 **Pet Sounds**, and we have an entry above for Jonathan Lethem's **Fear of Music**. Aaron Cohen's very informative and most enjoyable **Amazing Grace** (33 1/3/ Continuum International Publishing Group) provides a 166-page analysis of Aretha Franklin's 1972 double album by that name, a recording of the January 13, 1972, performance she gave in the New Temple Missionary Baptist Church in Watts, Los Angeles. She was two months short of her thirtieth birthday and **Amazing Grace** would become her biggest selling album. The performance, says Cohen, was shaped by the presence of Aretha's "family, colleagues, and congregants inside the church" and it "touched on social and political changes far outside its doors." He examines her art in the context of those changes. The appendix of sources includes both writings and recordings and there is a short list of websites and another of 33 1/3's eighty-three available books.

11) Folk music, etc.

I've loved American folk music since my teens in the 1940s and in the '50s closely followed its resurgence. Pete Seeger, who will be ninety-four on May 3 and has long been, not only America's Folk Singer, but America's Conscience — there is no other way to describe him — and he is still both and still singing. From the pre-World War II labor movement to his 1940s

time with the Weavers and their Hollywood blacklisting to the Civil Rights movement to the Vietnam and Iraq war protests to cleaning up the Hudson River to current concerns such as the increasing healthcare and economic inequality, Pete has always been out front. He tells his life story in **Pete Seeger In His Own Words** (Paradigm Publishers). The sources for the book are Pete's personal archive, "along with important writings," selected and edited by the father and son team of Sam and Rob Rosenthal. His is a story rich in historical significance and full of inspiration. Photographs and index.

In her **Frontier Figures: American Music and the Mythology of the American West** (University of California Press), Beth E. Levy "highlight[s] the intersections between classical music and the diverse worlds of Indians, pioneers, and cowboys" by examining the works of such composers as Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, Virgil Thomson, Charles Wakefield Cadman, Arthur Farwell, and others. Twenty-five citations of jazz, eight of blues, and more than a hundred of folk in the index lead one to the use the composers made of these idioms. This is quite a unique study, "a tour-de-force exploration of how the American West, both as physical space and as inspiration, has animated American music." Notes of sources and a bibliography.

A song apiece by Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Gil Scott-Heron, Nina Simone, Bob Dylan, James Brown, Fela Kuti, Plastic Ono Band, Country Joe and the Fish, Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, U2, Rage Against the Machine are some of the thirty-three whose histories are provided in Dorian Lynskey's **33 Revolutions Per Minute: A History of Protest Songs From Billie Holiday to Green Day** (Ecco/Harper Collins). The volume is an endlessly fascinating account of the political and social movements that inspired the creation of these songs. Photographs, source notes, index, and appendices on Protest Songs Before 1900, Songs and Albums Mentioned in the Text, and One Hundred Recommended Songs.

Electric Eden: Unearthing Britain's Visionary Music (Faber and Faber, Inc.) by Rob Young examines the use of English root-music sources used by Fairport Convention, Pentangle, Steeleye Span, Nick Drake, and others, who "were on a decades-long quest in the 1960s and '70s to recover the music of the English past." Following up on their efforts, the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Traffic, Kate Bush, Talk Talk, and more used some of the same inspirations. This is a wide-ranging exploration of Britain's folk music and how it fed into rock. The groups and their members come alive on the page. Photographs, bibliography, a "Musical/Discographic Timeline," and index.

12) Biographies and autobiographies of pop musicians

Here is a list of the two-foot-high stack of pop musician biographies that I have received this past year or so. I've indicated for each whether photographs, index, etc., are included.

Harry Shapiro, **Jack Bruce Composing Himself** (Jawbone Press). Photographs, discography, appendix of live performances, short overview of Bruce's choice of bass guitars, index.

Greil Marcus, **The Doors: A Lifetime of Listening to Five Mean Years** (Public Affairs). Photographs, index.

Daniel Mark Epstein, **The Ballad of Bob Dylan: A Portrait** (Harper Collins). Photographs, source notes, index.

Greil Marcus, **Bob Dylan By Greil Marcus: Writings 1968-2010** (Public Affairs). Photographs, index.

David Yaffe, **Bob Dylan: Like a Complete Unknown** (Yale University Press). "Playlist of seventy essential Dylan tracks," source notes, bibliography, index.

Sean Wilentz, **Bob Dylan In America** (Doubleday). Photographs, "Selected Readings," source notes, discography, index.

Paul Brannigan, **This Is a Call: The Life and Times of Dave Grohl** (Da Capo Press). Photographs, source notes, bibliography, discography, index.

Steven Roby and Brad Schreiber, **Becoming Jimi Hendrix: From Southern Crossroads to Psychedelic London, the Untold Story of a Musical Genius** (Da Capo Press). Photographs, bibliography, Recommended Listening, Sessionography/Discography and Television Appearances, 1962-1966, Chronology of Tours and Events, index.

Marc Spitz, **Jagger: Rebel, Rock Star, Rambler, Rogue** (Gotham Books). Photographs, bibliography, index

Tim Riley, **Lennon: The Man, the Myth, the Music — The Definitive Life** (Hyperion/Harper Collins). Photographs, source notes, bibliography, discography, index.

Colin Grant, **The Natural Mystics: Marley, Tosh, and Wailer** (W. W. Norton & Company). Photographs, source notes, bibliography, index.

Howard Sounes, Fab: **An Intimate Life of Paul McCartney** (Da Capo Press). Photographs, source notes, bibliography, index.

Bob Mould and Michael Azerrad, **See a Little Light: The Trail of Rage and Melody** (Little, Brown and Company). Photographs, index.

Keith Richards (with James Fox), **Life** (Little, Brown and Company). Photographs, index.

Mark Blake, **Is This the Real Life?: The Untold Story of Queen** (Da Capo Press). Photographs, bibliography, index.

