

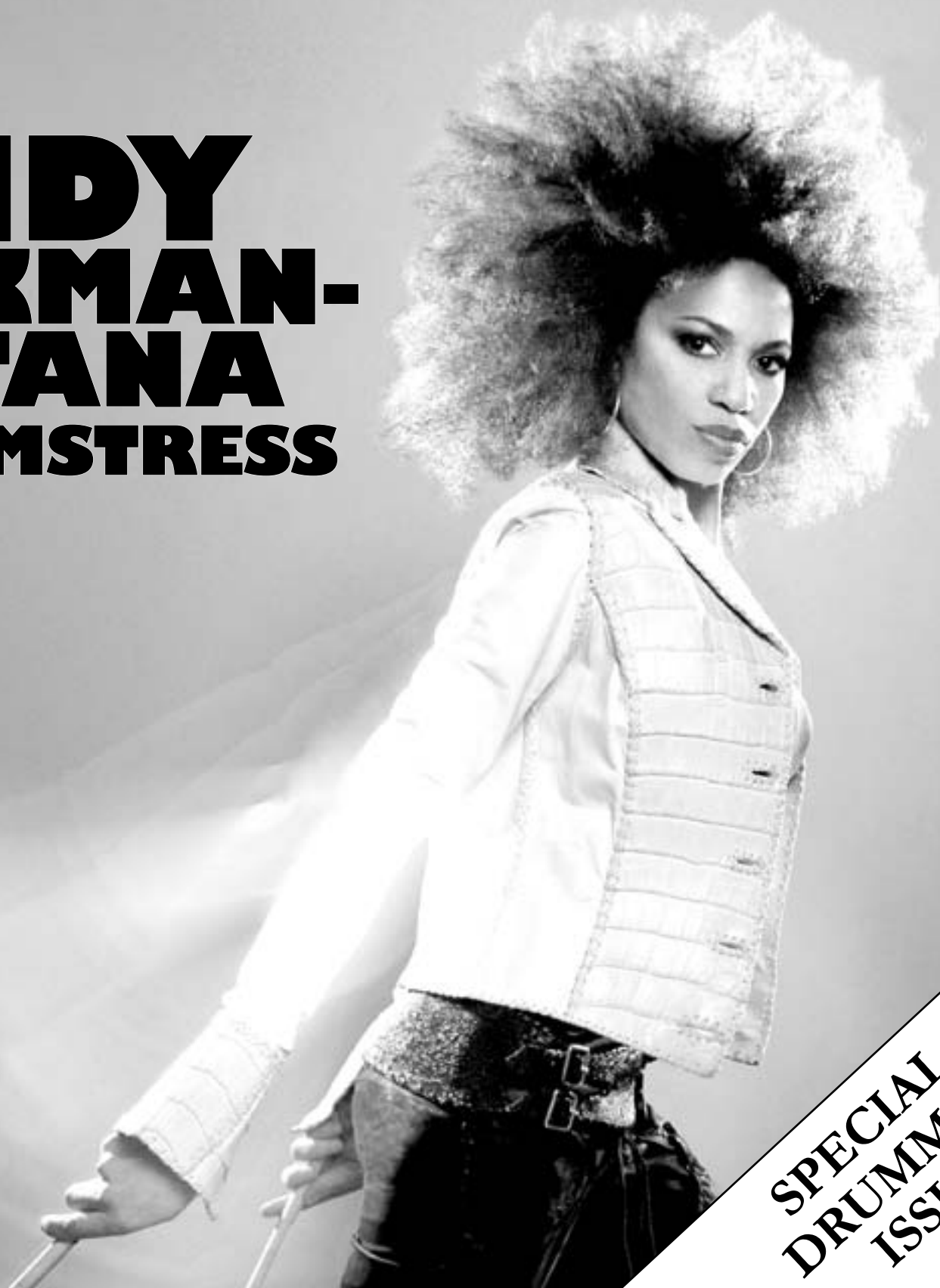
# THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD

March 2012 | No. 119

Your FREE Guide to the NYC Jazz Scene

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## CINDY BLACKMAN- SANTANA THE DRUMSTRESS



SPECIAL  
DRUMMER  
ISSUE

PIERRE  
FAVRE

• TOMAS  
FUJIWARA •

MICHAEL  
CARVIN •

UGEXPLODE  
RECORDS •

EVENT  
CALENDAR



# THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD

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& Oliver Steidle

To describe the contents of this issue, we quote the immortal words of MC Rakim: “You ask me how I did ‘em / I let the rhythm ‘em”. Our first issue of spring focuses on those crucial engines of jazz, the drummers. Some might argue that jazz as a style evolved primarily from its rhythmic elements and so we celebrate the contributions recent and past of the timekeepers that make this music swing (or maybe not). We invite them all to step out from behind their kits and take a much-deserved bow in this, our special Drummer Issue.

Cindy Blackman-Santana (On The Cover) is carrying on the traditions of her early mentor Tony Williams and is increasingly visible inside and outside of the jazz world. She brings her Explorations band into Jazz Standard for two nights this month. Pierre Favre (Interview) is a legend in European jazz but has also worked with a who’s who of international jazz stars as well as being an innovator in the realm of solo percussion. He makes a rare trip to the States as part of the Intakt Records-curated fortnight at The Stone, performing in various configurations. Tomas Fujiwara (Artist Feature) is among the crop of exciting young drummers working in the city and beyond as both compelling leaders and propulsive sidemen. He performs this month as part of the new collective group Thumbscrew and with the Bhangra funk band Red Baraat. Michael Carvin is a veteran of the bands of Pharoah Sanders, Billy Bang and others and has released many albums as a leader, including last year’s *Lost and Found Project 2065*. He appears this month at Lenox Lounge. We also have a Lest We Forget on famed prebop drummer Big Sid Catlett, a Megaphone from Swiss drummer Dieter Ulrich, who is also at The Stone several times this month, a feature on drummer Weasel Walter’s ugEXPLODE label and an opening section of CD reviews (pgs. 14-19) devoted to drummers in the forefront and in the ‘background’.

We hope that this special Drummer Issue puts a 5/4 spring in your step (double pun!) as it has for us.

Laurence Donohue-Greene, *Managing Editor*

Andrey Henkin, *Editorial Director*

*On the cover:* Cindy Blackman-Santana (photo by Jimmy Bruch)

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# Pierre Favre

by Ken Waxman

*During a career of more than 55 years, drummer Pierre Favre, who turns 75 in June, has been a constantly innovating musician. One of the first Swiss players to embrace free music in the late '60s, since then he's explored a variety of musical concepts: from giving solo percussion concerts to composing notated works and collaborating with folkloric-influenced improvisers. He makes a rare New York appearance this month, playing in different configurations during Intakt Records' two-week curation of The Stone.*

**The New York City Jazz Record:** You're a self-taught drummer. Why were you attracted to the drums?

**Pierre Favre:** The first drummer I heard was Max Roach on the *Jazz at Massey Hall* LP. It was rare at the time, but a friend of mine had the record and he played it over and over for me. Immediately I fell in love with the drums and spent all my time playing everything I heard and also listening to radio and records. Fortunately I had a good memory and could memorize almost anything very easily.

I only had two LPs, both with Big Sid Catlett, who was my biggest influence. He was like a sorcerer. He was precise and fluent when he played time and when he played the melody his unexpected rim shots shaped it and made it swing. ...I was talking to Tony Williams and he told me: "Big Sid Catlett was my biggest influence too." Later on I liked Kenny Clarke and Philly Joe Jones and of course Elvin Jones, Pete La Roca, Billy Higgins... Besides I was always trying things out. I could play simple rhythms for hours, just trying to swing.

By then I was living in Neuchâtel with my parents and I regularly jumped out of the window to go to the bars and try to sit in with dance bands coming through town. Finally, in 1955, one bandleader came to talk to my parents and they let me go to work full time in his dance band. At 17 I wasn't allowed to play in bars yet, but that bandleader told my parents he'd watch out for me. In 1957 I auditioned for the radio orchestra in Basel. I couldn't read a note but they liked me. I got the job, but I had to promise to learn how to read music.

