

JAZZ & BLUES

F L O R I D A

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES



Mark O'Connor



Terry Hanck



Marcia Ball



Simone Kopmajer



The Manhattan Transfer



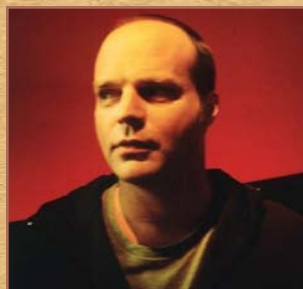
Turk Mauro



Cyrus Chestnut



Nico Wayne Toussaint



John Medeski

WINNING SPINS

By Bob Weinberg

DURING ITS 40-YEAR history, The Manhattan Transfer has plied its trademark harmonies and finely honed jazz sensibilities in a variety of settings. From nostalgic jukebox nuggets like “Tuxedo Junction,” to poppy disco-era hits (remember “Twilight Zone”?), to a sonically adventurous salute to Louis Armstrong, the Transfer has refused to remain in stasis. (The group’s 1985 release *Vocalese* tips a cap to Jon Hendricks, who pioneered the vocalese form and will perform along with the Transfer and The New York Voices at the Arsht Center in Miami on January 15.)

And certainly the quartet of Tim Hauser, Janis Siegel, Alan Paul and Cheryl Bentyne—the lineup since Bentyne joined in 1978—continues to seek challenges, which is evident in their ambitious new release, *The Chick Corea Songbook*. While Corea represents one of modern-jazz’s most-revered figures, his compositions are often quite lyrical. This is most obvious in songs he penned for his seminal fusion group Return to Forever, which featured Flora Purim singing poetic lyrics by Neville Potter. But the Transfer doesn’t really echo that group in any conscious way (other than the album’s packaging, which depicts familiar imagery such as castles, cosmos, doves in flight and a floating feather that alludes to RTF’s 1972 debut *Light as a Feather*.)

The Transfer puts its own spin on RTF classics, offering a fresh take on the oft-interpreted “Spain,” for instance, its sparkling arrangement and bright harmonies causing listeners to hear the tune anew. Same goes for the Transfer’s version of “500 Miles High,” one of RTF’s most durable melodies. Here, the group takes an ethereal, dreamy approach, opening with wordless, a cappella harmonies before delving into the winsome first verse, also sung in unison.



THE MANHATTAN TRANSFER

Adapted from RTF’s “Space Circus,” the reworked “Another Roadside Attraction” features swirling rounds of vocals that recall the motion of a carnival ride, as well as disorienting funhouse mirror effects, as it beckons us to “listen, listen, listen” A shout-out to Van Dyke Parks (“Van Dyke where you be/In this writing spree”) nods to the oddball musical adventurer, who collaborated with Hauser and his son, Basie Hauser, on the sly lyric.

Hauser takes the lead on Corea’s gorgeous “Time’s Lie,” offering an unaffected and lushly romantic vocal on a typically cosmic Potter lyric, and receiving subtle harmony backing from his bandmates. Fred Hersch lends both his pianistic and arranging skills to the tune, as well as to the playful “La Chanson du Bébé (Children’s Song #1),” featuring charming lyric imagery contributed by Bentyne and Siegel.

Of course, no tribute to Corea would be complete without acknowledging the Latin flavor that informs his work. In addition to the aforementioned “Spain,” the Transfer opens its salute to the jazz great with “Free Samba,” a piece Corea penned especially for the album and on which he contributes his sprightly synthesizer. Shimmering percussive

WINNING SPINS

accents, birdcalls and some bluesy electric keyboard figures start the track in the humid environs of the rain forest, which then breaks out to the sunsplashed tropical shores of Brazil. Siegel contributes lyrics and takes the lead on “The Story of Anna and Armando (Armando’s Rhumba)”—Chick’s parents—which tells how Armando won over his Anna by cooking her a magical meal in his Andalusian café.

A superb tribute, *The Chick Corea Songbook* teases out the wonder, playfulness and magnanimous spirit for which the composer is beloved. The Transfer truly sounds reenergized by the material, and the new recording marks a highpoint in their long history.



The Manhattan Transfer will perform with Jon Hendricks and The New York Voices Jan. 15 at the Arsht Center in Miami. Call 305-949-6722 or visit Arshtcenter.org.

