

EARSHOT JAZZ

A Mirror and Focus for the Jazz Community

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Cover Art by Reed Olsen



EARSHOT JAZZ

A Mirror and Focus for the Jazz Community

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MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure the legacy and progression of the art form, Earshot Jazz cultivates a vibrant jazz community by engaging audiences, celebrating artists, and supporting arts education.



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Black American Music

I'm putting the "bottom line" at the top: I can't imagine life without Black music.

This understanding comes after a chain of consecutive thoughts that started with my preparing to write about how this summer marks 30 years since I first showed up as a volunteer usher at the Earshot Jazz Festival. It also reflects an examination of my own place in today's world. Being a large, white male in America has allowed me to take a lot for granted, as if the gifts of other cultures were just part of the platter on my table. But It's ever more clear to me that my life would be not be as full, and that, in fact, America would not be America, without Black culture.

I wasn't a complete stranger to jazz at the time, but those 1990 MO-HAI concerts—with Scofield and Lovano, Don Pullen's trio with Cindy Blackman (now Santana), and the incredible International Creative Music Orchestra with Butch Morris conducting—pulled me deeper into the core of the music and absolutely opened up my view of the tradition. In these ensuing years within Earshot, including close to 3,000 concerts that we've put up, I have been privileged to work with many of the masters of this music, and the bright artists who are dedicated to honoring the momentum of jazz tradition. Over all of it, for me, the beautiful flame at the heart of all Jazz, no matter who plays it, is Black American culture.

Jazz has been a blessing in my life. Thinking about it now, the music has been a deep presence since I became conscious of my choices as a kid, and probably before. Sometimes I think that the private relationship we each have with music is like a special room within the house of our psyche. And each one is different from the one next door. And we can go in there and be who we are, and know that our soul is in there too, and it's safe. No one can take it away.

I've had to build some additions on my house over these many years. It's a lot bigger than jazz. But when I take a clear look at the music I turn to and draw comfort from, it's clear that nearly every form is rooted in and indebted to Black brilliance and culture.

It's been an honor and privilege to be in service to the art form of jazz, which was born from Black liberation. It's also a position that comes with a responsibility to ask hard questions of ourselves and community, as part of our celebration of the music. Welcome to Earshot Jazz; the eighth edition of this publication's 36th year. We invite your questions, comments, and, of course, your involvement.

Thank you!

—John Gilbreath, Executive Director



NOTES



Obituary: William Dement, A man of Medicine Who Loved Jazz

William Dement, MD PhD, an important figure in the sleep medicine field died June 17, at the age of 91 after suffering from cardiovascular disease. Dement cemented his medical career in the late 1950's in the direction of sleep studies when he earned his PhD at the University of Chicago. Dement and his team discovered and named the sleep phase, rapid eye movement or REM. While Dement is well-known in the medical field, his ability and love of jazz are lesser known. Born in Wenatchee, 1928, he grew up in Walla Walla and served in the U.S Army in Japan. Dement attended college at the University of Washington earning a basic medical degree in 1951, and helped pay his way through school by working as a jazz bass player. He enjoyed hosting jam sessions on his houseboat and he also had the opportunity to play with jazz talents Quincy Jones and Stan Getz. In the 1980's he supported the formation of the academic jazz program at Stanford University. Dement is survived by his two daughters and a son.

Café Racer Closure

In July, Café Racer owner Cindy Anne announced that the physical location of Café Racer on 5828 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle would close permanently. Citing the COVID-19 mandated closures of music venues, and concerns for their customers' health, the ownership decided that closing their physical location and moving their music performances to an online platform would be the most feasible and sensible action to take at this moment. Their plan is to continue providing great local music and content online until it is safe to open another in-person location. Café Racer

online music offerings can be heard at caferaceradio.com

Thanks to the Raynier Institute and Foundation

We are enormously grateful to be part of the ongoing legacy of the late James Ray, whose passion for Seattle's social health and musical vibrancy led to the creation of the Raynier Institute and Foundation. We thank the Raynier Foundation and its staff for all they do to make Seattle a better place.

Earshot Jazz Festival 2020

Sign 'O the Times! Drawing on the lessons that jazz teaches us—to listen, improvise, and learn—the 2020 Earshot Jazz Festival will go on this year, adapted into an all-digital format in October that reflects the diversity of jazz and responds to our changing community.

We look forward to presenting music performances with an emphasis on our region's talent alongside compelling conversations and other forms of sustained digital engagement. This year's Featured Resident Artist, Ahamefule J. Oluo, will have the exciting opportunity to explore new ideas in a shifting landscape. Save the date for late October and stay tuned for further details at earshot.org.

