

JAZZ & BLUES

APRIL 2009

F L O R I D A

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES



Sonny Rollins



Lynne Arriale



Branford Marsalis



Davis & Dow



Groove Thangs



Juan de Marcos



Shelly Berg



Alfredo Triff



Dena DeRose



Dave Hubbard



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WINNING SPINS

By Bill Meredith

PIANIST LYNNE ARRIALE'S TRIO

averaged nearly a release per year after she started her recording career in 1993. So something had obviously changed when the follow-up to her 2006 live CD was delayed until 2009. In the interim, the Milwaukee-born, Jacksonville-based pianist parted ways with the very simpatico rhythm section of bassist Jay Anderson and drummer Steve Davis. But she also came up with changes that made her new CD/DVD release, *Nuance — The Bennett Studio Sessions* (Motema), worth the wait. It features the new rhythm section of veteran bassist George Mraz and young drumming phenom Anthony Pinciotti, plus guest trumpet ace Randy Brecker.

The CD opens with Arriale's moody arrangement of Sting's "Wrapped Around Your Finger," a mid-1980s pop hit for The Police, before taking a 180° turn through Thelonious Monk's playful "I Mean You." The one-two punch showcases both the pianist's interpretive skills and Brecker's broad range as a soloist. Arriale wanted another lead player in the band and certainly got one in Brecker, who takes the disparate pieces to poignant depths and energetic heights.

Arriale's compositional skills then come to the fore. Her ballad "Longing," and the subsequent, New Orleans-flavored "Crawfish & Gumbo," spotlight very different aspects of her writing — not to mention how effortlessly the rhythm section wraps itself around both moods. Mraz's melodic sensibilities and Pinciotti's mallet work provide the perfect shading on the ballad. The rhythm team then plays a shell game with the meter of "Crawfish & Gumbo," allowing Arriale and Brecker to flex considerable bop muscles in their respective solos.

Tommy Wolf's "Ballad of the Sad Young Men" makes for another tranquil highlight. Mraz's sparse bass line and stately solo, and Pinciotti's mallets and cymbal flourishes, set up Brecker's pleading muted trumpet and allow Arriale to display the harmonic nuances for which her new release was named.

The pianist also composed two of the set's most energetic numbers. On "La Noche," Pinciotti's percolating drumming pushes solos by Brecker and Arriale. The New York City drummer likely had the toughest transition into Arriale's group when he replaced



LYNNE ARRIALE

Davis, whose unique approach and personable style made him an invaluable part of Arriale's sound and presentation.

Pinciotti's soloing over the band's ending vamp puts an exclamation point on "La Noche," and he starts out the whimsical "Yada Yada Yada" on brushes before switching to sticks. His wavelike rolls coax Arriale into a spiked array of chordal colors that make up her best solo of the CD. The piece then ends like it began, with a series of stuttered, Monk-like two-note phrases.

The live-in-the-studio DVD offers extended versions of all 11 songs, in nearly the same running order. Like the CD, this disc

WINNING SPINS

was captured inside Bennett Studios near New York City, and the polite crowd certainly doesn't incite raucous performances. Rather, the live versions of the songs stay quite true to their recorded counterparts, albeit with longer solos.

Brecker takes full advantage of the live setting, elevating certain pieces beyond their CD interpretations. His clean, swinging trumpet lines give Arriale's "Carry On" an additional swagger visually, and his articulate flugelhorn adds extra clarity to the somber "Longing." It's interesting to watch a band — which had never played together as a unit before it recorded — interpret on the fly. So if anything, the one-take concert DVD offers a unique contrast to the multi-take studio CD. Bonus interviews with each band member, plus producer Suzi Reynolds, illustrate how many tries Arriale insisted on to give each piece on the CD its final, singular nuance.

