

Lightnin' Malcolm & Cedric Burnside

Jason Hainsworth of Miami Jazz Collective

Nick Curran

THE JAMIE OUSLEY TRIO

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Jamie Ousley, bass Joe Davidian, piano Austin McMahon, drums

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WINNING SPINS

By Bob Weinberg

BOBBY STRINGER KNOWS A THING OR TWO about juke joints. The veteran Miami soul singer has performed in a few of the raucous, remote venues over the years, lending authenticity to his tune "Over in the Woods," which kicks off his new CD I'm Not To Blame. "They had these little spots down in Goulds, where they had Brown's Lounge," he remembers. "And in Homestead, they had King's. They weren't in the woods, but they were down—way, way away—and people would come from miles around, if they had the right name."

Certainly, Stringer was one of the right names. Night after night, he built his rep as a dynamic entertainer in the clubs of his native Coconut Grove, Overtown and Liberty City. The juke he sings about in "Over in the Woods," however, was not in South Florida, but rather in Alabama. Johnny's Place drew audiences from all over the South and was owned by Johnny Collins, the father of Stringer's wife, Bernice Stringer. The couple co-wrote the song, and its sinuous backbeat, heated vocals and snippets of dialog capture the giddy anticipation of an evening out at such an establishment.

While *I'm Not To Blame* contains its share of sensuous Southern soul and R&B, it also features straight-up down-home blues. In the spoken intro to the Mitchell-Scales-Robinson tune "Blues Is in the House," Stringer calls out all the "closet blues lovers." This party-hearty anthem, complete with sultry female backup singers, proves that the blues needn't be a buzz kill.

On the stunning, self-penned slow-burner, "I've Been Trying To Get Next to You," Stringer shows just how deeply he can dig into the marrow of the blues. "I've been trying to get next to you, baby, but your mind is too strong," he sings in a pleading vocal. "You said the last love you had did you wrong, that's why we can't get it on." Bassist Vinnie Fontana and drummer Guido Marciano lay down a beat as thick and smoky as Tom Jenkins' barbecue, while guitarist Jimi Fiano icepicks snaky leads that stab right at the emotional core of the tune and underline Stringer's taut vocals. Fiano keeps the spotlight on the singer,



BOBBY STRINGER

and his solo at about the two-and-a-half-minute mark is a marvel of concision.

Fans of the Malaco sound of Little Milton and Bobby "Blue" Bland will enjoy tracks such as "Somebody Else's Somebody," a catchy yet cautionary tale of the heavy price exacted on cheating lovers. On the title ballad, Stringer expertly supplies his own backup singing—as well as a Barry White-style spoken interlude—and the song is further layered with synth strings and the double-tracked saxophones of Stan Waldman.

As he has on previous releases, Stringer also reprises his 1970s single, "Before You." Fiano and the rhythm sec once again show their versatility, this time laying down irresistible dance grooves, with Waldman's horns the perfect complement.

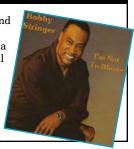
Like the blues, the church is deeply embedded in Stringer's DNA. This is especially evident on the concluding "Brand New Me," which features a lilting female chorus as Stringer testifies to the transformative nature of true love. The singer induces shivers as the band drops out and, accompanied solely by piano,

WINNING SPINS

he declares his love for the woman who saved him. Then, the band comes back in and the song builds to an ecstatic finish.

Throughout, Stringer sounds as potent as ever, even as he awaits a kidney transplant. A South Florida treasure, he continues to give all he's got in service of the music he loves.

An Evening of Jazz and Blues featuring Jesse Jones Jr. and Bobby Stringer takes place at 8PM on Sept. 5 at the South County Civic Center, 16700 Jog Rd, Delray Beach. Tickets cost \$45, with dinner. Call (561) 495-9813.