4Culture's Reopen Fund

4Culture's Reopen Fund for Organizations and Landmarks intends to provide support for training, protective equipment, infrastructure upgrades, additional personnel and other measures needed by cultural organizations to open under COVID-19 public health restrictions. Organizations are encouraged to apply even if they do not operate out of a permanent facility. King County Council has allocated

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

A Message from Earshot about the 2020 Jazz: The Second Century Series

Dear Artists,

We truly are living in unprecedented times with the global health crisis of COVID-19 and the global uprising to combat systemic racism. This series has always been about exploring the fundamental question: “One-hundred years into the art-form, what sonic shape does jazz take in its second century?” This has never felt more relevant—or urgent—during these times of social distancing, where musicians are being forced to explore new and innovative ways to develop and present their art.

Things are a little different in this edition of the Jazz: The Second Century series. We’re adapting the format from a live concert to a pre-recorded audio or video performance, which will be presented as a “Watch Party” via our social media streams.

Our submission format is fluid and flexible. Artists are invited to use the tools and technology available to them to create a response to what jazz is right now. Submissions can be in the form of the final product or a sample of what the final product will be. If you do not have access to recording equipment, contact us at 2ndcentury@earshot.org and we’ll work to get you what you need.

The safety of artists is a top priority! Submissions should embrace and follow current health recommendations and movement restrictions in their creative response.

Jazz: The Second Century has always remained true to our core values of cultivating community and supporting the progression of the genre. And at this moment, we need community and art more than ever.



2019 SECOND CENTURY ARTIST HALEY FREEDLUND
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Have fun with this project. Push yourself to think outside the box. Take care of each other. Be safe.

We can’t wait to see what you come up with!

—Earshot Team

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CALL FOR ARTISTS

Jazz: The Second Century Series

Seeking submissions, now through **August 31 2020!** Earshot Jazz seeks submissions from Seattle-area individual artists and ensembles for the 2020 Jazz: The Second Century series. The series brings the progression of jazz into creative motion. Projects that question and expand the conventions of the jazz form are welcome.

Seattle-area individual artists or groups are eligible to apply. Submissions must include a recorded sample of a project that can be pre-recorded and presented in a livestream “Watch Party” setting and a written statement between 250–350 words.

Individual artists or ensembles (following current health and safety guidelines) are selected by a blind-jury process. Second Century artists and ensembles present a pre-recorded audio or video performance during October 2020, and are paid a competitive

fee for the performance (\$125 per artist up to 8 artist/contributors).

Please send submissions electronically to 2ndcentury@earshot.org by August 31, 2020.

This series—presenting Seattle artists, selected by a peer panel, performing original work—is a continuation of the very first programming initiative of the Earshot Jazz organization, and embodies one of our core values. Earshot’s first concert series, New Jazz/New City, was mounted in the New City Theater, now the Richard Hugo House, on Capitol Hill in 1986. The series has continued each year since: as New Jazz/New City, the Earshot Spring Series, Voice and Vision, and now Jazz: The Second Century.

The series is a current and un-sentimental look at our city’s engagement with this diffuse, vibrant art form.

Thanks to the artists, to our panelists, who helped curate these concerts,



2019 SECOND CENTURY ARTIST XAVIER LECOUTURIER BY STEVE KORN

and to audience members who support them.

A list of past Second Century artists can be viewed online at earshot.org.

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We've Been Here: Dr. James Gore on Seattle Jazz and Black Lives Matter



JAMES GORE BY DANIEL SHEEHAN

Dr. James Gore wants us to know he's been here. He's here now. He'll be here in the future. Gore wants us to know that jazz is here in Seattle. It's been here. It will be here. Gore is Black and the CEO of Ariel Media, a mar-

keting, research, media and consulting service organization. As an educator, Dr. Gore founded the Jackson Street Music Program, an experiential learning program which exposes youth to the arts and higher education.

"I appreciate it," he says of the new momentum of the Black Lives Matter movement. "You gotta' holler to make yourself heard," he says. "Black folks should be allowed to tell their own stories." He took note recently of Earshot Jazz's new Statement of Anti-Racist Work. "I'm optimistic," he says, of Earshot and Seattle's music industry as a whole. What he wants is conversation now that BLM has opened up individuals and institutions like never before to openly discuss race and inherent racism. He doesn't want tokenism. What he wants is a coming together of colleagues. He wants to be met as an equal. "I'm Black. I do jazz."