South Florida Jazz presents **The Lynne Arriale Quartet, featuring Randy Brecker, George Mraz and Anthony Pinciotti, 8PM Saturday, April 11 at the Miniaci Performing Arts Center in Davie. For more information, call 877-311-SHOW or visit Southfloridajazz.org.**



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DAVE HUBBARD
FIRE ROCK RESTAURANT, WPB/APRIL 17

Tenor saxophonist Dave Hubbard has a discography of more than 50 albums, and has played with the likes of Ray Charles, Patti LaBelle, George Benson and Roy Haynes. Hubbard started playing professionally at age 13 in his native Maryland with the Baltimore Municipal Band, and was subsequently hired by R&B star Maxine Brown in 1960. The saxophonist later added his soulful sound to sessions by adventurous crossover artists, including keyboardists Les McCann, Charles Earland and Dr. Lonnie Smith. Hubbard's own recordings also navigate traditional jazz, fusion and beyond. Since moving from New York City to South Florida in the mid-1990s, he's become



a frequent guest performer at Fire Rock Restaurant with its house band, the Susan Merritt Trio. **BM**

SHELLY BERG with JIGGS WHIGHAM
BROWARD CENTER, Ft. LAUDERDALE/APRIL 1

With a bright, buoyant sound, jazz pianist Shelly Berg interprets a wide spectrum of popular song. On his 2005 trio recording *Blackbird*, he lyrically improvises on the music of everyone from Billy Strayhorn and Pat Metheny to The Beatles and Billy Joel. This Catholic approach surely serves him well as Dean of the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. Over the past two years, the veteran educator and performer has been quite active on the South Florida concert scene, as he raises funds for and awareness of the revered institution. For this Gold Coast Jazz Society performance, Berg teams up with Cleveland, Ohio-born trombonist Jiggs Whigham, whose long career



includes stints with the bands of Stan Kenton, Maynard Ferguson, Thad Jones-Mel Lewis and Freddie Hubbard, among numerous others. Berg and Whigham will be backed by the ever-swingin' Gold Coast Jazz Society Band, led by saxophonist Eric Allison. **BW**

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**BRANFORD MARSALIS QUARTET
GUSMAN CENTER, MIAMI/APRIL 4**

The chemistry and camaraderie of the Branford Marsalis Quartet is unmistakable. On *Metamorphosen*, the group's excellent new recording, the bandmates challenge and complement one another in a variety of modern-jazz settings. Each musician contributes compositions to the session, making for a varied program that reflects the respective personalities of drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts, bassist Eric Rivas, pianist Joey Calderazzo and saxophonist Marsalis. Echoes of Monk abound, as the foursome digs in on a righteous redo of "Rhythm-a-Ning" and perfectly executes the push-pull rhythms of "Sphere," Rivas' tip of the porkpie hat to the idiosyncratic bop icon. The eldest of the Marsalis brothers, Branford has flirted with the pop world in high-profile gigs with Sting and The Tonight Show Band, but ultimately returned to his first passion: straight-ahead jazz. In recent years, he's released some of the best music of his career on his own Marsalis Music imprint. **BW**



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**JUAN DE MARCOS AFRO-CUBAN ALL STARS
SUNRISE THEATRE, Ft. PIERCE/APRIL 7
KRAVIS CENTER, WPB/APRIL 8
TAMPA BAY PAC, TAMPA/APRIL 9
ARSHT CENTER, MIAMI/APRIL 11**

Crisp brass articulation and sizzling, irresistible Latin grooves are hallmarks of the Afro-Cuban All Stars, an exciting multigenerational group led by veteran drummer Juan De Marcos Gonzalez. The unit first recorded in 1997, as part of the Buena Vista Social Club sessions, showcasing the talents of group members ranging from teens to octogenarians. The Havana-born Gonzalez, who had co-founded the influential Sierra Maestra band in the mid-'70s, recruited heroes such as pianist Ruben Gonzalez and vocalist Pio Leyva, as well as the cream of the crop of young Cuban players for the recording, *A Toda Cuba Le Gusta*, which brought them worldwide acclaim. The popularity of traditional Cuban music soared on the island as well, as listeners rediscovered their roots. **BW**



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DAVIS AND DOW QUINTET
featuring FEDERICO BRITOS
HOLLYWOOD BEACH THEATER/APRIL 9
AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY, DELRAY/APRIL 16
NORTHWOOD VILLAGE, WPB/APRIL 24

Davie-based vocalist Julie Davis and guitarist Kelly Dow usually perform as a jazz duo, but they offer just as much verve and energy with a full band. Expect fireworks when the husband-and-wife team adds the rhythm section of bassist Paul Shewchuck and drummer Orlando Hernandez — plus Uruguayan violin master Federico Britos — for this “Full Moon Jazz Night Concert Series” presentation. On the duo’s new CD, *Loverly*, Davis scats, sings torchy numbers and injects plenty of personality into standards



and originals while accompanied by Dow’s nimble, orchestral guitar work. Britos, who’s at home playing jazz, Latin or classical music, combines all of those styles as only he can while guesting on three tracks. **BM**