In 1960 I left the orchestra and went to Paris for one year and then to Rome where I worked with the American Jazz Ensemble led by clarinetist Bill Smith and pianist Johnny Eaton. In 1961 I went back to Switzerland to work with my own trio. In 1962 I went to Munich playing in the TV orchestra, freelancing in the studios and appearing frequently with people like Benny Bailey, Don Menza and Booker Ervin.

In 1966 I came back to the Paiste & Sohn factory in Nottwil, Switzerland as adviser to the Paiste brothers Robert and Toomas. My job was testing of cymbals and organizing drum clinics all around the world. It was a hard but very rewarding job and I could finally devote myself to playing the way I wanted to. I stayed there until 1971 when I moved to Zurich, where I still live.

**TNYCJR:** Wasn't pianist Irène Schweizer employed at

Paiste & Sohn, as your secretary?

**PF:** I met Irène Schweizer in Zurich during a concert. She told me she was looking for a job, and I asked her to work for me as I needed a secretary. At first we would play together occasionally after work and after some time we were playing together every day.

**TNYCJR:** You were also one of the first European drummers to turn from American-influenced modern jazz to European-centered free jazz. What change in musical thinking did that involve?

**PF:** This is a quite complex story. Since I began to play I was following the path of American jazz. This was OK, but I guess that I had enough of the idea people had, which was "you're a pretty good drummer and musician, but any American showing up will be able to play you off the wall" - and it's still that way for many people in Europe. But the '60s was a period of change and we young people needed a deep breath. For me the free jazz idea allowed me to let everything out, who I am, where I come from, etc. It opened new horizons, my musical breathing. I lived silence, which I had not noticed before, dynamics, phrasing and a different sense of time. And all this could be experienced in front of an audience that gave you the chance to feel what is musically true and what isn't.

**TNYCJR:** You and Schweizer recorded *Santana*, one of the early European free jazz discs, with German bassist Peter Kowald. How did you get involved with him and later other experimental players?

**PF:** Irène and I were playing a lot throughout Europe and so we met other musicians looking for the same type of sounds. At first our bass player was Jiri [George] Mraz. Jiri wanted to immigrate to the US, so Peter took his place. *Santana* was our own production. We had only one and a half hours in the studio so we had to get it out. Through Kowald's influence we became more loud and busy. I played mostly loud and very busy. But I enjoyed it; it felt like a young dog that you take out to let it run.

**TNYCJR:** Since then you've recorded solo percussion discs and ones with all-percussion ensembles. How do percussion performances differ from those in which you work with other instrumentalists?

**PF:** I actually started to play solo concerts during the time with Irène and Peter. I was including more cymbals and sounds in my drum set, but the day I brought a gong I figured that it was better for me to just play my drums. Then, boom, I thought: OK, I'll try all that stuff alone. A few years later [1984] came *Singing Drums* for ECM [with Fredy Studer, Paul Motian and Nana Vasconcelos playing a variety of percussion instruments]. It was a challenge to compose

a whole program for such great musicians. In a solo concert you carry the whole evening on your shoulders, the space belongs to you. When you play with more musicians you share that space; in a way you take a step back, you just play what has to be played. As a drummer you're there to give pulse, dynamics, fire and color to the band.

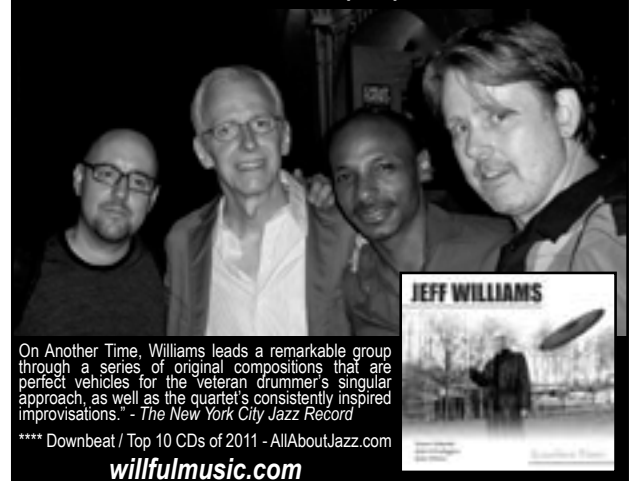
**TNYCJR:** You also at one time played a very extensive kit. Do you still use that set-up?

**PF:** Yes, there were times where I tried to play full melodies on the drums and I came on stage with all

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 36)

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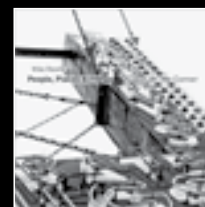
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# (KÖLN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

Transforming “All or Nothing At All” and “Night and Day” much in the same way Brad Mehldau would do to Radiohead or a jazz standard, he also performed the latter’s “2+2=5”, further revealing Mehldau’s influence.

Hot off the heels of her impressive 2011 Enja release *Quite Simply*, Niescier made sure she got some stage time at the festival as well. She presented her cohesive Sublim band with Florian Weber (piano), Sebastian Rather (bass) and Christoph Hillmann (drums), the lineup from her previous Enja record (*Sublim III*), which received the ECHO JAZZ prize, Germany’s most prestigious jazz award. Much in the New York quartet tradition of Tim Berne or David Binney (palpable influences both), you could close your eyes during her sublime set and imagine being downtown at The Stone or 55Bar. Niescier abstracted themes with a cutting tone, lyrical one moment, rhythmically intense the next. She also performed (on alto and soprano) with bassist Ulla Oster’s Chimäre, electric guitarist Norbert Scholly and Eva Pöpplein’s laptop and electronics providing a backwash of beats (Kraftwerk-ish at moments). In contrast to her own band, Niescier’s role was performing precise, written-out lines that synched with and shadowed the leader and vice versa. The opener (“13th Floor”) and set closer (“Joytick”) were succinct, catchy performances, the former a feature for the saxophonist and bassist.

Oster also lent solid support to Christina Fuchs’ quartet NoTango, the leader’s various reeds (curved soprano, tenor, bass clarinet) complemented by Florian Stadler (accordion) and Hillmann (drums), who busily shifted tempos and suitable rolls as if manufacturing waves over which his bandmates could happily surf. Hillmann also appeared with bassist André Nendza’s Quintett. The bandleader, a thoughtful and original player and composer in the swinging, modern bop tradition, has a knack for restructuring and reharmonizing familiar melodies, creating strong, immediately catchy compositions uniquely his own.

The most adventurous sets came from Dus-Ti, a duo much greater than the sum of its parts. Mirek Pyschny (drums and effects) and Pablo Giw (trumpet and effects), perhaps influenced by Bill Dixon/Tony Oxley, incorporated electronic effects and created a potpourri of sounds recognizable (experimental electric guitar) to not so familiar. Their fully spontaneous approach was both chaotic and impressionistic. Drummer Peter Kahlenborn’s Vesica Pisces trio featured two electric guitarists, each with a tendency to finish the other’s lines. The leader’s unobtrusive style was one of understatement, lending itself well to the intricate yet spacious compositions. And pianist Philip Zoubek’s quartet with reedman Leo Huhn and Nillesen was a crossroads of Lennie Tristano, Anthony Braxton and Jimmy Giuffrè in one of the festival’s many revealing sets. ❖

For more information, visit [winterjazzkoeln.com](http://winterjazzkoeln.com)

# (MIS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

cadences framing Parker’s magisterial split tones and herculean displays of circular breathing.

Mahall and percussionist Paul Lytton were the acoustic components of the Systems Quartet, which otherwise featured Axel Dörner sourcing microtones from his slide trumpet while processing sounds through his laptop and Linson percussively thumping or atonally bowing his bass in addition to using real-time electronics to process multiple variants of each of the quartet members’ timbres. While Lytton’s unmatched cymbal sizzles and shell side scraps plus Mahall’s staccato reed bites were most obvious,

Linson’s electronic work multiplied the number of textures in a restrained fashion, so it was never certain whether Dörner’s singular Theremin-like pitches were self-created or synthesized or whether the spacey crackles that suddenly emanated from Mahall’s horn were aided by Linson’s manipulations.