That, he does. With Ariel Productions, he's produced concerts for nearly three decades now, mostly in the Smooth Jazz category. It hasn't been easy as a Black producer working primarily in white-led spaces. It's difficult to get a toehold and be successful when the market is 6% African American. "Musicians just want to play," Gore says though. "And audiences don't care who they are so long as they can play." Gore brings the players. He produces Jazz in the City each year. 2020 has been challenging with COVID-19 but such acts lined up this year have included Eugenie Jones, Kareem Kandi, Greta Matassa, and Josephine Howell. "I'm up against big local producers here," he says. "But I compete. I work hard."

Not only does he produce shows he helps those coming up in Seattle's vibrant music scene. He founded the Jackson Street Music Program, offering free concert tickets to students enrolled in the program, backstage meet-and-greets with artists, and free lectures and seminars related to the music industry. "I go into a venue with these kids and we look at the backstage staff—the ushers and techs; the lighting and sound—where are the Black people?" He's keen on seeing representation in these areas. "I'm proud of the fact that these kids can look up to me—a successful producer but we need to diversify backstage and on-stage." He makes note that, currently, the only jazz station in the Seattle market—KNKX—does not have a Black on-air personality for the art



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which was birthed by Blacks. “We’re here,” he repeats.

That’s a major thrust of his program, giving students exposure and the tools needed to enter into these arenas. “The universal appeal of music can be used as an instrument to teach skills that may be valuable to youth throughout their personal and professional lives.” Gore’s Music Business Academy, part of the Jackson Street Music Program, is hosted on the campus of Seattle University (of which Gore is a triple graduate) and offers students a week of living and studying on-campus learning about the music industry.

Youth Air, another arm of his program, is a student-run radio show. It was created to foster Black youth to seek careers in arts management, entertainment law, and other underrepresented professions. Maybe one of the students will be an on-air talent in Seattle.

“It’s extremely important to maintain African American culture in jazz in Seattle,” Gore says. It’s been maintained by African Americans in Seattle since the word go. Jackson Street was where it was at. Music could be heard most every night between 1st and 15th Avenue beginning in the early 1900s. The area would become one of the West Coast’s best places for jazz. Seattle helped launch the careers of Quincy Jones, Ray Charles, and Ernestine Anderson. Jackson Street clubs would also bring in world famous entertainers like Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Louis Armstrong. Jazz clubs flourished up through the 1960s when the Civil Rights Movement took hold and rock ‘n’ roll rose in popularity, supplanting jazz.

Gore is here to remind us, however, that jazz hasn’t gone away. It’s here. It’s vibrant and alive. And he’s here right along with it.

—Jonathan Shipley

PREVIEW

Royal Room Staycation Festival



ROBIN HOLCOMB BY PETER GANNUSHKIN

Though it wasn’t initially intended for a global pandemic, the Royal Room’s Staycation Festival has since proven well-timed. The festival, meant to showcase music for those staying in the neighborhood for the summer, is now happening online, connecting audiences with local performers and providing performers with paid gigs, all at a time when the doors of the club remain shut.

In March, the Royal Room attempted to stream solo pianists, but technical glitches prevented them from doing so. By the time they presented the first Staycation performer, songwriter and violist Alex Guy, on May 24th, the city was not only on lockdown, but also on curfew due to protests opposing

police brutality and advancing the Black Lives Matter movement.

Looking out into an empty room, alone on the bare stage, Guy announced to the streaming audience: “Although I can’t see you, I believe that you are there,” before opening her set of spare and haunting solos.

As Guy attests in her performance, the Royal Room has been “a home away from home” for many local musicians. In 2011, pianist and composer Wayne Horvitz, along with business owners Tia Matthies and Steve Freeborn, opened the venue in Columbia City, providing a small-to-medium room with a full calendar of performances.

In 2016, Horvitz, along with his partners, conceived the South Hudson Music Project, a not-for-profit funding model designed to sustain music-making in the venue and in the neighborhood as a whole, as ticket revenue alone couldn’t pay the bills. (Since 2018, the Washington nonprofit agency Shunpike has sponsored the South Hudson Music Project). Currently, Horvitz says, the Royal Room is at a “crossroads.”

“Since March we have been playing it by ear, but now we are really facing the idea that we may not be open in the normal sense for a year,” he says. For the following week, Horvitz played with his wife, the singer songwriter Robin Holcomb. Opening and closing with a version of Stephen Foster’s “Hard Times,” they covered material that included Woodie Guthrie and the Carter Family.