Gil Scott-Heron, **The Last Holiday: A Memoir** (Grove Press). Photographs.



Jeanette Leech, **Seasons They Change: The Story Of Acid Psych And Experimental Folk** (Jawbone Press). Photographs, source notes, bibliography, index.

Pete Townshend, *Who I Am: A Memoir* (Harper Collins). Photographs, index.

W. Royal Stokes has been observing the jazz, blues, and popular music worlds since the early 1940s. He was editor of *Jazz Notes* (the quarterly journal of the Jazz Journalists Association) from 1992 to 2001 and has participated in the annual *Down Beat* Critics Poll since the 1980s. He hosted his weekly *"I thought I Heard Buddy Bolden Say . . ."* and *Since Minton's* on public radio in the 1970s and '80s. He has been the *Washington Post's* jazz critic and editor of *JazzTimes* and is the author of *The Jazz Scene: An Informal History from New Orleans to 1990* (Oxford University Press, 1991), *Swing Era New York: The Jazz Photographs of Charles Peterson* (Temple University Press, 1994), *Living the Jazz Life: Conversations with Forty Musicians about Their Careers in Jazz* (Oxford University Press, 2000), and *Growing Up With Jazz: Twenty-Four Musicians Talk About Their Lives and Careers* (Oxford University Press, 2005). His novel *Backwards Over* will see publication in 2013. He is currently at work on a memoir and *A W. Royal Stokes Jazz, Blues & Beyond Reader*.

 [Uncategorized](#)

Best & Notable Releases of 2012

 February 25, 2013  [Royal](#)

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Nota bene: All of my choices are in alphabetical order by artist or name of group and are to be counted equally as to points, rank, etc.

TEN BEST NEW RELEASES

Dan Barrett and Chris Hopkins, *Dan Barrett's International Swing Party: Tour 2010 — Live! Volume 2* (Echoes of Swing Productions)
Anat Cohen, *Clarooscuro* (Anzic)
Ernest Dawkins, *Afro Straight* (Delmark)
Curtis Fuller, *Down Home* (Capri)
Keith Jarrett, *Sleeper* (ECM)
Brad Mehldau, *Ode* (Nonesuch)
Art Pepper, *Unreleased Art Pepper Vol. VII: Sankei Hall — Osaka, Japan* (Widow's Taste)
Roberta Piket, *Solo* (Thirteenth Note)
Wadada Leo Smith, *Ten Freedom Summers* (Cuneiform)
Henry Threadgill, *Tomorrow Sunny/The Revelry*, Spp (Pi)

TOP THREE REISSUES

Clifford Brown and Max Roach, *The Clifford Brown & Max Roach Emarcy Albums* (Mosaic LP)
Eva Cassidy, *The Best of Eva Cassidy* (Blix Street)
Sweet Sue Terry, *Greatest Hits* (Qi Note)

BEST VOCAL ALBUM

Kate Miller-Heidke, *Nightflight* (SIN/Sony Australia)

BEST LATIN JAZZ ALBUM

Papo Vasquez, *Oasis* (Picaro)

BEST DEBUT CD

Natalie Cressman, *Unfolding* (Natalie Cressman)

NOTABLE INSTRUMENTAL JAZZ RELEASES OF 2012

Harry Allen & Scott Hamilton, *'Round Midnight* (Challenge)
Joe Alterman, *Give Me The Simple Life* (Miles High)
Bob Arthurs and Steve Lamattina, *Jazz for Svetlana* (Bob Arthurs)
Dan Block, *Duality* (Miles High)
Vince Giordano and The Nighthawks, Loudon Wainwright III, Catherine Russell, Leon Redbone, and others, *Boardwalk Empire: Volume 1 Music From The HBO Original Series* (Elektra)
Anthony Branker & Ascent, *Together* (Origin)
Dave Brubeck Quartet, *Their Last Time Out* (Columbia Legacy/Sony)
Brubeck Brothers Quartet, *Lifetimes* (Blue Forest)
Don Byron, *Love, Peace And Soul* (Savoy Jazz)
Kevin Coelho, *Funkengruven: The Joy of Driving a B3* (Summit/ Chicken Coup)
Copernicus, *Deeper* (Nevermore/Moonjune)
Roger Davidson Trio, *We Remember Helen* (Soundbrush)
Caroline Davis, *Live Work & Play* (Ears & Eyes)
Tom Dempsey/Tim Ferguson Quartet, *Beautiful Friendship* (Planet Arts)
Akua Dixon, *Moving On* (Akua Dixon)
Rick Drumm and Fatty Necroses, *Return From the Unknown* (Rick Drumm)
Duke Ellington Legacy, *Single Petal Of A Rose* (Renma)
The Fat Babies, *Chicago Hot* (Delmark)
Michael Feinberg, *The Elvin Jones Project* (Sunnyside Communications)
Mercedes Figueras & The Black Butterflies, *Rainbows for Ramon* (Mercedes Figueras)
Jacob Fischer, *Jacob Fischer: Guitarist* (Arbors Jazz)
Rebecca Coupe Franks, *Two Oceans* (Rebecca Coupe Franks)
Satoko Fujii and Natsuki Tamura, *Muku* (Libra)
Hal Galper Trio, *Airegin Revisited* (Origin)
Gato Libre, *Forever* (Libra)
Beka Gochiashvili, *Beka Gochiashvili* (Exitus Entertainment)