There was no doubt about the source of Mahall’s stand-out playing a couple of nights later, when his acoustic horn prowess and offbeat humor were put to good use in a duo with pianist Aki Takase. With fare encompassing ‘40s film ditties, Duke Ellington’s “Mood Indigo”, Thelonious Monk’s “Pannonica” and originals from both players - including “Trumpet for Beginners”, a hesitant, huffing-and-puffing line the reedist composed as an affectionate dig at the style of Dörner, his long-time associate - the pianist’s characteristic mixture of pounding Fats Waller-emulating stride plus angular Monk-like digressions came in handy when meeting the reedist’s idiomatic command of the curved instrument.

Monk’s repertoire was also celebrated on MIS’ concluding night by the Dudek/Koller quartet, playing appropriately related themes by John Coltrane, Tadd Dameron and other 20th Century heavy hitters. By conviction a Trane devotee, the German saxophonist was most effective when the quartet tackled less familiar material like Herbie Nichols’ “Step Tempest” and Ornette Coleman’s “Congeniality”. On the former, Dudek’s spherical lines and stentorian flutter-tonguing reconfirmed the melody while the pianist’s slurred fingering and chromatic note exposure created theme variants. On “Congeniality” Dudek subtly changed the tempo once the head was stated while Hayhurst and Calderazzo maintained the original line. Further on, the saxman’s lower-case, altissimo slurs evolved in stark contrast to Koller’s decorative note clusters and novel voicing atop the bassist and drummer’s rhythmic pull.

Similar reconfigurations were the stock-in-trade of vocalist Winstone’s emotive second set one night previous, accompanied by pianist Nikki Iles and reedist Mark Lockheart. Concentrating on Weill’s American-period songs, except for the inevitable “Mack the Knife”, the singer brought an adult wistfulness to melodies like “September Song”, “My Ship” and “The Bilbao Song” - in the middle of which she cleverly interpolated the street-smart verse of “The Alabama Song”. Her renditions were helped immeasurably by outstanding lyrics provided by, among others, Maxwell Anderson and Ira Gershwin.

Those glorious German-American musical collaborations could be heard as a precursor to similar first-class German-British teamwork presented at the Vortex that week. ❖

For more information, visit [vortexjazz.co.uk](http://vortexjazz.co.uk)



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# Switzerland - A Drummer's Country

by Dieter Ulrich

Where to start? - Maybe with the surprising fact that elderly people who still know well our regional Swiss-German dialect call a trap set “a jazz“! - This simply means that this alien instrument, bringing all those dangerous sounding grooves into their everyday dance music, immediately became a synonym for the entire idiom. It took the drums to make it jazzy for the Swiss.

Looking back at the history of Swiss jazz, we were probably not more open-minded towards that new ecstatic sound (mostly presented by African-Americans) than in the countries surrounding us. But I would consider it typically Swiss that you could find in Switzerland an impressive amount of jazz concerts already in the '20s and '30s, with stars as famous as Louis Armstrong and Coleman Hawkins playing with their bands up in the smallest mountain villages - Hawkins even recorded a couple of shellacs in Zurich in 1936. Back in the late '20s Zurich had three dance halls with regular jazz bands.

With the Fred Böhler Orchestra and especially Teddy Stauffer's Original Teddies, Switzerland already had two internationally renowned jazz orchestras years before World War II had started. But, if you think this helped jazz find wider recognition, you are wrong! Jazz was not liked more in Switzerland, only accepted more easily, more self-evidently than in the rest of Europe. And considering the fact that the drumset - “the jazz” - was the only instrument that did not even exist before that musical style was coming up, this little country in the middle of a fascist continent, was at least ten years ahead when it came to mastering this new instrument!

There was almost no remarkable European drummer born before 1930, the Swiss Stuff Combe an important exception (besides Brit Phil Seaman). But, of the five leading European drummers born between 1930-40, four were Swiss: Charly Antolini (1937), Pierre Favre (1937), Daniel Humair (1938) and Hans Peter Giger (1939). The fifth, Tony Oxley, was born in Great Britain, the other non-fascist country.

In central Europe these four artists soon represented four different stylistic schools in jazz, like cardinal points almost: Antolini, a technically brilliant and traditionally-trained ‘drum-player’, whose main inspiration was Louie Bellson, set the ground work. In contrast to him, Daniel Humair always was more into

experimental handling of groove, rhythm and interplay. Shortly after 1960 his style was already very personal and modern (there was not a shadow of “trying to play like...” any more). Pierre Favre, whom you can hear at The Stone this month, always was a very different personality. More than his two compatriots, he progressed through different styles, times and conceptions, starting as an exceptionally talented and already well-trained youngster. He played with Chet Baker and many other greats - with Louis Armstrong even (!) - at an early age. But, his elegance in style and outstanding sound culture soon made him detect and develop the more percussive, even ethnological sides of his instrument. Experimenting with musicians like Peter Kowald and Irène Schweizer, Favre soon reached a different and clearly ‘European’ level of piano trio, then later on in duo playing. That in the '70s he got more and more known as a solo performer was only logical. Hans Peter Giger in many ways was something like a king-sized version of the others. Starting his international career mainly in the oldtime jazz field, he was soon recording with Ellington and Strayhorn. Returning to Switzerland, he was co-founder of the then first professional jazz school in Bern, leading the Family Of Percussion and playing and recording with everyone, up to Archie Shepp in 1980. An incomparable early master of polyrhythms and odd meters he, as a player and teacher, gave Switzerland's drummer community much more than we tend to remember!

With these four outstanding stylists on drums, Switzerland was already well equipped in earlier days, when jazz was starting to establish itself in Europe as a new international art. But there are at least three other reasons why the drums were easier to learn and easier to be played in Switzerland in the first half of the last century. As in America, a vivid brass band tradition produced a constant need for young drummers. Every village, every association had and still has its own band, playing old corny marches right up to the Duke Ellington repertoire. Due to a very decentralized political and cultural structure, almost every Swiss town at that time built up its own almost independent little scene, had its own bands, festivals, clubs and little coffee shops and nowadays jazz schools. Only for illustration: the National Amateur Jazz Festival was founded in Zurich in 1951 and Switzerland, with its only 6.5 million inhabitants, has seven jazz schools and in five of them you can get a professional diploma! And finally, Switzerland was not destroyed after the big war; there was money, safety and a future and although most of the jazz players were not professionals at that time, they were able to develop and, if really talented, they could start an international career.

For the following generation, Switzerland's lead had already finished, but the seed was growing. Among well-educated youngsters of wealthy backgrounds, it became hip to play jazz. Many of the best players - and there were some very good ones - did not need to make a living with their music and when the big late '60s jazz crisis also hit our country, they returned to family businesses and turned into semi-professionals or started something new on their own.

But the local scenes all over the country, supported by a growing cultural state system, made it evident how creative these little entities could get. In Zurich the Africana club played the main role in the late '60s and beginning of the '70s. Being the first station of the South African musicians community, later fully moving to London, the Africana was the place where they left their distinctive musical traces. Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim), Dudu Pukwana, Johnny Dyani and many other South African musicians impressed the locals in Zurich as much as they did later on in London. Drummer Makaya Ntshoko (mainly known for his fabulous work with Hugh Masekela) even settled there, becoming a respected ‘European’ drummer and a member of the Basel scene.