“We worked really hard,” Horvitz said about the performance, “And it seemed like everything we planned felt right given the gravity of the pandemic.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



Digital Community in Uncertain Times: Seattle's Wayward in Limbo Series



LORI GOLDSTON BY KELLY O



ERIN JORGENSEN BY NIFFER CALDERWOOD



TAMARA ZENOBIA PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Since mid-April, Seattle's experimental music organization Nonsequitur has adapted their long-running Wayward Music Series, hosted at the Chapel Performance Space in Wallingford, to a virtual setting that has had remarkable results. Appropriately titled "Wayward in Limbo," the online series has featured 35 musicians since this writing, each presenting 30-60 minute recordings of new experimental work. The recordings are uploaded to Soundcloud and presented on the Wayward website at no cost, and the artists retain all rights to the recordings and receive financial compensation from Wayward, as well as personal donations, to help offset the loss of work brought about by the COVID-19 crisis, and support their continued presentation of creative work in our music scene.

It's no secret that the global pandemic and protests in support of the Movement for Black Lives are laying

in plain sight the failure of our nation and its neoliberal policies to provide basic freedoms and protection to all. In such an emotionally charged, violent, and confusing political and psychic atmosphere, making time for music can seem superfluous and self-indulgent for both musicians and listeners. Yet jazz and experimental music have always carried within them an imaginative thrust for a more egalitarian and harmonious society. Their ability to speak truth to power has directly resulted from the fact that the people and communities behind the music often exist on the margins of society, and, despite this, develop new creative pathways, technologies, methodologies, and messages from their position. The Wayward in Limbo series has presented us with rich archive of wide-ranging music that upholds this imaginative thrust.

To our great benefit as listeners, there are no strict guidelines for the music,

except that it has to be new, and that it has to fit within Wayward's mission to present experimental and "fringe" music. Among other things you'll find prompt-based and free solo and group improvisations, low-end synth drones and "avant soul-pop", field recordings, film and dance soundtracks, new songwriting and jazz, prepared instruments, and an urgent and musically-enveloped collection of recordings from the front lines of Seattle protests. While the series is in no way a replacement to live music, at the same there has hardly been a space to hear such a range of creative voices and musical ideas happening in Seattle.

"When everything went into lockdown and the Chapel closed in March, we wanted to find another way to directly support those [experimental] artists—something we could do quickly and effectively and that would be at least somewhat substantial," says Nonsequitur co-founder Steve Pe-

ters. “So we came up with the idea of streaming audio, inspired largely by Doug Haire’s long-running (and greatly missed) Sonarchy radio show on KEXP.”

Perhaps the only thing more impressive than the diversity of sounds in the series, is the wide range of humanity demonstrated by the artists. Here are thirty-five people (and counting) who showed up and were willing to be vulnerable in the midst of everything that’s been going on. For many, the solo and/or recorded format is not a comfortable one, and for others it forced them to develop new methods for making music. Some have been able to continue making music in these unprecedented times, for others their set is perhaps their first time making music in weeks or months. There is resilience, joy, pain, sadness, resourcefulness, curiosity and empathy in these sounds, which are of course heightened in these transformative times. Such a display has the power to validate each and every one of us, for if nothing else, it reminds us that everyone has their own process.

As someone who presented in the series in June, as I spend time listening to the sets of fellow musicians, I feel an invisible support to continue finding avenues to make music, and a renewed faith in the need for experimental music, now and always. While there is no way to cover the vast range of sounds by the musicians who have presented in the Wayward in Limbo series thus far, what I can say is this: listen to them. Center and celebrate the experience of the artists not because they are vulnerable, but because these experimental sounds and demonstrations of humanity are great gifts to our society and equip us with the imaginative zeal to keep moving.

—Carlos Snaider

For information on the Wayward In Limbo series, visit waywardmusic.org



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Renaissance Man in Our Midst: A Portrait of John Seman

By Paul r. Harding

There's this kid from a suburb of Philadelphia, who walked to piano lessons with the ghost of Albert Ayler. Soon after those elementary years he'd spend a good deal of time in his room practicing and recording music. Learning to play the bass after relationships with a trumpet, tuba, and drums spelled creative freedom for this kid. Soon this kid took what cannot be taught or bought—his imagination—from childhood in North Jersey to Southeast Pennsylvania to DC. The Music led him further west to take on a few brims in the hat store of cultural roles here in the Northwest, specially, Seattle. His name is John Seman.