ALFREDO TRIFF TRIO
COLONY THEATRE, MIAMI BEACH/APRIL 18

On his 2007 recording *Boleros Perdidos*, Alfredo Triff explores the musical and psychological terrain of being up late and alone, which takes on additional poignancy in the romantic tropical paradise of Miami. Not that the pleasures of the Magic City are lost on the Havana-born violinist and composer, but his world-weary take implies that he’s yearning for more than the earthly delights that he’s abundantly sampled. Blending nostalgic Cuban styles such as son, danzon and rumba with an avant-garde sensibility, Triff creates mesmerizing mini musical dramas that have made him a favorite among critics and audiences. For this Tigertail Productions performance,



he’ll be joined by trio mates Alex Berti and Daniel Ponce, on bass and congas respectively, as well as Miami spoken-word artists Adrian Castro and Rosie Inguanzo, and richly emotive Miami singer Roberto Poveda. **BW**

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CHRIS BOTTI

**PEABODY, DAYTONA BEACH/APRIL 16
VAN WEZEL HALL, SARASOTA/APRIL 23
KRAVIS CENTER, WPB/APRIL 25
FILLMORE THEATER, MIAMI/APRIL 26
RUTH ECKERT HALL, CLEARWATER/APRIL 28**

Trumpeter Chris Botti may have risen to fame through working with pop stars like Paul Simon and Sting, but don't dismiss his jazz pedigree. The Oregon native studied in the renowned Indiana University music program, then received on-the-job training with ex-Miles Davis saxophonist George Coleman and trumpet titan Woody Shaw after moving to New York City. Botti's pop session work included legends like Bob Dylan and Aretha Franklin, and the trumpeter also has fusion skeletons



in his closet: the 1998-'999 CDs *Upper Extremities* and *Blue Nights* by a quartet with drummer Bill Bruford, bassist Tony Levin and guitarist David Torn. Botti actually plays practically every style because he's one of the few musicians who can, something he proved on *Italia*, his traditional 2007 CD for Columbia. **BM**

DENA DEROSE TRIO

HARRIET THEATRE, WPB/APRIL 28

Of all the singing instrumentalists in jazz, Dena DeRose may have taken the most circuitous route toward such double-duty. She was working solely as a pianist in the mid-1980s before encountering a combination of carpal tunnel syndrome and arthritis that required surgery — and two years away from the piano. During that hiatus, when dared by friends to sing a number at a jazz club, DeRose discovered the other side of her talent. By 1991, she was fully recovered as a player, excelling as a singer and working as both. For this Jazz Arts Music Society concert, DeRose's trio includes bassist Martin Wind and drummer Matt Wilson. It's the same lineup featured on



her latest MaxJazz CD, *Live at the Jazz Standard Vol. 2*. **BM**

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"[Triff mines] that tension of being both compelled by and standing back from nostalgia."
-The Miami Herald



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GROOVE THANGS

BOSTON'S ON THE BEACH, DELRAY/APRIL 14 ALLIGATOR ALLEY, OAKLAND PARK/APRIL 17 "Lazy Strokes," "Koko," "Catch You Later." If these song titles slap a goofy grin on your mug, you likely were among the rabid fans who followed South Florida's own Groove Thangs in the 1980s and '90s. Combining soul, funk and more than a touch of Caribbean jerk spices, Groove Thangs' music was irresistible, thanks to the singular vision of the Stacey brothers. The ecstatic soul vocals of "Down Pat" and the incredibly versatile lead guitar of "Bonefish Johnny" made for a potent blend, especially on their genre-mashing original tunes which looked for inspiration to the likes of James Brown, Wayne Cochran and any number of garage and beach music bands. While personnel shifted over the years, bassists Carl "Kilmo" Pacillo, drummer Tim Kuchta and saxophonist Jeff Watkins often comprised the classic GT lineup. Down Pat now lives in New York, but he'll return for these



reunion shows this month, as the band celebrates 25 years of hut-rockin' s h a c k music. **BW**

JAZZ & BLUES

FLORIDA

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES

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SONNY ROLLINS: SAXOPHONE COLOSSUS

by Bob Weinberg

STRIDING THE STAGE OF AN ANCIENT

Roman amphitheater, Sonny Rollins seems completely at ease. Attired in scarlet slacks, a loose-fitting black shirt and white tennis shoes, his chiseled features framed by sunglasses and a snowy beard, the iconic saxophonist truly appears to be enjoying himself. Prowling the lip of the stage, he unfurls one mighty solo after another to the delight of the 7,000 attendees of the 2006 Jazz à Vienne festival in Southern France.