But if you started to play jazz at that time and were interested in its roots and did not have a teacher who had all the old records, you had better be good in paleontology! Of Charlie Parker you would only find some obscure bootlegs of even more obscure club dates, sometimes containing not more than his naked solos and many a record salesman would get a puzzled look trying to understand why you saw Miles Davis belonging to the jazz instead of pop-rock department in his shop. When I started to get into drumming in the mid '70s Heinz Lieb and Fredy Studer, both into a more rocky vein, were coming up and soon were the most successful younger jazz drummers around. But it was the four older guys who had already made Switzerland a ‘drummer's country’ for the rest of Europe. ❖

*Ulrich is at The Stone Mar. 4th as part of Objets Trouvée, Mar. 6th with Oliver Lake and Christian Weber and Mar. 9th with Jan Schlegel and Ray Anderson. See Calendar.*

*Dieter Ulrich, born 1958, began his musical education with classical piano training from age 6 to 20, starting on drums (and other instruments like bugle) at age 12. He was the drummer in two of Switzerland's top avant garde bands in the '80s (with Urs Blöchliger and Werner Lüdi) and since has performed with many musicians all over the world, co-authored eight experimental contemporary opera productions and appeared on over 40 albums.*

## VOXNEWS

by Katie Bull

Let's span the inter-generational vocal panorama in our olde and ever-young New York City. In the same way an instrumentalist's sound can mature into deeper dimensionality, the sound of a fine elder jazz singer carries richness of nuance in phrasing, ease of invention, an ‘it-goes-without-saying’ level of entrainment and total solidity of expression. You can't buy that. You can't auto-tune that either. But you can often notice a foreshadowing of wise elder-energy in younger singers. One of the many great things about jazz vocal listeners in this town is your age-blind listening. By supporting music first, you are enacting defiance towards our culture's ageism.

At Dizzy's Club (Mar. 27th-Apr. 1st), “Generations of Jazz Vocals” will feature the sonorously unadorned **Sachal Vasandani** holding his own alongside the seasoned fountain-of-youth **Jon Hendricks**. I just witnessed 90-year-old Hendricks tear it up for Scott

Seigel's classy Nightlife Awards in Town Hall with stunning energy! The Grande Dame of interdisciplinary jazz wildness, **Shelley Hirsch**, will blow you away with her in-the-moment free association inventions at Roulette (Mar. 29th and 31st). Another boldly idiosyncratic veteran singer/composer up this month is an artist cut of jazz cabaret cloth, **Nora York**. She will lead her Amazing Band in “Power/Play” at the BAMCafé (Mar. 9th), featuring the bluesy fusion sounds of Sherryl Marshall in an original socio-politically themed jazz-theater event. More classic jazz cabaret - where the singer is an improvising instrumentalist - will be on display with legendary pianist/singer **Barbara Carroll** appearing at Highlights in Jazz (Mar. 8th). For those who respect the lineage of the classic genre, you will need a dose of Carroll to absorb this news: the famed Oak Room at the Algonquin is closed for good. **Amy Cervini** offers an ode to Blossom Dearie, stepping back in time on *Digging Me Digging You* (Anzic). Cervini has a pristine ebullience;

she never guilds the lily, every note counts and her band is boss, appearing at 55Bar (Mar. 6th-7th). Weaving lightning scat, lyrics from life and bluesy grit, the Grammy-nominated singer/composer **Gregory Porter** will celebrate *Be Good* (Motéma) at the Highline Ballroom (Mar. 16th). Major news for **Sheila Jordan** fans; a previously unreleased recording made 12 years ago brings the perfect ease and simpatico between her and bassist Harvey S to our ears again on *Yesterdays* (HighNote). And if you love the combination of bass and voice, **Sandy Patton**'s deep alto range matches Thomas Durst's strings as they swing, slink and groove in conjoined impulse on *Painting Jazz* (Unit). In contrast, genre-busting saxophonist/singer **Jessica Lurie** blasts away at your expectations with *Megaphone Heart* (Zipa). Last but not least, Steve Colson & The Unity Group features the totally free **Iqua Colson** on *Triumph* (Universal Sound). Although a series of individual pieces, the sum feels like an inter-woven extended free-form improvisation. Sorta like...life. ❖



**Ominous Telepathic Mayhem**  
Weasel Walter (ugEXPLODE)  
**Speed Date** Deric Dickens (s/r)

**La Paloma**  
Ulrich Gumpert/Günter "Baby" Sommer (Intakt)  
**The Age of Energy**  
Chicago Underground Duo (Northern Spy)  
by Gordon Marshall

Duets with drums are like rubbing two sticks together. You have to be really good to start a fire. Coltrane was the one who stole this fire from Zeus, in 1967 with Rashied Ali on *Interstellar Space*, and however far in one direction it's taken, whether to warm and light up the past, or to blaze new trails for future growth, Coltrane and Ali, however cryptically, will be found on the ground beneath, like braided roots in the dirt. The temples built on this soil are grand at their best, as four recent releases prove emphatically.

On *Ominous Telepathic Mayhem* Weasel Walter's drumming is rapid and ferocious. It never overpowers the horns or guitars, though; Walter knows when to subdue the approach at the appropriate times - as in "Showering with Beer", the opening track, where trumpeter Peter Evans starts out in freebop mode but, as the improvisation progresses, distorts his flow through some kind of rough, intense feedback that makes his trumpet almost sound like a guitar. This segues aptly into Mary Halvorson's own guitar foray. Echoes and atonality augment the sparse space and she and Walter move forward almost as if independently, their themes crossing but not coinciding. The wild, Sonny Sharrock-like climax echoes Evans' prior feedback-laden trumpet and then things calm down as in a slow blues. Alto saxophonist Darius Jones enters his game in full blast mode, stuffing the spirit of Coltrane down his bell. Alex Ward alternates between clarinet and guitar, his sound bursting like oil out of a well.

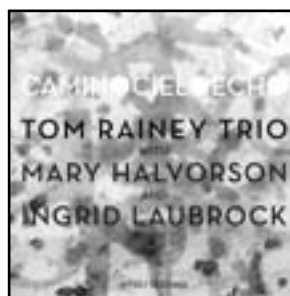
Deric Dickens is a drummer with a classic bop feel. On *Speed Date* he circles the explorations of his collaborators neatly and safely like a picket fence, opening the proceedings with cornetist Kirk Knuffke, who also comes up with some buoyant bop notes. Ben Cohen plays alto sax on a slow ballad, with the depth of a tenor that lands him on the surf somewhere between Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins, later striding forth in full Hawkins mode on his own tenor sax proper and finally taking his alto up a decade or two, again suggesting tenor, with the holy hails of Albert Ayler tightly under his belt, switching back and forth to C melody saxophone. Trumpeter John Crowley squeaks and spits while meandering beats on the tom. These represent only half of the collaborators (others are Matt Wilson, Jeff Lederer and Jeremy Udden). The record is remarkable for the stylistic consistency belied by its crazy-quilt constituencies.

On *La Paloma*, Günter "Baby" Sommer works with pianist Ulrich Gumpert. Known for their free jazz work, the two here spade into everything, from gospel to honky tonk, for a relaxed and stimulating ride into the past that is never too far from current times, or those beginning with the European avant garde, from which they develop their rigorous sense of structure. Sommer, often a gloriously histrionic drummer, is

subdued here, giving the shier Gumpert all the space he needs to unfold his ideas. That said, this is a true dialogue in the best sense and there is a glorious give and take between the two that gives us a timeless cross-section of music history.

Drummer Chad Taylor and trumpeter Rob Mazurek's *The Age of Energy* is copiously suggestive, even in its title, where it could represent either mental or natural energy. The two point to the latter with the opening "Winds Sweeping Pines". It almost has an ecological feel to it, as electronics wrap themselves around the drums like a windmill spinning air into power. The whole album has this feel of hearing the sounds of the environment, being inspired by them, but never forgetting to respect the lay of the land. The music keeps reinvesting itself in this element, a healthy give and take between the two musicians extrapolated into a healthy rapport between them and the sounds of their environment. Coming out of Chicago, this is as hopeful a prospect as we can get about a music that keeps evolving in the direction of the synthetic.

For more information, visit [nowave.pair.com/ugexplode](http://nowave.pair.com/ugexplode), [dericdickens.com](http://dericdickens.com), [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch) and [northern-spy.com](http://northern-spy.com). Weasel Walter is at ABC No-Rio Mar. 11th. Chad Taylor/Rob Mazurek are at Union Pool Mar. 15th. See Calendar.



**Camino Cielo Echo**  
Tom Rainey Trio (Intakt)  
by John Sharpe

If one of the prime goals of a leader is to explore new territories while inspiring excellent performance, then drummer Tom Rainey has hit the jackpot. Even though the 13 tracks on his sophomore leadership effort are attributed between the cast, they retain the freshness of improvisations due to their wild unpredictability. That same adventurous ethos also pervaded the trio's justly lauded debut *Pool School* (Clean Feed, 2010).