It's time to stop and check out this kid's trek, socially and aurally. This is the mapless track that renaissance creative pioneers take; not settlers but visionaries. Oh, not the covered wagon kind circling what were new racist definitions/images of words like "Savage" and "Noble Indian" while truly vital trails in melody and rhythm between New Orleans, Memphis, Houston, St. Louis, and all the way to Chicago and all the way to New York City, and later places like Muscle Shoals would be like Gold Rush claims, if music precious stone. Unpaved paths not of a wagon master but a scout of Renaissance Ear. Fearless ears. That kid had such ears and no covered wagon. That kid is a man who has greatly contributed to Seattle's communities of The Music.

For two decades plus John Seman has waved a kaleidoscope of brave, original

banners across the crowds of Seattle's music scenes. Music outfits/bands and individual players have sprung up from the likes of which no city of Seattle's size and racial makeup can compare—Black music in a city with so small a population of Black Folks. Seattle has about 750,000 folks living within its city borders; maybe 8% be Black Folks. Including Seattle there are only three cities in the 700,000 to 750,000 population range—Washington, DC 40% Black residents. And Denver—maybe 10% Black folks. So, what makes Seattle so different? The Music from Hendrix to Cobain, something in the water, indelibly close yet distant as snowcapped mountains. John rides in the posse of Sun Ra and Charles Mingus with his steady (co-founder) sidekick, drummer, poet, and visual artist, Mark Ostrowski. Somewhere around high school they were introduced to freedom in The Music where their saddle and spurs came by way of Stravinsky and Black Sabbath.

Along the trail John was nurtured in technique by the likes of Bootsy Collins to Paul Laurence Dunbar Chambers, Ron Carter to Mike Watt, Cliff Burton to Jimmy Garrison. Today that renaissance kid is both sheriff and outlaw. A Bob Dylan meets Miles Davis kind of renegade on the new (old) frontier. Then suddenly there was an open bass chair in the high school Jazz band. Soon the body and character of the bass led his soul and intellect to becoming an ensemble direction leader through an understanding of the function of the bass in harmony.

Mark Ostrowski joined John in the great northwest around the late-90s. Between the club/coffeeshop and Cornish Community they bonded with (mostly under 30) "collective mind frames and they took hold" and evolved into becoming an organizer. John had that rare willpower to take on creating a community within the larger framework, from film to music festivals; orchestrating, writing, rehearsing, booking; transportation, press, and this little thing called paying the artists. Monktrail Creative Music Concern was born—that title alone should inform you about the elements and images mixed between the likes of bands named Non Grata (big band based on AACM model), Deal's Number, and Special O.P.S.

John gives compassionate gratitude for those who have come within his scope since his ethnomusicology graduate work; from Smithsonian to cataloging and digitizing every audio artifact and discovery of history (including unreleased Hendrix—like with the Isley brothers) for the EMP museum (now known as MoPOP). Modest—an understatement. John emphasizes those who he gives credit to for his development, like Stuart Dempster and Ask the Ages! Zachary Watkins with Floss! Lil Coop Sextet! Beth Fleenor! Wally Shoup, Dennis Rea, Paul Hoskin, and Jeffery Taylor!

This leads us to the "urgency and beauty" of the making. This leads up to right now and the effects of William Parker to Melvin Gibbs, (the late) Henry Grimes to Pascal Niggenkem-

per. “Anything, anywhere, anytime for no reason at all”—Frank Zappa. After so much has happened in the diversity of listening to what comes down to sound in the language of The Music that race and politics shrinks into wonder—like the heavenly view from a spaceship ascending from earth. The land and sea, sound and silence, miracles in rhythm in a celestial groove, like John says about his playing: “the groove...I like something in the groove” Something in the Peter Brötzmann and Derek Bailey groove. The cliché-free groove. The Hound Dog Taylor’s Hand tracks that liber-

ate us within the groove. Experience listening to their “Look Up and Let Go” and “Hostile Architecture” and all the productions that lead/led up to this city’s soundscape in harmony. Events that somehow that kid between New Jersey and Pennsylvania had no way of knowing would enrich a whole city. Arts & Nature, Folklife, Olympia Experimental Music festival, Sounds Outside, and, of course, Earshot Festivals only a Renaissance Man could conceive (without knowing he would).