Vinny Golia Abstractions and Retrocausalities (Nine Winds)
Scott Healy Ensemble, Hudson City Suite (Hudson City)
Fred Hersch Trio, Alive at the Vanguard (Palmetto)
Marquis Hill, Sounds of the City (SkipTone Music)
Chris Hopkins & Bernd Lhotzky, Partners in Crime (Echoes of Swing Productions)
Jason Kao Hwang, Burning Bridge (Innova)
Asuka Kakitani, Bloom (Nineteen Eight)
Karl 2000, Karl 2000 (GSI Studios)
Frank Kimbrough Trio, Live at Kitano (Palmetto)
Lee Konitz, Bill Frisell, Gary Peacock, Joey Baron, Live at the Blue Note (Half Note)
Steve Kuhn, Steve Swallow, Joey Baron, Wisteria (ECM)
Jeff Lorber Fusion, Galaxy (Heads Up)
Jon Lundbom & Big Five Chord, No New Tunes (Hot Cup LP)
Roberto Magris, Aliens in a Bebop Planet (JMood)
Wynton Marsalis, Music of America (Sony Masterworks)
Mark Masters Ensemble, Ellington Saxophone Encounters (Capri)
Virginia Mayhew Quartet, Mary Lou Williams — The Next 100 Years (Renma)
Myra Melford, The Guest House (Enja/Yellow Bird)
Pat Metheny, What's It All About (Nonesuch)
Hendrik Meurkens and Gabriel Espinosa, Celebrando (ZOHO Music)
Bob Mintzer, For the Moment (MCG Jazz)
James Morrison, Snappy Too (Aleph)
MP3 Trio, l'Eau (Demajors)
Hailey Niswanger, The Keeper (Calmit Productions)
Dave Phillips and Freedance, Confluence (Innova)
Ben Powell, New Street (Ben Powell Music)
Reggie Quinerly, Music Inspired by Freedman Town (Redefinition Music)
Sam Rivers, Reunion: Live in New York (Pi)
Jason Robinson, Tiresian Symmetry (Cuneiform)
Scott Robinson Doctette, Bronze Nemesis (ScienSonic Laboratories)
Cynthia Sayer, Joyride (Plunk)
Bobby Sanabria Big Band, Multiverse (Jazzheads)
Wadada Leo Smith and Louis Moholo-Moholo, Ancestors (TUM)
Gary Smulyan, Smul's Paradise (Capri)
Aki Takase & Han Bennink, Two for Two (Intact)
Leon Foster Thomas, Brand New Mischief (Krossover Jazz)
Ryan Truesdell and Gil Evans, Centennial — Newly Discovered Works of Gil Evans (ArtistShare)
UoU, Take the 7 Train (Tippin')
Michael Webster, Momentus (OA2)
Jessica Williams, Songs Of Earth (Origin)
Steve Williams & Jazz Nation, Steve Williams & Jazz Nation With
Eddie Daniels (OA2)

NOTABLE JAZZ VOCAL RELEASES OF 2012

Amikaeyla, Being In Love (RootsJazz)
Peter Appleyard, Sophisticated Ladies (Linus Entertainment)
Susie Arioli, All the Way (Jazzheads)
Dee Bell, Sagacious Grace (Laser)
Cheryl Bentley, Let's Misbehave: The Cole Porter Songbook
(Summit)
Ran Blake and Christine Correa, Down Here Below: Tribute to Abbey Lincoln Volume One (Red Piano)
Lola Danza, The Island (Evolver)
Dena Derose, Travelin' Light (MAXJAZZ)
Paulette Dozier, In Walked You (Paulette Dozier)
Madeline Eastman and Randy Porter, A Quiet Thing (Mad-Kat)
Cynthia Felton, Freedom Jazz Dance (Felton Entertainment)
Amina Figarova, Twelve (In & Out)
Letizia Gambi, Introducing Letizia Gambi (Jando Music)
Giacomo Gates, Miles Tones: The Music of Miles Davis (Savant)
Marcus Goldhaber, Almost Love (Fallen Apple)
Norah Jones, Little Broken Hearts (Blue Note)
Stacey Kent, Dreamer in Concert (Blue Note)
Lisa Kirchner, Something To Sing About (Verdant World)
The Lumineers, The Lumineers (Dualtone Music Group)
Sandra Marlowe, True Blue (Sandra Marlowe)
Paul McCartney, Kisses on the Bottom (Hear Music/Concord)
Chris McNulty, The Song That Sings You Here (Challenge)
Jessica Molaskey and Dave Frishberg, At the Algonquin (Arbors Jazz)
Stephanie Nakasian, Show Me The Way (Capri)
Maria Neckam, Unison (Sunnyside Communications)
Alexis Parsons & Connie Crothers, hippin' (New Artists)
John Proulx, The Best Thing For You (MAXJAZZ)
Ellen Robinson, Don't Wait Too Long (EMR Music)
Jackie Ryan, Listen Here (Openart Productions)
Seung-Hee, Sketches on the Sky (SoRieN Music)
Tessa Souter, Beyond the Blue (Motema Music)
Sweet Leda, Need The Music (Sweet Leda)
Uptown Vocal Jazz Quartet, Hustlin' for a Gig (HouseKat)
Joan Watson Jones with Frank Wilkins, Quiet Conversations — A Duet (Eye Of Samantha)

Productions)

Alison Wedding, This Dance (Ground Up Music)

Bob Wolfman, Transition (Bob Wolfman Music)

NOTABLE LATIN JAZZ RELEASES OF 2012

Paul Beaudry & Pathways, Americas (Soundkeeper)

Anna Estrada, Volando (Feral Flight Productions)

Grupo Los Santos, Clave Heart (OA2)

Kat Parra, Las Aventuras de Pasion! (JazzMa)

Carol Saboya, Belezas (AAM Music)

Son Yambu, La Maravilla (Apollo Sound)

NOTABLE BLUES AND BEYOND RELEASES OF 2012

All Purpose Blues Band, Cornbread & Cadillacs (Catbone Music)

Jeff Black, B-Sides and Confessions Vol. 2 (Lotos Nile Music)