While a running time of over 70 minutes may be thought generous, in fact the time is well spent as the sheer variety and boldness of approaches adopted almost overwhelms. Lightning fast changes of direction betoken near telepathic understanding and lead to multi-sectioned cuts: rarely does a piece finish in the same zip code as where it started out.

Rainey demonstrates a highly attuned sense of dynamics as he co-opts unusual timbres, textures and rhythms to create a cohesive narrative. On tenor and soprano saxophones, Ingrid Laubrock incorporates novel textures into her unexpected switchbacks, most notably on "Mental Stencil", where she wields a distorted bassoon-like buzzing to good effect. Guitarist Mary Halvorson has melded a unique style by deconstructing and reconfiguring familiar elements into something audaciously new, helped by judicious use of effects pedals (love those aural shooting stars on "Two Words").

What persists in the mind is the sense of purpose, even at the most unfettered, with instrumental prowess casually deployed to conjure kaleidoscopic mood shifts. "Expectation of Exception" opens with purposeful restraint, before congealing around a driving groove, only to dissipate into pointillist starbursts while "Arroyo Burrow" forms from an accumulation of small gestures: a smear of soprano saxophone here, a percussive rustle or a spiky arpeggio there. "Mullet Toss" begins in a burst of agitated frenzy, featuring slashing guitar, overblown tenor and

a rambunctious boogaloo, before its brow is mopped by a spacey coda. On the languid title track, you can almost feel the Californian heat radiating from the tarmac. But this outstanding album ends on its most lyrical note, as "June" belays a wistful melodicism and tender distortion in a lovely ballad.

For more information, visit [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch). Rainey is at The Stone Mar. 7th with Ingrid Laubrock, Mar. 10th with this trio and Mar. 14th as a co-leader and with Sylvie Courvoisier; Cornelia Street Café Mar. 9th with Ingrid Laubrock, Mar. 17th with Kris Davis and Mar. 23rd with Mark Helias; Barbès Mar. 13th with Kevin Tkacz; Korzo Mar. 20th with Kris Davis and The Kitchen Mar. 24th with Mary Halvorson. See Calendar.



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## RECOMMENDED NEW RELEASES

- Juhani Aaltonen/Heikki Sarmanto - *Conversations* (TUM)
- David Berkman - *Self-Portrait* (Red Piano)
- Tim Berne - *Snakeoil* (ECM)
- Hans Glawischnig - *Jahira* (Sunnyside)
- Luis Perdomo - *Universal Mind* (RKM)
- Tom Warrington Trio - *Nelson* (Jazz Compass)

David Adler, New York@Night Columnist

- David Bindman Ensemble - *Sunset Park Polyphony* (s/r)
  - Chick Corea/Eddie Gomez/Paul Motian - *Further Explorations* (Concord)
  - Ulrich Gumpert/Günter "Baby" Sommer - *La Paloma* (Intakt)
  - Tania Maria - *Tempo* (featuring Eddie Gomez) (Naïve)
  - Wes Montgomery - *Echoes of Indiana Avenue* (Resonance)
  - Angelika Niescier - *Quite Simply* (Enja)
- Laurence Donohue-Greene**  
Managing Editor, The New York City Jazz Record

- Kevin Brow - *Dolls & Guns* (Blackout)
- Scott DuBois - *Landscape Scripture* (Sunnyside)
- Steve Horowitz - *New Monsters* (Posi-Tone)
- Gianni Lenoci/Kent Carter/Marcello Magliocchi - *FreeFall* (Setolo Di Maiale)
- Irène Schweizer - *To Whom It May Concern* (Piano Solo Tonhalle Zürich) (Intakt)
- The Spokes - *Not So Fast* (Strudelmedia)

**Andrey Henkin**

Editorial Director, The New York City Jazz Record

## GLOBE UNITY: SWITZERLAND



**Untitled Yet** Dominic Egli's Plurism (Unit)  
**Transhumance** Béatrice Graf (Altrisuoni)  
**Polisation** Lucas Niggli Big Zoom (Intakt)  
 by Tom Greenland

Like jazz, Switzerland embraces a mix of cultural identities, including French, German and Italian. This month's recordings, all drummer-led, attest to the musical variety and creativity to be found in the high- and lowlands, from the Danube to the Rhine.

Dominic Egli's *Plurism*, an adventurous but accessible trio effort with Donat Fisch (tenor/alto sax) and Raffaele Bossard (bass), features the leader's originals, mostly long-form modal melodies underpinned by rock beats, fleshed out with ardent esprit de corps. Fisch's sax, casually urgent, has a sleeper effect: initially understated, it gently weaves in and out of tonality, building subtle tension to arrive at vital musical moments, evident in his outro blowing over "Flames" and fine work on the final four cuts. Egli sets up two tracks with toy piano ostinatos, later plying a kalimba (thumb piano) and delivers a short but dynamic solo on "AFAP", demonstrating throughout his empathetic and highly supportive commitment to group playing.

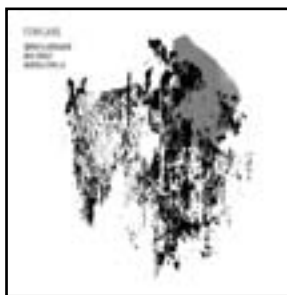
Béatrice Graf's *Transhumance* is a two-disc anthology of free duets with John Menoud (guitar), Nicolas Maret (vibes), Reto Suhner (alto sax), Peter Schärli and Hilaria Kramer (trumpet), Lucien Dubuis (bass clarinet), Samuel Blaser (trombone) and Bruno Amstad (vocals), all recorded live and "on location" - in a field; a forest; by the waves of a beach or the waters of a fountain; in a Greek pavilion; an elegant manor; even on a mountainside. Separate sessions segue seamlessly together, 'glued' by a common ambient track; ironically, the hi-fi unidirectional mic-ing often minimizes environmental elements, which are mixed in separately. Graf's playing is patently imaginative, at times tastefully reserved, at others fully extroverted, drawing on an array of found percussion implements. Her eclectic cast of musical character actors renders a satisfying pastiche of soundscapes and styles that holds up well over two discs.

On *Polisation* Lucas Niggli propels his Big Zoom quintet through a powerful set of lightly scaffolded improvisations. Joined by longtime collaborators Nils Wogram (trombone) and Philipp Schaufelberger (guitar), enhanced by the more recent addition of veteran avant improvisers Anne La Berge (flute/electronics) and Barry Guy (bass), the group's sound falls somewhere between a Grateful Dead-esque space jam and the pointillist timbral experimentation of Edgard Varèse. A sonic seismologist, Niggli shifts musical textures like tectonic plates, creating murmurs, tremors, even full-magnitude 'ear(th) quakes', particularly on the epic closing track, where mercurial musical moodswings create an unsettling otherworldly effect reminiscent of a *Twilight Zone* score.

For more information, visit [unitrecords.com](http://unitrecords.com), [altrisuoni.com](http://altrisuoni.com) and [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch). Niggli is at The Stone Mar. 1st, 2nd and 6th. See Calendar.



**Route de Frères**  
 Andrew Cyrille &  
 Haitian Fascination  
 (TUM)



**Femklang**  
 Søren Kjærgaard/Ben  
 Street/Andrew Cyrille  
 (ILK Music)

by Anders Griffen

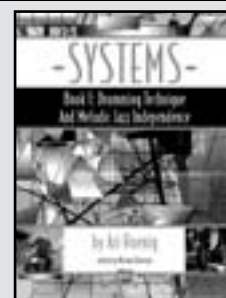
Haitian Fascination is the apt name for the unified group on *Route de Frères*. Indeed drummer Andrew Cyrille is "fascinated" with sincere exploration of his family's cultural memory. While his parents had come from Haiti, Cyrille was born in Brooklyn, first visiting the island at age seven. Likewise, the title, *Route de Frères*, or "Road of Brothers", is perfect. Even while Cyrille initiates the direction, there is a mutual feeling, a kinship among the players and the music sounds joyful. Cyrille is joined by Haitian musicians Frisner Augustin on percussion and vocals and Alix Pascal on guitar along with fellow Americans Lisle Atkinson on bass and Hamiet Bluiett on baritone saxophone and their rapport is great. The traditional song "Marinèt" opens the album and Augustin's percussion and vocals are evocative of Haitian tradition. The emphasis is on the drums rather than the cymbals, Cyrille playing cáscara clavés, patterns sounded on the drum shells, to carry the time. Pascal's acoustic guitar is beautiful, particularly on his own "Deblozay" and Cyrille's "Hope Springs Eternal". Atkinson personifies balance as he both leads and follows and has a nice arco solo on "Isaura" by Bluiett. The title track, composed in three parts, is a highlight.