Between “composition performance ritual” and “broader global cultural context” that kid’s route to Oberlin

Conservatory and onto University of Maryland brought him out of the ridiculous wilderness of civilization to arrive to archive The Music while creating and producing it at the same time! Yes, through Heavy Metal, Rap, and Kronos, Schoenberg to Bartok, and Count Basie to Miles, those early chords in the left hand he found so alluring until he heard “the key centers” and those “lines Mingus wrote like Stravinsky, I thought about dots on paper and how good it would sound if I did it. I did it and am still doing it... in a hundred years of Avant Garde!”

Paul r. Harding

Published works: *Hot Mustard & Lay Me Down* (En Theos Press, 2003); *Excerpts of Lamentation & Evidence of Starlite* (Aurius Unlimited, 1993); excerpt of completed novel manuscript in *Black Renaissance Noire*; selected verse in *Black Renaissance Noire*, *Transition 112*, *Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora*, *Konch*, *Coon Bidness*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, and various anthologies. Unpublished manuscripts in both the Gwendolyn Brooks Papers at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, and the Derek Walcott Collection at the Alma Jordan Library, University of West Indies. Awarded Philip Whalen Memorial Grant for poetry and Edith K. Draham Scholarship for fiction. ‘Spoken Music’ performed with legendary Charles Gayle, Ravi Coltrane, Joe Ford, Michael Bisio, and other renowned musicians. Former Earshot Jazz Board of Directors President, former Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle Education Director and founder of ULMS Children’s University. Currently teaches critical thinking, reading and writing in the Bronx.



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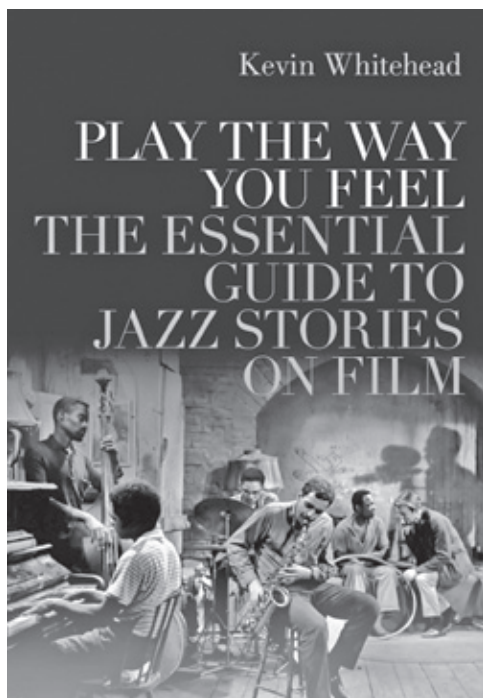
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If in these days of quarantine, if you find yourself dipping into more movies and books than usual, jazz writer Kevin Whitehead (commentator for “Fresh Air,” author of *New Dutch Swing*) has a delightful strategy for combining those pandemic pastimes. In a brilliant, one-of-a-kind new book, *Play the Way You Feel: The Essential Guide to Jazz Stories on Film*, Whitehead surveys 93 years of films dealing with jazz, from *The Jazz Singer* (1927) to *Bolden* (2019), mining them for recurring cultural tropes—or in some cases clichés—that illuminate how we think about the music and the culture that surrounds it. Here are movies

about jazz as a young generation’s rebellion; a beleaguered underdog, playing second fiddle to European music; an African-American creation, envied and/or stolen by whites; a formula for reconciling personal freedom with the needs of the group; a battle for authenticity in a shallow culture; and, per the volume’s title, a truth serum that demands from its practitioners that they “play the way you feel.”

Not limiting himself to obvious candidates such as *Young Man with A Horn*, *Round Midnight*, or *La La Land*—Whitehead writes about movies that will be discoveries, even for aficionados, including *Sweet Music* (1935), *Orchestra Wives* (1942), *Ball of Fire* (1942), *Kings Go Forth* (1958), *Too Late Blues* (1962), *All Night Long* (1962), *Sweet Love, Bitter* (1967), *Space Is the Place* (1974) and *Stormy Monday* (1988). Along the way, he also covers a little TV—*Treme* (2010-13), *Johnny Staccato* (1959-60); some cartoons—*The Three Little Bops* (1957), the infamously racist animated segment of *The King of Jazz* (1930); an obscure documentary, *The Cry of Jazz* (1959); and two “soundies” (early short played on jukebox-like machines) featuring Bessie Smith and Duke Ellington. In his too-short section dealing with films that dis jazz, I wish he had engaged Cameron Crowe’s loathsome *Jerry Maguire* (1996), but hey, you can’t have it all.