Carolina Chocolate Drops, Leaving Eden (Nonesuch)

Barbara Carr, Keep the Fire Burning (Catfood)

The Chieftains (with Bon Iver, Carolina Chocolate Drops The Civil Wars, The Decemberists, and Imelda May), Voice Of Ages (Hear Music) CMC & Silenta, Get It on Now (Roca)

Ry Cooder, Election Special (Nonesuch)

Craig Charles Funk & Soul Club, Craig Charles Funk & Soul Club (Freestyle)

The Cutler, The Best Things In Life Aren't Things (Steel Tiger)

Daddy Mack Blues Band, Pay the Piper (Inside Sounds)

Doubt, Mercy, Pity, Peace & Love (Moonjune)

Antje Duvekot, New Siberia (Dandelion)

Ghost Town Blues, Dark Horse (Inside Sounds)

Davy Graham, Anthology: 1961-2007 Lost Tapes (Les Cousins Music)

Caroline Herring, Camilla (Signature Sounds)

Hey, Rube!, Can You Hear Me Mutha? (Steel Tiger)

Martha High, Soul Overdue (Freestyle)

Howelldevine, Jumps Boogies & Wobbles (Arhoolie)

Jim Lauderdale, Charlie Louvin, Nanci Griffith, Mike Farris and 18 South, Music City Roots: Live From Loveless Cafe (Compass)

Colin Linden, Still Live (Yellow Dog)

New Riders Of The Purple Sage, 17 Pine Avenue (Woodstock)

Johnny Rawls, Soul Survivor (Catfood)

Shuffle Demons, Clusterfunk (Linus Entertainment)

Skillet & Leroy, 2 Or 3 Times A Day (Cult Collectibles)

Connie Townsend & The Ginsangers, Feast of St. Martin (Wild Ginsang Music)

NOTABLE MUSICAL CAST RECORDINGS OF 2012

George Gershwin, Audra McDonald, Norm Lewis, and David Alan Grier, Porgy and Bess: New Broadway Cast Recording (P.S. Classics)

George Gershwin, Danny Burstein, Rebecca Luker, Jason Graae, and Philip Chaffin, Sweet Little Devil (P.S. Classics)

Stephen Sondheim, Colin Donnell, Celia Keenan-Bolger, and Lin

Manuel Miranda, Merrily We Roll Along (P.S. Classics)

BEST CHRISTMAS RELEASES OF 2012

Jason Paul Curtis, Lovers Holiday: With Swinglab & Swing Machine (Jason Paul Curtis)

Nathan Eklund, Crafty Christmas (OA2)

NOTABLE REISSUES ALL GENRES

Hilton Felton, The Best Of Hilton Felton 1970-74 (Jazzman)

Allan Holdsworth, Hard Hat Area (Moonjune)

Henri-Pierre Noël, Piano (Wah Wah 45s)

Various Artists, Jukebox Mambo: Rumba & Afro-Latin Accented (Jazzman)

Various Artists, Spiritual Jazz 2: Europe (Jazzman)

Various Artists, Spiritual Jazz 3: Europe (Jazzman)

Paul Winter Sextet, Count Me In (Living Music)

NOTABLE DVD RELEASES OF 2012

Gregg Allman, I'm No Angel: Live on Stage (Cherry Red)

The Beatles, Strange Fruit: The Beatles' Apple Records (Sexy Intellectual)

The Beatles, Their Golden Age (Facts That Matter)

Charlie Daniels Band, Live At Rockpalast (Made in Germany Music)

Bob Dylan and The Band, Down in the Flood: Associations and Collaborations (Sexy Intellectual)

The Vinny Golia Large Ensemble, Overview: 1996-2006 (Nine Winds)

The Grateful Dead, Dawn Of The Dead (Sexy Intellectual)


John Lee Hooker, Cook With The Hook: Live 1974 (John Lee H)

The Rolling Stones Under Review 1975-1983: The Ronnie Wood Years Part 1 (Sexy Intellectual)

Ike & Tina Turner, Ike & Tina on the Road 1971-72 (MVD Visual)

Frank Zappa, From Straight To Bizarre: Zappa, Beefheart, Alice Cooper and L.A.'s Lunitic Fringe (Sexy Intellectual)

W. Royal Stokes' Best and Notable Releases of 2011

January 8, 2012  Royal

 1 comment

Ten Best New Releases

Terri Lyne Carrington, *The Mosaic Project* (Concord Jazz)
 Ron Carter, *Ron Carter's Great Big Band* (Sunnyside)
 Keith Jarrett, *Rio* (ECM)
 Grace Kelly and Phil Woods, *Man With the Hat* (Pazz Productions)
 Joe Lovano/Us Five, *Bird Songs* (Blue Note)
 Roswell Rudd, *Incredible Honk* (Sunnyside)
 Sonny Rollins, *Road Shows vol. 2* (Emarcy/Universal Music Group)
 Lalo Schifrin, *Jazz Meets the Symphony #7* (Aleph)
 Wadada Leo Smith, *Heart's Reflections* (Cuneiform)
 Omar Sosa, *Calma* (Ota)

Top Three Reissues

John Carter and Bobby Bradford, *John Carter & Bobby Bradford* (Mosaic Select)
 Jimmie Lunceford, *The Complete Jimmie Lunceford Decca Sessions* (Mosaic)
 Art Pepper, *Blues for the Fisherman: Unreleased Art Pepper, Vol. 6* (Widow's Taste)

Best Vocal Album

Catherine Russell, *Strictly Romancin'* (Harmonia Mundi/World Village)

Best Latin Jazz Album

James Carter, *Caribbean Rhapsody*, (Emarcy/Universal Music Group)

Best Debut CD

Lisa Lindsley, *Everytime We Say Goodbye* (Blondsongstress Productions)