ROCKIN' R&B REVUE

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JAN 17 ★ EARL'S HIDEAWAY/SEBASTIAN
JAN 18 ★ TO BE ANNOUNCED

THE WORD featuring JOHN MEDESKI, ROBERT RANDOLPH, NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS CULTURE ROOM, FT. LAUDERDALE/JAN. 1

If you're not departing with this collective for Jam Cruise 8, this pre-cruise party will give you a taste of how many different musical styles can be played simultaneously on dry land. The Word consists of keyboardist John Medeski, of jam-band top dogs Medeski, Martin & Wood, along with gospel pedal-steel-guitar phenom Robert Randolph and modern blues trio the North Mississippi Allstars. The band's self-titled 2001 CD showcased tracks like "Waiting on My Wings," which blended sacred music with blues and rock *a la* the Allman Brothers Band—plus additional funk and jazz in the style of Medeski's primary group. The versatile



keyboardist will lean heavily on the Hammond organ while accompanying the Allstars' Luther Dickinson on guitar and vocals, brother Cody Dickinson on drums and vocals, and Chris Chew on bass and vocals. Randolph, who was barely known in the secular music world before The Word, will provide literal high-lights with his uncanny upper-register pedal-steel runs. **BM**

CYRUS CHESTNUT TRIO – JAZZIN' ELVIS AMATURO THEATER, FT. LAUDERDALE/JAN. 13

Pianist Cyrus Chestnut's creative use of the space between notes—as opposed to an overreliance on the notes themselves—inspired *Time* magazine to name him "the best jazz pianist of his generation." Influenced by the rhythmic tendencies of Fats Waller and the unorthodoxy of Thelonious Monk, and employing the exuberance of both, Chestnut has developed a varied résumé since graduating from the Berklee College of Music in 1985. Before starting his solo recording career, the pianist worked with vocalist Jon Hendricks (see this issue's Winning Spin) and trumpeter Wynton Marsalis. Since then, he's performed with opera star Kathleen Battle and released a string of conceptual



albums including the recently released *Spirit*, a solo-piano collection of spirituals, and *Cyrus Plays Elvis*, from which this Fort Lauderdale performance takes its theme. In addition to jazz interpretations of the King, expect Chestnut, bassist Michael Hawkins and drummer Neal Smith to craft a synthesis of jazz, pop, gospel and other surprises. **BM**

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TURK MAURO
VAN DYKE CAFE, MIAMI BEACH/JAN. 27

Saxophonist Turk Mauro's career has been one of peaks and valleys. The tenor stylist switched to baritone to play in big bands led by Dizzy Gillespie and Buddy Rich between 1975 and 1979, and released his tenor debut *The Underdog* in '77. Its followup, *The Heavyweight*, further showcased Mauro's self-described specialties of "bebop, blues and ballads." But when his traditional approach stopped garnering as many gigs in his native New York City, Mauro took the advice of fellow saxophonist Sonny Rollins and moved to Paris in 1987. The relocation reignited his playing career. Since he moved to South Florida in 1994 to care for his aging father, Mauro has released



the critically acclaimed Milestone CDs *Hittin' the Jug* and *The Truth*. For his show at the Van Dyke, Mauro will perform with South Florida all-star siblings Mike Orta on piano and Nicky Orta on bass, plus veteran drummer Danny Burger, to offer further truthful jazz testimony. **BM**

MARK O'CONNOR
WELLINGTON COMMUNITY
HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE/JAN. 31

Few violinists would attempt an unaccompanied solo recital, but Mark O'Connor has played by his own rules over the course of an eclectic 35-year career. He started out playing guitar, but soon mastered mandolin and violin, as well. Still in his teens, he toured with legendary French violinist Stephane Grappelli. In 1982, O'Connor joined the Dixie Dregs, recording and touring as both a violinist and guitarist with the heralded fusion outfit. His solo career has since yielded gems such as 1993's *Heroes*, on which he performed with influences like Grappelli, Benny Thomasson and Jean-Luc Ponty. O'Connor's most recent releases have ranged from the



high-octane playing of his *Hot Swing Trio* to orchestral efforts like *Americana Symphony*. Released on his own OMAC label, the latter features the violinist performing variations on his "Appalachia Waltz" with the Baltimore Symphony. As on the recording, O'Connor's Wellington concert will showcase his masterful blend of classical, folk, bluegrass, jazz and country music. **BM**

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Saturday 9.....	Bluehouse 4:30PM
Thursday 14.....	Randi & Blue Fire
Friday 15.....	Nouveaux Honkies
Saturday 16.....	Albert Castiglia
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Out of a Dream

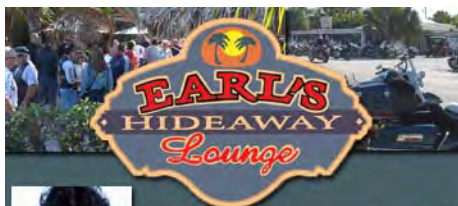


TRISHA O'BRIEN

Palm Beach vocalist Trisha O'Brien's new cd *Out of a Dream* is now available at trishaobrien.com.

The album's beautifully arranged love songs feature Shelly Berg on piano, Peter Washington on bass, Lewis Nash on drums, and Ken Peplowski on tenor saxophone. Enchanting audiences with her freshly interpreted jazz standards, Trisha has performed at Feinstein's at the Regency in New York, Dizzy's, Nighttown, and the Royal Room at the Colony Hotel in Palm Beach.