*Femklang* presents a wide-open atmosphere. Pianist Søren Kjærgaard has a nice touch on the piano and a keen interest in harmony. He allows a lot of space for his notes to speak. Cyrille's melodic accompaniment adds dimension to the compositions and his performance initiates exchange. There is more of an exploratory feeling here than one of celebration. All of the compositions are attributed to Kjærgaard except "Pedestre Pantonale", which credits authorship to all three musicians (bassist Ben Street completes the trio) and also plays like one of the most collective performances on this disc. "Row No. 18", accompanied by Street's walking bassline, inspires a lively interaction as well. "The Loop, variation one" and "variation two" open and close the album. Each employs a modification on a drum pattern reminiscent of a rhythm associated with Rara Festival music from Haiti, an element that

no doubt comes from Cyrille. But the trio does not always seem to embark on common purpose. The bass is innocuous at times and the piano, in service to the compositions first, is almost superimposed over the drums. The piano rings out and the melody takes its time to unravel. Sometimes this is to great effect; "Formindskede Smuler" unfolds like a developing story. *Femklang* is the kind of album that can surprise you. On subsequent listens the tunes will reveal themselves in new ways.

For more information, visit [tumrecords.com](http://tumrecords.com) and [ilkmusic.com](http://ilkmusic.com). Cyrille is at The Stone Mar. 11th and Village Vanguard Mar. 20th-25th with Bill McHenry. See Calendar.

## IN PRINT



**Systems, Book 1: Drumming Technique  
 and Melodic Jazz Independence**  
 Ari Hoenig (s/r)  
 by Francis Lo Kee

Since the '70s there has been an explosion of instrumental instructional books. In drumming alone, books like Gary Chaffee's *Patterns* series, Jack DeJohnette & Charlie Perry's *The Art of Modern Jazz Drumming*, Ed Thigpen's *The Sound of Brushes*, Gary Chester's *The New Breed* and John Riley's *The Art of Bop Drumming* have become important pedagogical components to a drummer's study. However, because we are talking about a relatively new instrument, there is still room for evolution, maybe even revolution.

In Ari Hoenig's *Systems, Book 1*, there's a little bit of both. Perhaps the aforementioned *The New Breed* inspired Hoenig as the subtitle of Chester's book is "systems for the development of your own creativity". There are other similarities, but where the books drastically diverge is in style of music: Chester's book is geared to drummers playing rock and R&B (duple subdivision music) while Hoenig's book is addressed to jazz drummers, digging deep into the concept of "four-way coordination". Since its invention, in the USA in the early 20th century, the drumset is one of the few instruments that utilize all four limbs. Hoenig methodically lays out how a drummer can build control of the four limbs through the triplet subdivision of the beat (in 4/4 swing time).

In the introduction to the book, Hoenig states that he is aware that "many students are overwhelmed with the realization of what they cannot do.". However practicing the exercises in this book will have a musical benefit: "...an enhanced ability to improvise fluidly around a theme, which will add much greater melodic depth to your playing." Though this is a technical book for practicing drummers, the rhythmic concepts may be interesting to any instrumentalist or composer wanting a deeper understanding of polyrhythms and drumset possibilities. This is destined to be one of the essential drum instructional books.

For more information, visit [arihoenig.com](http://arihoenig.com). Hoenig is at Cornelia Street Café Mar. 3rd and 25th with Petros Klampanis and Smalls Mar. 5th, 19th and 26th. See Calendar.

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**Capsule**  
**The Landrus Kaleidoscope (Blueland)**  
 by Sharon Mizrahi



**What Is There What Is Not**  
**Luciano Biondini/Michel Godard/Lucas Niggli**  
**(Intakt)**  
 by Ken Waxman



**Clearing Customs**  
**Fred Frith (Intakt)**  
 by Marc Medwin

On the inside cover of *Capsule*, leader Brian Landrus writes in part, "I dedicate this record to all the animals in our world." A unique introduction to an equally inventive album, which, despite the succinct title, extends its reaches far and wide into the electronic, smooth and cool realms of jazz. The Landrus Kaleidoscope both blurs and strengthens the bounds between these musical forms in the blink of an eye, much to the ear's delight.

Though Rudy Royston's half-rhythmic, half-tangential drum style on the opening "Striped Phase" hints at a scattered avant garde approach, guitarist Nir Felder quickly tightens around the airy vibe. When Landrus jumps in with his bass clarinet, the enigmatic ambience takes flight. The piece, however, abruptly breaks into a free landscape of woodwind and percussion fireworks, recalling the experimentalism permeating the tune's first few seconds. Landrus ties up the loose ends in a brilliant switch to baritone sax, returning to his original stride once again.

Michael Cain grasps Landrus' riveting reins with his Rhodes piano in "Like the Wind", channeling the acidic mood of classic rock over a funk backlight. Royston's shrugging reggae rhythm tempers the electric piano's acerbic power, further subdued by bassist Matthew Parish's acoustic bellows. Though laced with subtle instrumental intricacies and bolder aural layers, the resulting dynamic is nothing short of articulate. But the icing on this seven-minute slice of sound is Landrus' bass flute, dripping like a dollop of molasses - thickly complex yet never cloyingly sweet.

Amid the crackling metamorphism, the album's most poignant track is surprisingly its sparsest one. "I Promise", tinged with just the right amount of deep soul and electronic cool, slowly grows in the hands of Royston's old school R&B beats and Landrus' balmy bass clarinet. The simmering union heats to a rolling boil as Cain's zappy chords seep their way in, magnetizing the piece with a dense luxuriousness that beckons rather than overwhelms.

For more information, visit [bluelandrecords.com](http://bluelandrecords.com). This band is at Cornelia Street Café Mar. 1st. See Calendar.

A pleasant CD that draws equally on jazz, folkloric and so-called classical influences, *What Is There What Is Not* features a trio of highly proficient European players and while the melding of the characteristic properties of Michel Godard's tuba, Luciano Biondini's accordion and Lucas Niggli's drums are satisfying enough, one wishes the latter had a more upfront role.

Likely Switzerland's most versatile contemporary drummer - heir to Pierre Favre, with whom he also performs - here, however, Niggli's rhythmic smarts and percussive profundity are not as prominent as timbres from France's Godard, who also plays bass and the tuba's ancestor, the serpent, and Italy's Biondini.

Biondini's "Powerplay" and Niggli's "Schluss", the first and final tracks, outline the trio's strategy. A happy mazurka, the former melds Godard's pedal-point slurs, the accordionist's tremolo shuddering and the drummer's paradiddles into melodic counterpoint intensified with rough beats from Niggli. Meanwhile "Schluss" descends tonally as vibrating drones from Biondini evolve in tandem with measured bops from Niggli and alphon-like reverb from Godard, which is transformed into slurred blue notes by the climax.

Godard's double-bass strokes are prominent on John Coltrane's "Naima" along with Niggli's hand-slapped, conga-like patterns. However Biondini's elaboration of the theme on pulsing bellows makes it a bit too polite and simple. Godard's arrangement of JS Bach's "Adagio in F" features the familiar theme played delicately on accordion keys, presaging slippery tonguing from the tubaist. Although the drummer's entry two-thirds of the way through, coupled with a walking bassline, confirms the swinging pulse, Biondini's interpretation may be too refined. Oddly enough it's Biondini's bouncy "Prima del Cuore" that allows Niggli the most freedom. Ruffs, flams and hearty rim shots create a staccato interface alongside Godard's flutter tonguing ostinato, adding needed oomph.