NOTABLE CDs of 2011

Muhal Richard Abrams, *Sound Dance* (PI)
 AfroBop Alliance, *Una Más* (OA2)
 Ambrose Akinmusire: *When the Heart Emerges Glistening* (Blue Note)
 The Sheryl Bailey 4, *For All Those Living* (Pure Music)
 Night Song, Ketil Bjørnstad and Svante Henryson (ECM)
 Jane Ira Bloom, *Wingwalker* (Outline)
 T. K. Blue, *Latin Bird* (Motéma Music)
 Les Boigts de l'Homme, 1910 (ALMA)
 Anthony Branker & Word Play, *Dialogic* (Origin)
 Bob Brookmeyer and the New Art Orchestra, *Standards* (ArtistShare)
 Jane Bunnett & Hiario Duran, *Cuban Rhapsody* (ALMA)
 Brian Carpenter's Ghost Train Orchestra, *Hothouse Stomp: The Music of 1920s Chicago and Harlem* (Accurate)
 Felicia Carter & Amy Shook, *Nothing to Do* (ShookShak Productions)
 James Carter Organ Trio, *At the Crossroads* (Decca/Universal Music Group)
 Cecilia Coleman, *Oh Boy!* (PandaKat)
 Chick Corea/Stefano Bollani, *Orvieto: Recorded Live at Umbria Jazz Winter 2010* (ECM)
 Eddie Daniels/Roger Kellaway, *Live at the Library of Congress* (IPO)
 Dead Cat Bounce, *Chance Episodes* (Cuneiform)
 Eldar Djangirov, *Three Stories* (Sony Masterworks Jazz)
 Armen Donelian, *Leapfrog* (Sunnyside)
 Echoes of Swing, *Message from Mars* (EOSP)
 Kali Fasteau/William Parker/Cindy Blackman, *An Alternate Universe* (Flying Note)
 Jack Furlong Quartet, *And That Happened* (Bridge and Tunnel)
 Laszlo Gardony, *Signature Time* (Sunnyside)
 Sir Roland Hanna, *Colors from a Giant's Kit* (IPO)
 Donald Harrison, *This Is Jazz: Live at the Blue Note* (Half Note)
 Frank Harrison Trio, *Sideways* (Linus)
 Atsuko Hashimoto, . . . *Until the Sun Comes Up* (Capri)
 Jake Hertzog, *Evolution* (Buckyball)
 Lisa Hilton, *Underground* (Ruby Slippers Productions)
 Julia Hülsmann Trio, *Imprint* (ECM)
 Jason Kao Hwang/Edge, *Crossroads Unseen* (Euonymus)
 Geoffrey Keezer/Joe Locke/Tim Garland, *Via* (Origin)
 Charles Lloyd/Maria Farantouri, *Athens Concert* (ECM)
 Mike Markaverich, *Gator Jazz* (Marktime)
 Delfeayo Marsalis, *Sweet Thunder* (Troubadour Jazz)
 Brad Mehldau, *Live in Marciac* (Nonesuch)
 Pat Metheny, *What's It All About* (Nonesuch)
 Nicole Mitchell, *Awakening* (Delmark)
 Yoko Miwa Trio, *Live at Scullers Jazz Club* (Jazz Cat Amnesty)
 Silvano Monasterios, *Unconditional* (Savant)
 Sarah Morrow, *Elektric Air* (Agate)
 Jimmy Owens, *The Monk Project* (IPO)
 Jeremy Pelt, *Talented Mr. Pelt* (High Note)
 Kim Pensyl & Phil DiGreg, *Melodious Monk* (Summit)
 Penguin Café, *A Matter of Life . . .* (Editions Penguin Café Ltd.)

Jean-Michel Pilc, *Essential* (Motéma Music)
Noah Preminger, *Before the Rain* (Palmetto)
Enrico Rava Quintet, *Tribe* (ECM)
Jack Reilly, *Live at Maybeck Recital Hall* (JackReillyJazz)
SF Jazz Collective, *Music of Stevie Wonder and New Compositions* (SF Jazz)
Terrell Stafford, *This Side of Strayhorn* (MaxJazz)
Joan Stiles/Joel Frahm/Matt Wilson, *Three Musicians* (Oo-Bla-Dee)
Rick Stone Trio, *Fractals* (Jazzand)
Talking Cows, *Almost Human* (Morvin)
3 Cohens, *Family* (Anzic)
Brian Vaccaro Trio, *Going Through the Motions* (Brian Vaccaro)
Kenny Werner, *Balloons* (Half Note)
Mike Wofford/Holly Hofmann Quintet, *Turn Signal* (Capri)
Phil Woods & Bill Mays, *Phil & Bill* (Palmetto)
Pete Zimmer, *Prime of Life* (Tippin')

Notable CDs by Vocalists

Eliane Amherd, *Now and From Now On* (ElianePerforms)
Ernestine Anderson, *Nightlife: Live at Dizzy's Club* (High Note)
Ran Blake and Dominique Eade, *Whirlpool* (Jazz Project)
Liz Callaway and Ann Hampton Callaway, *Boom! Live at Birdland* (PS Classics)
Freddy Cole, *Talk to Me* (High Note)
Barbara Cook, *You Make Me Feel So Young: Live at Feinstein's* (Entertainment One)
Shirley Crabbe, *Home* (ShirleyCrabbe)
Nicole Henry, *Embraceable* (ArtistShare)
Rebecca Kilgore and the Harry Allen Quartet, *Celebrating Lady Day and Prez: Live at Feinstein's, Live at Loew's Regency* (Arbors)
Amos Lee, *As the Crow Flies* (Blue Note)
René Marie, *Voice of My Beautiful Country* (Motéma Music)
Susie Meissner, *I'm Confessin'*, (LydianJazz)
Sophie Milman, *In the Moonlight* (Entertainment One)
Amanda Monaco, *Pirkei Avot Project, Vol. 1* (Genevieve)
Ana Moura, *Coliseu* (Harmonia Mundi/World Village)
Gretchen Parlato, *The Lost and Found* (ObliqSound)
Deborah Pearl, *Souvenir of You: New Lyrics to Benny Carter Classics* (Evening Star)
Madeline Peyroux, *Standing on the Rooftop* (Pennywell Productions/Decca/Universal Music Group)
Ed Reed, *Born to Be Blue* (Blue Shorts)
Jane Stuart, *Don't Look Back* (Jane Stuart Music)
Anne Walsh, *Go* (AtoZink Music)