A keen observer and penetrating, witty writer, Whitehead understands music and movies equally well—how Martin Scorsese’s *New York, New York*

(1977), for example, is driven by “the tension between an improvisational aesthetic and showbiz gloss,” or how Clint Eastwood’s *Bird* (1988) “plays games with time in a way you can liken to bebop.” Unlike so many jazz fans, he isn’t upset when biopics like *St. Louis Blues* or *The Benny Goodman Story* stretch the facts, unless of course if they are also boring.

Though it can serve as a handy bookshelf reference, *Play the Way You Feel* is not only a compendium of movie reviews—there are no grades; evaluations are implicit—but rather a fascinating cultural expedition with its own logical development. Still, you can usually tell if Whitehead likes a film. It’s a pleasure to hear him praise the shadowy, Seattle-based minor classic, *The Fabulous Baker Boys* (1989) or explain why Robert Altman’s *Kansas City* (1996) failed. *The Gig* (1985), one of my favorites, gets some airtime, though Whitehead oddly downplays the role of race in it. On the other hand, he has a keen eye for two racial tropes that pop up in jazz films again and again: whites confirming legitimacy on Black music by accepting it as high culture and Black musicians conferring legitimacy on white musicians by accepting them as authentic—or, as the title says, “playing the way they feel.”

But there is so much more to talk about. If you love movies and you love jazz, a real treat awaits you.

—Paul de Barros

Folks Project *Live at the Triple Door* Self-Released

Seattle-based jazz ensemble Folks Project released their debut album, *Live at the Triple Door*, in February 2020. Comprised of D'Vonne Lewis on drums, Darrius Willrich on keys, and Evan Flory-Barnes on bass, the music of Folk Project is a tribute to and continuation of Seattle's rich tradition of jazz. Taking cues from the West Coast Cool Jazz movement in general, as well as the expansive, atmospheric compositional structures of such Seattle luminaries as Quincy Jones, Folks Project mines the memory of past musical means of expression to extract new interpretations and new meaning on the path toward a jazz future.

Live at the Triple Door opens with "Let's Go," a piano driven post-bop exercise in movement and excitement. "5023" follows as a laid back, contemplative melody. Bass and piano trade solos, evoking an almost unidentifiable nostalgia: the music gives a familiar warmth, giving the listener a melancholy reminisce for memories that

aren't quite known. "Your Love" and "Stay Here With Me" offer lite-funk trips akin to late-1970s quiet storm radio with a modern twist. The final track, "Scene of Serene," is a fitting bookend to the album. Increasingly assertive cymbals and toms wash over bass and piano. The trio splits from one movement of the suite to the next, with the memory of the previous passage informing the team of the next leg of the excursion. The music continually expands, tensing and relaxing and folding and growing, culminating in a cleansing catharsis like a sun-shower on a summer's day. As a morning flower stretches toward the sun, so does "Scene of Serene" paint a picture of beauty and calm.

In his essay "The Golden Age, Time Past," Ralph Ellison notes that "music gives resonance to memory." A phrase, or chord progression, or even a simple key change, can unleash a deluge of events past and times remembered. Music in general, and jazz in particu-



lar, as a means of expression, is a medium that is by its very nature shaped by memory. The jazz musician at their best references the sounds and textures that inform their art, and adds and manipulates and distills the music down to its essence to create new structure and meaning. It is simultaneously a backward and forward-thinking arrangement: the memory of the old resonates through the creation of the new. Folks Project gives us exactly that: taking elements from the times past of Seattle music, Folks Project takes us on a journey toward a new golden age of jazz.

—Grant Grays



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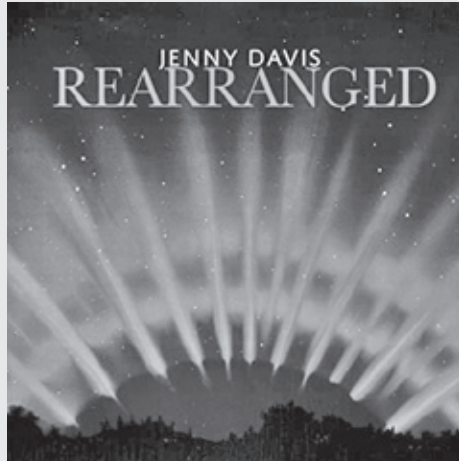
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Jenny Davis *Rearranged* Three Penny Records

Exploring the relationship between closeness and distance, vocalist and composer Jenny Davis sings, “You’re far away / but I can feel you,” on the opening bossa nova “Aceptar,” off her fourth release *Rearranged*. An active and accomplished bandleader, Davis’ skill connects certain distances that, until recently, were bridged in the club between performer and audience. Joining Davis in fostering connection are award-winning pianist Jovino Santos Neto and his trio (bassist Chuck Deardorf and drummer Jeff Busch), along with a host of guests, who remain close by to give her long, lifting phrases and inventive tunes room for rhythm.