For more information, visit [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch). Niggli is at The Stone Mar. 1st, 2nd and 6th. See Calendar.

In the late '80s, Fred Frith was involved in a Heiner Goebels project for ECM called *The Man in the Elevator*, where Brazilian music alternated in rapid juxtaposition with free jazz and bursts of skuzzy downtown New York distortion. *Clearing Customs* is another seamless combination of disparate musical 'types', a 67-minute work conjuring shades of Frith's more stereotypically 'classical' compositions and an excellent survey of his stylistic development to date.

The various shades and colors of Frith's guitar work were apparent to anyone listening since 1974's groundbreaking album of guitar solos, which in turn followed hot on the heels of Henry Cow's first album. As Frith's career developed, he refined the multifarious soundworlds from those seminal records and all of that diversity is here, updated and even more dangerous. Listen to the sudden outbursts that pervade even the first three minutes of music and, yet, Frith has gone even further than that. He incorporates bygone eras of music history, as with Tilman Müller's *Bitches Brew*-era trumpet blasts. The quick rhythmic bursts, in pairs, are immediately recognizable, but their context has become international, thanks to Wu Fei's guzheng.

If the piece consisted entirely of well-executed mélange, replete with samples, that would probably be interesting enough, but then there are the more minimalist passages, reminiscent of Frith's string quartets. The first of these carries a beautiful guitar melody, peppered with tabla and muted trumpet, hanging somewhere around the 15-minute mark. Of course, it disappears as quickly as it began, in a hailstorm of traps, full-on trumpet assault and electronics. Despite numerous layers, there is never a sense of clutter, as there is with so many pieces where samples and live instruments coexist.

The album's title is apt. As similarly diatonic music returns to end the work, there is a sense of circularity, but the road traveled has also been winding; there is a feeling that the slate has been wiped clean, all customs cleared and a new music created.

For more information, visit [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch). Frith is at The Stone Mar. 1st-2nd. See Calendar.



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 Or from Downtown Music Gallery



*In Circles*  
Co Streiff-Russ Johnson Quartet (Intakt)  
by John Sharpe

Almost the first reference point that springs to mind upon hearing *In Circles* is the classic Ornette Coleman quartet from the early Atlantic sides. There is the same loose conversational jousting between alto sax and trumpet, the same folk jazz melodic bent and above all the same sense of playful fun. In fact, alluring interplay promoted by thoughtful arrangements characterizes this first album from the quartet of Swiss saxophonist Co Streiff and Brooklyn-based trumpeter Russ Johnson.

Johnson wields a bulging resume Stateside but he has also forged strong links in Switzerland with Streiff's sextet and saxophonist Tommy Meier's Root Down, also documented on the Intakt label. Streiff herself has covered similar ground, her most notable appearance being in duet with pianist Irène Schweizer. Together on this expansive live date, they play largely inside, but with outside sensibilities, thoroughly cognizant of the last 50 years of jazz history. Bassist Christian Weber propels energetically while drummer Julian Sartorius is responsive and stokes the fires. They mesh well, especially on Johnson's "The Loper", where his not-quite-random clatter stalks the stop-time bass. This funky growler also inspires its author to an anthemic solo, full of suspenseful repetition.

One of the standouts, Streiff's title track boasts an engaging theme, which provides ample meat for the soloists to chew upon in its insistent riffs and a cappella horn breaks, as evidenced by Weber's ghostly arco murmuring behind a theme restatement that expands into a vigorous bowed feature to take the tune out. "Farks Lark" finds the band at their most Ornettish; Sartorius unleashes his inner Ed Blackwell as his tuned drums form an integral part of the angular head of this crowd-pleasing set closer. Added from a studio session, the final "Confession" switches the mood for Johnson's blues-tinged sermonizing following a soulful bass intro. It's a solid debut, a great memento of a live encounter with this accomplished unit.

For more information, visit [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch). This group is at The Stone Mar. 3rd. See Calendar.



*Soul*  
Jeremy Pelt (HighNote)  
by David R. Adler

If working bands are a rarity in jazz today, trumpeter Jeremy Pelt seems not to have gotten the memo. *Soul* is his fourth album to feature the same steady quintet lineup: JD Allen (tenor sax), Danny Grissett (piano), Dwayne Burno (bass) and Gerald Cleaver (drums).

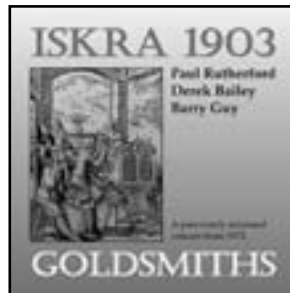
Rooted in an expansive, fiercely swinging, darkly hued sound reminiscent of Miles Davis' mid '60s quintet, Pelt's group still has its own identity and how could it not? These are leading players of our day, genuine personalities with bands of their own and as a

unit they have a way of reaching beyond themselves. *Soul* is their first collection devoted mainly (but not wholly) to ballads. One could say that it burns at a lower temperature than Pelt's previous efforts, but it burns nonetheless. The program, once again, is mostly originals, although the quintet reworks George Cables' "Sweet Rita Suite", a waltz with an alluring piano/bass intro and a fine muted-trumpet turn. "Moondrift", a lesser-known Sammy Cahn tune with a shining guest vocal by Philadelphia's Joanna Pascale, is concise and perfectly placed, a gratifying departure.

The six remaining titles are Pelt's and beautifully done. "Second Love", the opener, is deeply meditative, a model of harmonic subtlety. The closing "Tonight...", featuring Pelt in quartet mode without Allen, has a gentle but persistent rolling tempo anchored by Cleaver on mallets. While the music is horn-driven to a large extent, Grissett dominates "The Ballad of Ichabod Crane" and solos first on both "The Story" and "The Tempest", putting the frontline on notice. He's the band's not-so-secret weapon.

With "The Tempest" and "What's Wrong Is Right", Pelt stirs it up and brings *Soul* out of the ballad realm. The former slips between agitated 6/8 and 4/4, recalling a type of heightened rhythmic ambiguity once heard from Tony Williams. The latter is a strutting midtempo blues with no chords - Grissett doesn't comp at all behind Pelt or Allen and then solos with his right hand exclusively. It's an open-ended concept that harks back to *Miles Smiles* and moves the album deeper into uncharted waters.

For more information, visit [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com). This group is at Jazz Standard Mar. 6th-7th. See Calendar.



*Goldsmiths*  
Iskra 1903 (Emanem)  
by Stuart Broomer

The early years of British free improvisation gave rise to a series of paradigm-shifting ensembles, among them AMM, John Stevens' ever-changing Spontaneous Music Ensemble and the duo of Evan Parker and Paul Lytton. Iskra 1903 - trombonist Paul Rutherford, guitarist Derek Bailey and bassist Barry Guy - belongs on that list. Named for a newspaper edited by Lenin in Zurich in 1903 ("Iskra" means "spark"), the group embodied a libertarian, collectivist music that dispensed with past structural references with the descriptive term "non-idiomatic".

Apart from live performances, the group's reputation long depended on one brilliant 1972 recording on Incus, since reissued and supplemented on a three-CD set called *Chapter 1*. *Goldsmiths* presents a previously unreleased performance by the group recorded at the London college of the same name. 40 years later the music may be less surprising than it was in March 1972, but it's still fresh and brilliant. This is genuinely free collective improvisation: lead voices may emerge at times, but it's rare that you'll want to follow a single part for an extended period. Instead it's the constant weaving of parts, the way one line will complement or even finish another, the sense of microtonal shifts and adjustments as lines fuse and disperse and one nuance inflects another. There's an uncanny collective wisdom around matters of dynamics and density, a split-second responsiveness to one another's impulses and disconnections.

The opening half-hour dialogue, titled "Cohesion

1A", is the most expansive work here, setting a pattern for detailed interaction and shifting sonics that will give rise to later textural interludes. While Bailey and Guy are both amplified, it's not simply a matter of making them louder; instead, there's an acute sense of bringing near-silent sonic events into the foreground of the band's on-going patterns of response, contradiction and reconciliation. This is a masterwork of early English free improvisation and an excellent introduction to a great band.