Notable Reissues

Basia, *From Newport to London* (Entertainment One)
Cabaret Echoes, *New Orleans Jazzers at Work, 1918-1927* (Archeophone)
Miles Davis, *Bitches Brew Live* (Columbia Legacy)
Bob Dunn, *Master of the Electric Steel Guitar* (Origin Jazz Library)
Clarence "Jelly" Johnson III, *Low Down Papa* (Delmark)
Kay Kay Greenwade, *Best of Kay Kay and the Rays* (Catfood)
Oscar Peterson, *Unmistakable* (Sony Masterworks)
Sonny Rollins, *On Impulse* (Universal Music Enterprises/UMB Recordings)
McCoy Tyner Trio, *Inception* (Universal Music Enterprises/UMB Recordings)
Various, *Bar-B-Cue'n Blues*, (Catbone Music)
Various, *Mean Street*, (Catbone Music)
Various, *Jukin'*, (Catbone Music)

Notable Blues and Beyond CDs

James Armstrong, *Blues at the Border* (Catfood)
Amy Black, *One Time* (Reuben)
Blue Lou & Misha Project, *Highly Classified* (Prima Vista)
Eva Cassidy, *Simply Eva* (Blix Street)
Bryan and the Haggards, *Still Alive and Kickin' Down the Walls* (Hot Cup)
Mayadou Diabate, *Courage* (Harmonia Mundi/World Village)
Mary Flower, *Misery Loves Company* (Yellow Dog)
George & Ira Gershwin's *Strike Up the Band: 2011 Studio Cast Recording* (PS Classics)
Amjad Ali Khan, *Samaagam* (Harmonia Mundi/World Village)
Alison Krauss & Union Station, *Paper Airplane* (Rounder)
YoYo Ma, *The Goat Rodeo Sessions* (Sony Masterworks)
Steve Martin and the Steep Canyon Rangers, *Rare Bird Alert* (Rounder)
David Maxwell and Otis Span, *Conversations in Blue* (Circumstantial Productions)
Miloš Karadaglic, *Mediterraneo* (Deutsche Grammophon)
Mark O'Connor, *An Appalachian Christmas* (OMAC)
Johnny Rawls, *Memphis Soul* (Catfood)
Sweet Bye and Bye, *World Premiere Recording* (PS Classics)
Terakaft, Artan N Azawad (Harmonia Mundi/World Village)
Tinariwen, *Tassili + 10:1* (Anti)

Notable DVDs

Copernicus, *Live In Prague* (Nevermore, Inc.)
Bob Dylan, *Revealed* (MVD Visual/Highway 61 Entertainment)
Brian Eno, *1971-1977: The Man Who Fell To Earth* (Sexy Intellectual)
Jennifer Leitham, *The Real Me Live* (Sinistral Recordings)



Robert Plant's Blue Note (Sexy Intellectual)
X, The Unheard Music (MVD Visual/Angel City Productions)

Notable LPs

Tony Jones, Pitch, Rhythm and Consciousness (New Artists)
Hiromi Kanda, Days of Yesterday (Music Gate)

 [Uncategorized](#)

John Fahey, 1939–2001

 October 30, 2011  [Royal](#)

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John Fahey in the 1960s.

"I remember Bob Brozman sayin' that any modern guitar player, contemporary guitar player, that plays finger-style country blues-influenced guitar who says he's not influenced by John Fahey is a bullshit artist," was bluesman Steve James' response to the query whether he had listened to the work of John Fahey.

I was turned on to John Fahey in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1965 by a guitar-playing folk singer whose apartment, in a two-story frame house on Mellen Street a block from the Harvard University campus, was next to my first floor flat. This was Bill "Millhouse" Nixon, who died in the mid-1980s in Los Angeles. Bill liked to sit on the front steps of the house, drink wine, and play and sing as passersby paused and listened. Bill told me that he had composed a song about a blind man and dropped by Club 47 in Harvard Square during a gig of Doc Watson and played it for him backstage. Doc, who was blind, asked him, "Now why would you write a song like that?"

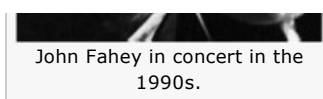
Anyway, before the initial track of the first of Millhouse's John Fahey Takoma label LPs had ended I was a stone fan of this extraordinary guitarist. I beat feet, as we use to say, down to the Harvard Coop that afternoon and bought the several Fahey albums they had in stock. Over the decades I acquired most of his recordings.

In 1973 my brother Bill, who had become a Fahey fan via my LPs, took my wife Erika, his son William, and me to a John Fahey concert in George Washington University's Lisner Auditorium. John sat onstage in a straight-back chair and blew the audience away with the virtuosity, originality, and sheer beauty of his playing. Departing the hall, we encountered a friend of mine in the lobby who invited us to the ashram he was a resident of, explaining that Fahey, who he said was into yoga and meditation, would be there. "He might play," my friend added. We followed his car to a substantial dwelling on Military Road in North West Washington, D.C.