This vigorous performance was documented on the recently released DVD, *Sonny Rollins in Vienne*, providing more evidence that the 78-year-old Saxophone Colossus remains a vital presence in the jazz world. Refusing to indulge in nostalgia, Rollins forges a fresh ensemble sound alongside longtime bandmates who pretty much breathe as one. That sound — and many of the same players — also receive a stellar showcase on the compilation CD *Sonny Rollins, Road Shows, Vol. 1*. The disc, which topped many jazz critics' best of 2008 lists, consists of previously unreleased live performances culled from shows spanning 27 years and three continents.

While some insist there are no second acts in show biz, Rollins has proved a gleeful exception. In the late '40s and early '50s, his brawny, insinuating sound impressed band-leaders such as Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk, all of whom employed the young, Harlem-raised talent. Before long, Rollins was leading his own sessions. Recordings such as *Saxophone Colossus* and *Freedom Suite* established him as one of the hottest jazz stars of the day.

Then, in 1959, at the height of his fame, he walked away from it all. During a three-year sabbatical, Rollins could sometimes be seen, or heard, practicing on the Williamsburg Bridge in Brooklyn. In 1961, Rollins returned in spectacular fashion with *The Bridge*, one of his most-beloved recordings, and continued to record in a variety of settings for RCA and then Impulse.

In 1969, Rollins again went into self-imposed exile. When he returned, he signed with the Milestone label, crafting a new approach that on the surface seemed the antithesis to his often-cerebral playing of the past. Sunny, exuberant and full of color, Rollins' sound embraced funk and R&B, as well as the bright, bouncy Calypso rhythms he had grown up with as the son of Caribbean immigrants. A Milestone mainstay for more than 30 years, Rollins crowned his tenure at



SONNY ROLLINS

the label with the 2005 release *Without a Song*, which earned him a Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Solo.

Subtitled "The 9/11 Concert," *Without a Song* was indeed recorded just days after the World Trade Center assaults. Rollins and his wife, Lucille, maintained an apartment just blocks from Ground Zero, and Rollins happened to be staying there on that fateful day. Later that week, he traveled to Boston, where the concert was recorded, the emotions still raw and the need for such a cathartic event likely acute for both audience and performers.

Although Rollins has undergone some rough times — including Lucille's death in 2004 — his playing remains joyful and life-affirming. The master himself believes that age has placed some limits on his chops, but his mind remains agile as he probes whatever area of a melody entices him, turns it inside out and examines it thoroughly in chorus after chorus. Add to that a supporting cast of veteran bassist Bob Cranshaw, guitarist Bobby Broom, and trombonist-nephew Clifton Anderson, and Rollins continues to be one of the must-see acts in jazz.

Sonny Rollins performs 8PM April 18 at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in Miami. Call 305-949-6722 or visit Arshtcenter.org.

JUNE 5 & 6

Wanee



MUSIC FESTIVAL
LIVE OAK • FLORIDA

40th
Anniversary!

Alman Brothers Band

Gov't Mule ♣ The Doobie Brothers
Toots And The Maytals ♣ Little Feat
Umphey's McGee ♣ Susan Tedeschi ♣ Arc Angels
The Wallers ♣ Drive-By Truckers
Bill Kreutzmann *featuring* Otell Burbridge and Scott Murawski
Keller Williams ♣ Grace Potter and The Nocturnals
Jorma Kaukonen ♣ Jalmoe's Jassz Band
Ivan Neville's Dumpstaphunk
Col. Bruce Hampton & The Quark Alliance
The Lee Boys with Otell Burbridge ♣ Hill Country Revue
Devon Allman's Honeytribe ♣ Bonobos Convergence
Mocean Worker ♣ Blowing Trees

SPECIAL FRIDAY MIDNIGHT PERFORMANCE

The Derek Trucks Band

Don't Miss the Wanee Kick Off Party, Thursday, 6/4 with

THE RADIATORS

ON SITE CAMPING!

Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park

WaneeFestival.com

LIVE OAK • FLORIDA

POWERED BY
LIVE NATION

TICKETS AT **MUSICTODAY.COM**