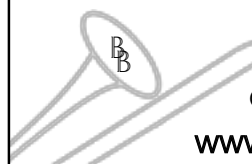
For more information, visit [emanemdisc.com](http://emanemdisc.com). Derek Bailey tributes are at Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center Mar. 5th and Downtown Music Gallery Mar. 18th. See Calendar.

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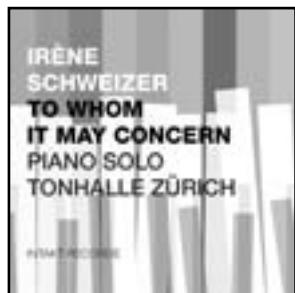
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**To Whom It May Concern**  
(Piano Solo)  
Tonhalle Zürich  
Irène Schweizer (Intakt)



**JUMP!**  
(featuring Irène Schweizer)  
Jürg Wickihalder  
European Quartet (Intakt)

by Ken Waxman

Born in 1941, Swiss pianist Irène Schweizer - part of the generation of Europeans who first mastered modern jazz - was imbued with African music played by expatriates such as Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim) and quickly plunged into energy music alongside pioneers like German saxophonist Peter Brötzmann and countryman drummer Pierre Favre. Since then her playing partners have ranged from drummer Hamid Drake and bassist Joëlle Léandre to up-and-coming Swiss improvisers including saxist Jürg Wickihalder.

One of those rare celebratory concerts that lives up to expectations, *To Whom It May Concern*, Schweizer's solo recital celebrating her 70th birthday, convincingly exposes every facet of her talents. The 10 tunes recorded in Zurich's Tonehalle demonstrate the iconoclastic pianist's command of her chosen idiom.

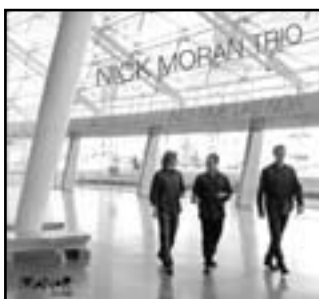
"Jungle Beat III/The Train and the River" is a new version of her vibrating composition matched with Jimmy Giuffrè's folksy classic, with its theme slowed down to emphasize drama. Her strong left-hand accents on "Homage to Don Cherry" owe as much to such honky-tonk specialists as Meade Lux Lewis as the late trumpeter's World music. Note the key pressure she brings to Monk's "Four In One", pinpointing the composer's child-like innocence that translates into sardonic jocularity. Schweizer's own compositions, often played staccato, tremolo and with contrasting dynamics, logically mate techniques, tradition and transcendence.

Bonding over a mutual appreciation for the music of Monk and Steve Lacy, Schweizer and Wickihalder have played together regularly over the past decade. The fine quartet session *JUMP!* is the result of their mutual respect and accommodation. Seconded by steadfast Swiss bassist Fabian Gisler and subtle and inventive German drummer Michael Griener, the group cycles through originals by the saxophonist. The frontline players' musical rapport conclusively dissolves their approximately 40-year age difference. Schweizer's experience means she knew Lacy as a peer while Wickihalder studied with him. That familiarity

on Wickihalder's part may be the disc's shortcoming however. There are points at which the sound of his soprano is not individual enough. Griener's cymbal slaps, triangle pings and rim shots lighten those junctures when Schweizer's tremolo keyboard command threatens to overpower the others while his clinks, rolls and ruffs provide a steady foundation over which Wickihalder's vibrated whistles and multiphonics can soar without profoundly altering the themes isolated in the pianist's intricate licks.

Key tracks are the brief "6243D (armstand back double somersault 1,5 twists free position)" and the extended and appropriately titled "High Wire Dancer". As properly timed as a gymnast's routine, the former gives Schweizer space to interpolate a couple of Monk quotes alongside her pounding and key clipping while Wickihalder finally transcends Lacy's influence. Symbolically describing an improviser's skill, "High Wire Dancer" has a safety net in the pianist's continuous, percussive cascades. Meanwhile the reedist melds double tonguing and reed bites into a horn-shaking, almost-Oriental-sounding ending with a series of discursive squeals and quacks.

For more information, visit [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch). Schweizer is at The Stone Mar. 9th with Jürg Wickihalder, Mar. 10th in duo with Pierre Favre and 11th in duo with Andrew Cyrille. See Calendar.



**No Time Like Now**  
Nick Moran Trio (Manor Sound)  
by Sharon Mizrahi

*No Time Like Now* paves a road of beautifully unusual melodies that take the senses for a spin. Guitarist Nick Moran, organist Brad Whiteley and drummer Chris Benham mix, mingle and argue with the lively ease of casual conversation, dancing between the worlds of assertion and laissez-faire.

"Strange Brew", the first of nine tracks composed entirely by Moran, makes no haste as it breezes forth on Benham's funky sails. Crisp rhythm sends electrifying waves of pure groove down to the crannies of the soul and tips of the toes. When Whiteley blares his acid-tinged organ chords alongside Moran's billowing guitar streams, a quick jig or shake of the shoulders is inevitable. The trio's gregarious vibe softens to ethereal reflection in the title track. Moran takes a turn for the pensive, assuming the aural consistency of lace. His gentle melody floats with a nostalgic lilt amid misty cymbal clouds. The divine air lands its feet upon Whiteley's deeper sound, absorbing the organ's density on its way to solid ground. "Natalya" uncovers the darker side of Moran's melancholy, echoing the title track's thoughtful mood with brooding, nearly elegiac undertones.

Peppering the band's spectrum of hearty jams and pondering tunes is a slice of experimental adventure in "The Physicist Transformed". The piece nestles in the palms of both free improvisation and reasoned structure. While Benham retreats as a subtly rhythmic force, Moran and Whiteley exchange refrains with hypnotic regularity. All three musicians opt for implicit harmony rather than headstrong fireworks in the indirectly complex work, perhaps illustrating virtuosity in rarest form: as a peaceful passion that burns with innovative balance and artful restraint.

For more information, visit [manorsound.com](http://manorsound.com). Moran is at Bar Next Door Mar. 9th and The Garage Mar. 29th. See Calendar.



**White Sickness**  
Scoolptures (Leo)  
by Stuart Broomer

Scoolptures is an Italian improvising quartet that mixes traditional instrumentation with a good deal of live signal processing. Bassist (and group founder) Nicola Nigrini and drummer Philippe Garcia use live electronics while Antonio Della Marini plays sine waves and live electronics. Alto saxophonist and bass clarinetist Achille Succi, the central voice in the ensemble's work, isn't processing his signal, but others certainly are: at times he appears in multiple.

The moods of the music can be gauged by the title phrase. It's taken from the late Portuguese novelist Jose Saramago's *Blindness*, a dystopian fantasy in which all but one member of a nameless society become suddenly and unaccountably blind. Scoolptures matches the grim intensity of the novel with a kind of elemental minimalism, an eerie soundscape suddenly broken by unexpected blasts. Succi's lines are sometimes almost evanescent, at other times reduced to sustained, machine-like multiphonics. The group provides a theatrical backdrop to that central focus, whether it's with drum punctuations or electronic squiggles, arriving at points like "Dodicidue", where the assembling field of sound around Succi's alto suggests both labyrinth and Minotaur.

Succi and Nigrini possess striking timbres. Succi's alto is capable of a painful lyricism and his warmly liquid bass clarinet can take sudden flight into buzzing overtones. Nigrini makes a fine lead voice as well, whether it's the reassuring fullness of his subtle pizzicato lines or the brilliance of his upper register bowing, marked by a cello-like vibrato. When the music emphasizes the acoustic duo of Succi and Nigrini, as on "Undicidue" and "Seidue", the sense of responsive close listening and free jazz is strong. Making maximum use of its live electronics, though, as on "Tredicidue", the group can turn Succi into a sax quartet that combines energy music blowout with the icy electronics of the band's methodology. It's thoughtful work, simultaneously achieving psychodrama and a coolly abstract perspective.

For more information, visit [leorecords.com](http://leorecords.com). Achille Succi is at The Stone Mar. 13th with Jürg Wickihalder. See Calendar.



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