Ushered into the living room of the house, we joined the circle seated on the floor, held hands, and chanted with the others. Conversation soon ensued and my friend called across the circle, "Royal here has a radio show on which he plays jazz records, John." This sparked Fahey's interest and he asked, "What jazz do you play?" I told him that I had a Saturday morning radio show called "*I thought I heard Buddy Bolden say . . .*" and played, for example, early jazz like King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, and bands and combos of the Swing Era. "Oh, you play the good jazz!" Fahey responded. My brother Bill had long puzzled over what could be the significance of a dog barking during one tune on a Fahey LP and so he asked John about that. "Well, I recorded that album at a friend's house and his dog barked," John replied. "So I stopped playing until he had finished and then started again." He did not play his



guitars at the ashram and my opportunity to again see him perform did not come for another five years.



John Fahey in concert in the 1990s.

I was fortunate to not only again see John Fahey in performance but to interview him for an hour or so in the upstairs band room of the long defunct Cellar Door, Washington, D.C., late in the afternoon of June 11, 1978. He was doing a one-night stand at the club and his father, Al Fahey, who lived in Rockville, Maryland, a D.C. suburb, was present and occasionally contributed to the discussion. John was beginning to string and tune his guitars as the conversation commenced. I recall providing him my nail clipper to cut the surplus string and when I said he could keep the tool he thanked me profusely. John and I sat on the floor and his father in a chair. I turned my tape recorder on and opened the interview with the question, "How do you feel about being referred to as a blues player?"

"I play some blues here and there, blues-like music," he answered, "but I really don't know how to categorize my music as a whole, because I play so many different kinds of pieces and I even mix up within one piece two or three or four or five different traditions. It's very eclectic. About the only thing I can say is I write almost all of it myself."

I asked John to speak of his beginnings and, in particular, to recount how he, while working on a Master Degree in folklore at UCLA in the early 1960s, had rediscovered Bukka White.

"I was looking for a lot of these old musicians," he explained, "and I figured some of them, some of them were still alive. Booker White had made a record in the thirties called 'Aberdeen Mississippi Blues,' so I wrote a postcard to 'Booker T. Washington White, Jr., Old Blues Singer,' care of General Delivery, Aberdeen, Mississippi, just a postcard saying, 'Dear Mr. White, If we can locate you and you can still perform as you did on such-and-such recording sessions, in the 1930s, we will pay you one hundred dollars merely to get in touch with us.' Well, two or three months later I got a reply from Memphis. What turned out was one of Booker's cousins worked in the Aberdeen post office and forwarded it to Booker. And then we went down and recorded him."

"John comes by music naturally," Al Fahey observed. "We always had a musical house. John at one time started to learn the clarinet and he also started to learn the piano."

"Well, you and Mom both played the piano pretty well," John interrupted.

"Yes, and I played the trumpet and we always had good classical music around the house."

"No-o-o, you didn't! You had schmaltz! You liked schmaltz and Mom liked swing band, Tommy Dorsey and stuff."

"I used to ask his mother to play 'Prelude in C-sharp Minor.' She would do that and then she would play 'In the Hall of the Mountain King.' She was really an accomplished pianist. I don't say that people are born with the ability, but environmentally John certainly was acclimated to it."

"Now, my mother liked blues. Every afternoon, there was this show she listened to over a Washington, D.C., radio station and the theme song was 'Nightmare' by Woody Herman, and you want to hear a blues -. I liked swing band music very much. Actually what happened, toward the end of the '40s, especially in the '50s, white mainstream pop music got pret-t-ty schmaltzy, pretty bad, and I saw this movie *The Thief of Bagdad* in 1948, and it had full orchestra in the background and it was imitation Debussy, Bartok, and so forth, and I flipped out over this music."

"He certainly flipped, he made me take him at least five times to see it!"

"Then I started listening to the NBC Symphony on Saturday and the New York Phil on Sunday. See, I thought if I listened long enough I would hear the music they played in this movie *Thief of Baghdad*. When it came back in '52 I could read well enough to see that it's an original musical score by Miklós Rózsa, who's a Hungarian-born Hollywood composer. I continued to listen to classical music and then about '55, '56 I got interested, briefly, in country/western, and one day over WRAL, Don Owens, the disc jockey, said, 'I'm going to play a very old record for you folks, 'Blue Yodel Number 7' by Bill Monroe. I mean, all the blues I'd ever heard was in Woody Herman, all the syncopation I'd ever heard was in Count Basie. I just flipped out. So I went to the record store, said, 'Do you have this record?' and they said, 'No, it's out of print, you have to find a record collector.' Shortly thereafter I found Dick Spottswood and he had it and we became friends. And, really, Dick Spottswood, from then on, was my musical guru."



Fahey in concert in the 1990s.

"We got these old Blind Blake records," John says of his earliest attempts to teach himself to play the guitar, "and it was easy enough to figure out what these guys were doing. I wasn't coming up with great approximations of what they were doing, any more than anybody else was, but I was learning the chord progressions and some of the licks and stuff like that. And due to the fact that I had so much listening between '48 and '52 of this classical music, I also started to write these extended pieces with folk tunes and occasional folk progressions and syncopation. They were really like little tone poems, and that's what I've really never stopped doing."

"Later on I started collecting old 78s in the South, going door to door. After going all the way to Tennessee and Mississippi, one Sunday I thought, I think I'll try canvassing around here in

my own neighborhood. I did the whole town of Takoma Park in one day. I found Blind Willie Johnson records, Stump Johnson, Charlie Patton, Louis Armstrong, King Oliver. Then I discovered that we had several — white and black — old folk musicians, who played this three-finger guitar style, and also banjo, fiddle, right there in Takoma Park. See, where we lived then, it was a southern culture. Maryland was not a Confederate state in the war but the culture was southern, and the music was, too.