For Press Releases, CD Reviews, Advertising Info or Listings, contact our Main Office at 561.313.7432 or PO. Box 2614, Palm Beach, FL 33480

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SPOTLIGHT

NICK CURRAN THE BACK ROOM, BOCA RATON/SEPT. 5

Guitarist and vocalist Nick Curran got his first professional experience at age 15, playing in his father's blues band while growing up in Portland, Maine. But the fledgling artist was a rock 'n' roller at heart, something he's made more obvious on his most recent recordings. Curran truly found his dual callings in Texas in his early 20s, soaking up the blues in Dallas and the roots-music scene in Austin. His 2003 blues release, *Doctor Velvet*, featured guest appearances by guitarist Jimmie Vaughan, and Curran's band Nick and the Nitelifes continued to tour through 2005. But his current update, Nick and the Lowlifes,



showcases the element of his playing that the blues couldn't corral—speed. Tracks like the autobiographical "Rocker," "Women and Cadillacs" and "Heeby Jeebies" add warp-speed rockabilly and early rock 'n' roll influences to his gritty, yowling vocals, creating a 21st-century hybrid of Little Richard and T.Bone Walker. BM

BRENDA ALFORD & FRIENDS THE VAN DYKE CAFE, MIAMI BEACH/SEPT. 6

Brenda Alford met jazz-singer extroardinaire Ella Fitzgerald in 1978 in Baltimore. She was so inspired by the encounter that three days later, she embarked on her own career as a jazz vocalist. Now based in South Florida, and a product of the University of Miami music program, Alford's most-recent CD shows true Ella-like versatility. My Favorite Things also features steel drummer Othello Molineaux's quartet with pianist Mike Gerber, bassist Nicky Orta and drummer Ernesto Simpson Jr. The foursome backs Alford on a pleading version of Rodgers and Hart's "My Funny Valentine," an exquisite vocal take of Sonny Rollins'



bebop classic "Oleo" and a reading of Marvin Gaye's hit "What's Going On." For her no-covercharge performance at the Van Dyke, which is part of the Sunshine Jazz Organization's Jazz Nite Out series, Alford will be accompanied by pianist Brian Murphy, bassist Jamie Ousley and drummer Orlando Hernandez. BM







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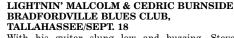
SPOTLIGHT

MIAMI JAZZ COLLECTIVE BASS MUSEUM OF ART, MIAMI BEACH SEPT. 11 AND SEPT. 18

Saxophonist Jason Hainsworth (shown below) and guitarist Fernando Ulibarri provide heady leadership to the Miami Jazz Collective. Hainsworth is the director of jazz ensembles and saxophone instruction at Broward Community College in Davie. Ulibarri is also an instructor at BCC, as well as at Miami's SoBe Music Institute and New World School of the Arts, where the Collective's pianist, Jim Gasior, is head of the jazz department. The all-star lineup is rounded out by teenage-bass phenom Carlos Alabazi, who plays with Miami legend Ira Sullivan, and versatile



veteran drummer John Yarling, who plays with... well... everybody. Expect material from Hainsworth's 2009 CD Kaleidoscope, which features his originals and standards. The quintet will also play compositions by Costa Rica native Ulibarri, Berklee College of Music grad who books the Bass Museum of Art's Friday "Hot Nights, Cool Jazz"



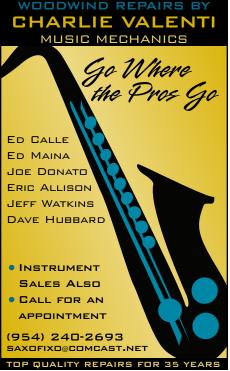
With his guitar slung low and buzzing, Steve "Lightnin" Malcolm pinballed about the asphalt during the 2008 Chicago Blues Festival, sonically calling up the memory of his two greatest influences: Junior Kimbrough and R. L. Burnside. His vocals proved nearly as potent, as he yowled Kimbrough's "All Night Long" and Burnside's "Jumper on the Line," accompanied solely by R.L.'s grandson, Cedric Burnside, who traded vocals with the guitarist and kept the crowd boogying with his expert Hill Country cadences. That same year, the pair released the aptly titled 2 Man Wrecking Crew and showed how



much they learned those North from Mississippi masters. Working out on a set of original groovers, Malcolm and Burnside update the Hill Country sound, retaining the mesmerizing majesty of their forebears, but sounding completely contemporary. Based on the strength of the CD, the team scooped up a Blues Music Award for Best Artist Debut. On-stage, they're even more powerful. BW



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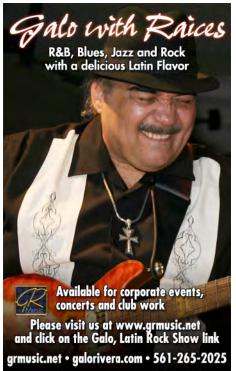




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