Davis’ singing explores these chord changes—passionate yet pensive—accompanied by Dimitri Matheny’s flugelhorn on her spare version of Bob Telson’s “Calling You.” Vocalist Lorrie Ruiz joins Davis on her refreshing new standard about personal boundaries, the firm funk of “Saying Yes,” (check out Busch’s tasteful cymbal work near the finish). The separation of symbol and emotion come up on “Gemini Tango,” a graceful bit of humor spiced with guest solos by violinist Heather Bentley and accordionist David Lange, whose melodies march like plot twists through the two-step trope of romance.

Davis’ compositional talent shines brightly through the playing of others, which refract back to Davis, illuminating her multi-faceted musical personality. The angular instrumental “Wise Up,” features polished playing by reedman Mark Taylor, while the grind-and-pull blues-morph of “Yeoman Warders,” offers an impressive Oliver-Nelson style arrangement for sax quartet featuring Kate Olson, Cynthia Mullis, Jim Dejoie, and Taylor.

On a reprise of the title track, accompanied live by the Sirius String quartet, Davis sets her voice to the emotional stridency of chamber music, letting it linger in the changes with the same vibrating pathos of the bowed strings themselves. “If you could take my fear / and rearrange me...” she sings, asking in music for a change close as a chord can come to renewal, never too far from feeling.

—Ian Gwin

Staycation, from page 7

Staycation includes a Wednesday night stream (via YouTube) to sustain the music community while not gathering in person. Guest curators invite a group of musicians to perform from their homes on a given theme; on August 5th, Allison Preisinger and Kyle Findley-Meier curate a singer-songwriter session that includes songwriters Eden Iris and Dwayne Haggins.

Sundays are streamed live from the Royal Room stage and are presented via Live Concerts Stream with viewing links available on the Royal Room Facebook Page. Upcoming Staycation performances include bassist Abbey Blackwell’s “Rae,” on **August 2**, longtime local experimenters Diminished Men on **August 9**, and African percussion group BenGhaTo is also planned to perform in August. The Royal Room will also celebrate Horvitz’ 65th Birthday on **August 28** with a streaming festival that features the ensemble Sweeter than the Day and the Royal We; Holcomb joins on **August 30** with performances featuring Reggie Garrett, Geoff Harper, and Eric Eagle. Jay Thomas’ band will present the release of his latest CD *High Crimes and Misdemeanors*, **September 11**.

With the help of their landlords, the Royal Esquire Club, Horvitz and his team hope to minimize expenses and sit tight until opening becomes a safe option.

“Just to be clear, this is a work in progress and not even settled,” says Horvitz. “It isn’t really a business plan, it’s a disaster plan.”

Until then, the Royal Room’s priorities remain presenting music and guaranteeing pay for musicians, currently through donations to the South Hudson Music Project.

—Ian Gwin

For details visit theroyalroomseattle.com.

Notes, from page 3

\$1.4 million to support local organizations in their re-opening efforts. To be eligible, cultural organizations must be located in King County and their primary mission should be related to one or more funding areas which include arts, heritage, and preservation. Awards could be used for installation of plexiglass barriers, sanitizing stations, signage, training for front-line staff, software upgrades and more. Priority will be given to organizations/landmarks that have a track record serving a community disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The deadline is August 17. For application and details please visit 4culture.org/grants/reopen/

Save our Stages Call for Support

The National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) through their #SaveOurStages campaign, is asking for nationwide support to preserve and nurture the ecosystem of independent live music venues and promoters throughout the United States. NIVA emphasizes that because of COVID-19 health concerns live music venues were the first to close and will be the last to re-open. Consequently, venues and the people whose livelihoods depend on them will suffer if they do not receive adequate financial assistance. NIVA is asking people to send a letter to their legislators in support of the Restart Act introduced by Senators Young and Bennet in the Senate and Representatives Golden and Kelly in the House, which would ensure the survival of independent venues across the nation, and preserve both the economic and cultural contributions that these venues provide. For more information visit nivassoc.org

Seattle singer/songwriter releases an anthology of his most beloved songs from the last two decades with

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