"I discovered that some of these guys could not be playing in what you call standard tuning, and so I tried to find out why in the hell are they doing that! I mean, I had seen people using steel bars on *Grand Ole Opry*, but I didn't know the tunings, and also the old Negro recordings where they did that sounded quite different. I had figured out some of the tunings, like Spanish tuning, but I couldn't really do it, and then I became friends with Elizabeth Cotten. By the time I met Elizabeth I could already play really about anything she knew. She was this old black lady, and she's still alive. She played guitar and sang and she was very good, wrote 'Freight Train.' I used to take her to parties, because I was so unpopular, you know, no white girls would go with me, or anybody my age, so I would take Elizabeth Cotten to parties. She liked it, she liked to trade songs. We'd all sit around and trade songs. So one night I showed her this open tuning and I said, 'Elizabeth, I know this is the tuning, but how do you know where to put the steel bar?' And she said, 'Well, I can't play it any more, I used to, but I can show you where to put it.' And I caught the trick right away. It was just a simple trick, but it'd taken me three years workin' on it myself and I had never gotten it. She showed me in a minute and then I had it."

At this point John, who had during the interview quaffed a couple of cognacs provided him by the club management, announced that he was going to dinner. I removed to my car around the corner and ate the sandwich and piece of cake I had brought along for my meal, drank my thermos of coffee, and returned to the Cellar Door in time for the first of John Fahey's two sets. He played brilliantly to the packed club, remarking on what had inspired some of the tunes, switching to a lap-top dobro for several numbers, took a brief break after an hour, and returned for a second set, adding an encore at its conclusion. When he finished this a waiter brought him a cognac a patron had sprung for. So John did another number. Again, the waiter supplied him with a cognac. Memory fades all these years later but I think he continued playing, with stunning control and creativity, downing successive cognacs, for about a half hour after the end of that second set.

John Fahey died on February 22, 2001. John Pareles, summarizing Fahey's early style in his *New York Times* obituary of him, said that his performed compositions embraced "the modalities of raga along with dissonances not found in country or blues" and that he used "unconventional tunings and turned some traditional picking patterns backward. He also experimented with tape collages, often to the annoyance of folk fans. Though hippie listeners may have heard his music as psychedelic, he was a bourbon drinker."

That 1972 Lisner concert and our meeting John at the ashram marked a sober period for Fahey, who had long suffered from alcoholism. He spent some time at a Hindu monastery in India at this time and his 1973 album *Fare Forward Voyager* was dedicated to a guru.

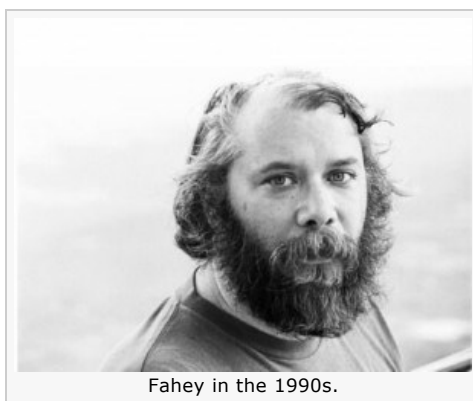
John's life fell apart in the late 1980s. He divorced his third wife, Melody, his drinking increased, he lost his house, and he suffered from chronic fatigue syndrome and diabetes. He lived at the Union Charity Mission in Salem, Oregon, for a while and sometimes camped out in his car. He supported himself by selling used classical records to collectors and even pawned his guitars.

In the 1990s alternative rock musicians sought out Fahey and he gave up drinking and released five albums, continuing to experiment with electric and lap steel guitars and using electronic effects.

In a January 19, 1997 *New York Times* review and interview, "A 60's Original With a New Life on the Fringe, Ben Ratliff reported: "His old fans barely recognized the odd creature on stage one recent evening at the Empty Bottle, a rock club near downtown. At 57, Mr. Fahey is puffy, and his white beard and sunglasses hide his face. He finished a blues dirge by simply coming to a stop and shrugging. His new fans are used to being puzzled; this was a young, intellectual audience who knew that Soundgarden was playing in an arena across town but were too hip for that. It is Mr. Fahey's moment as he rides back into view as an avant-garde father figure."

Ratliff added, "Of his old fans . . . request[ing] his old music, [Fahey said], 'I don't talk to them. . . . If they keep it up, I tell them: 'Look, if you want to live in the past, go live in the past. But don't try and take us with you.' These days he listens to clattering industrial-rock bands like Einsturzende Neubauten and uses some of their sounds — along with train and factory noises — in his own recorded collages."

In an undated interview with guitarist, producer, educator, and long-time friend Stefan Grossman a few years before he died, John explains where he came from as he got serious about playing the guitar: "The more I played the guitar the more I began to really love the guitar and to love virtually any kind of music that anybody played well on guitar. In the music I was composing I was trying to express my emotions, my so called negative emotions, which were depression, anger and so forth." John goes on to talk of his early history, his influences,



Fahey in the 1990s.

his "finger picking pattern," that he was "getting more and more into jazz and alternative stuff," and "doing [Tuvan singing](#)," and other stages of his artistic development.

When Grossman asks how he feels about his old fans asking him to play as he did decades ago, John says, "Well I do feel a little dragged by that because I'd prefer to do what I'm doing at the time but I also realize that you have to keep a lot of those songs in your repertoire and up to practice. Any professional musician realizes that keeps them around. And keeps trying to get the audience to go forward with them, but they don't always want to go, but that's OK."

It is a very interesting interview, well worth [checking out](#).

John Jeremiah Sullivan, in "Unknown Bards: The blues becomes transparent about itself" (*Harper's Magazine*, November 2008), reviews two books on the blues and a release of Revenant Records, which Fahey co-founded a few years before he died. The article contains an account of an interview Sullivan did with Fahey a year or so before he died and many acute observations on the guitarist's art and life.

John Fahey's recordings continue to give me much listening pleasure.

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