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Jan 17 Terry Hanck
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**SIMONE KOPMAJER
HEIDI'S, COCOA BEACH/JAN. 8-9**

Just in her 20s, Simone Kopmajer has been gaining global attention with her sultry, sophisticated singing. The Austrian-born daughter of a big-band leader, Kopmajer fell in love with jazz at an early age, and she displays a great sensitivity and sense of swing. Her clear intonation and kittenish sensuality come through in interpretations of standards, and it's unsurprising to learn that she received training from seasoned vets such as Sheila Jordan, Jay Clayton and Michele Hendricks. Jazz-vocal great Mark Murphy was so impressed with the young singer that he brought her to the attention of the Japan-based Venus Records, for which she released four albums. Her latest, *Didn't You Say* for Hitman Jazz,



finds her performing crossover material such as Prince's "Kiss" and James Taylor's "How Sweet It Is To Be Loved by You," as well as the intimate, classic-jazz-sounding title track. The Heidi's shows will be CD release parties for the new disc. Find out why Ira Sullivan raves about her, and why Scott Yanow listed her in his 2008 book *The Jazz Singers: The Ultimate Guide*. **BW**

**ROCKIN' R&B REVUE featuring TERRY HANCK,
JP SOARS AND THE RED HOTS,
MATTHEW STUBBS AND SAX GORDON
ACE'S LOUNGE, BRADENTON/JAN. 15
THE BACK ROOM, BOCA RATON/JAN. 16
EARL'S HIDEAWAY, SEBASTIAN/JAN. 17**

Silver-maned sax blower Terry Hanck helms this Rockin' R&B Revue, assembling a multigenerational gang of party-minded all-stars. Along for the ride are frequent collaborators JP Soars and the Red Hots, who jump the blues with expertise and enthusiasm, as well as New England area guitarist Matthew Stubbs and tenor man "Sax" Gordon Beadle. Stubbs showcased his slinky, gritty style on his 2008 instrumental release *Soul Bender*, which calls up images of girls in go-go boots



dancing The Frug, and which was punctuated by the smoke-belching solos of Sax Gordon. Hanck won raves with his all-original 2008 recording *Always*, and always fills the dance floor with riffs informed by Junior Walker, Red Prysock and other great honkers and wailers. It'll be a treat to hear this roster of A-list frontmen, as well as the sax-and-guitar duels it's sure to inspire. **BW**

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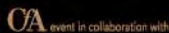
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VAN DYKE CAFE, MIAMI BEACH/JAN. 5
DOWNTOWNER, FT. LAUDERDALE/JAN. 7
RED'S CLUB MEMPHIS, FT. LAUDERDALE/JAN. 8
THE ORANGE DOOR, LAKE PARK/JAN. 16

The South Florida Blues Society has enjoyed a pretty good run at the International Blues Competition. This year's entrant, The Nico Wayne Toussaint Band, will head up to Beale Street in January to defend the title. Born in France, the harmonica-playing Toussaint came under the spell of the blues after hearing the Muddy Waters album *Hard Again*, which featured James Cotton on harp. Thus inspired, he led his own Chicago blues band in Europe, and frequently visited the U.S., where he sat in with Jimmy Johnson, Luther Allison and



Billy Branch, among others. Here in SoFla, Toussaint teamed up with the father-and-son team of guitarist Josh and bassist Deny Rowand, and Ritchie Correcelli on drums, all of whom play in the group Outta d' Blues. Toussaint also has a secret weapon in Josh "The Pitbull of the Blues" Rowand. Looks like the SFBS may have to make room for another trophy. **BW**

MARCIA BALL
PLAZA THEATRE, ORLANDO/JAN. 8
GUSMAN HALL, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI/JAN. 9
SKIPPER'S SMOKEHOUSE, TAMPA/JAN. 17

You can always count on Marcia Ball to rock the house like the joint was on fire. The Austin-based piano queen radiates the 88s with boogying brio, as she thunders across the keys and sings in a soulful voice that rings with Louisiana and Texas influences. Her discography on Rounder, and now Alligator, shows how much she absorbed from inspirations such as Professor Longhair, Allen Toussaint and Irma Thomas. But the best way to experience Ball is to catch her live, as she sits behind the keyboards, her long legs elegantly crossed, and belts out tunes that defy audiences to keep still. For



proof, check out the 2005 release *Live! Down the Road*, which finds the pianist and a superb band rocking faves such as "Big Shot," "That's Enough of That Stuff" and "Louella." Her 2008 studio recording, *Peace, Love and BBQ*, conjures a backyard bash with a smoky grill and rootsy soundtrack. Last year, Ball claimed the Pinetop Perkins Piano Player of the Year Blues Music Award. **BW**

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