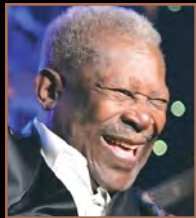


JAZZ & BLUES

MAY
2010

F L O R I D A

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES



B.B. King



Jacqueline Jones



Kenny Werner



Sammy Figueroa



Soulphonics



Superstars of Fusion



Watermelon Slim



Skyla Burrell Band



*Sonny
Fortune*

WINNING SPINS

By Bob Weinberg

AS ANYONE WHO'S SEEN SONNY Fortune in concert can tell you, the Philly-born saxman and flutist is a powerfully expressive performer. So, it's surprising to learn that Fortune, who turns 71 this month, recently released his first live album as a leader with *Last Night at Sweet Rhythm*, available from his own Sound Reason imprint.

Of course, Fortune's bandstand performances have been captured for posterity before—he's featured on Miles Davis' 1975 live recording *Pangaea* and on Buddy Rich's 1974 club date *Very Live at Buddy's Place*, to name a disparate two. Still, his own group concept and dynamic remained undocumented until Fortune and his quartet laid down the tracks that comprise *Last Night at Sweet Rhythm* in September 2009. Formerly known as Sweet Basil, the Greenwich Village jazz spot Sweet Rhythm closed its doors the very next month.

The long shadow of John Coltrane, Fortune's major influence, shades much of what he plays. Composed entirely of Fortune originals spanning his decades-long discography, this live set is no exception. On the opening, "It Ain't What It Was," Fortune's muscular alto soars over and swirls around the cooking rhythm section of pianist Michael Cochrane, bassist David Williams and drummer Steve Johns. The saxophonist has found like-minded colleagues in Cochrane and Johns, who recall Trane's greatest foils, McCoy Tyner and Elvin Jones, respectively. Cochrane's solo sparkles with a Tyner-like elegance and excitement, as Jones exuberantly, but never oppressively, lights up his kit. When Fortune returns, the mix has been heated to simmering magma.

The quartet cools down the proceedings with the exquisite "The Blues Are Green." Fortune lengthens his phrases but eventually builds up to Pharaoh Sanders-like cries of spiritual ecstasy until the notes are rushing headlong from his horn. Once again, Cochrane and Johns fulfill their Tyner and Jones roles, and bassist Williams takes a woody-toned and melodic solo. A generous frontman, Fortune shares the spotlight with his sidemen, displaying a well-placed confidence.

The leader switches to flute on the lovely and lyrical "Never Again Is Such a Long Time."



SONNY FORTUNE

Evading facile comparison, Fortune truly has developed a voice of his own on the instrument. The same could be said of his soprano-sax playing, which takes the lead on "In Waves of Dreams." His unhurried, languid phrasing contrasts with his more aggressive approach on alto and mimics the torpor of a dream haze. The song picks up steam as it unfurls, and Cochrane delivers yet another bright solo.

Switching back to alto, Fortune pays homage to Lady Day on the bluesy "A Tribute to a Holiday," playing it fairly straight on his opening and closing solos. However, when he reemerges after Cochrane's wonderful turn, Fortune ventures further afield, once again contrasting flurries of notes with long lines, before wrapping up with a blues-drenched flourish.

Starting and concluding with just the stark, lonely cry of the flute, "The Joneses" lovingly references Elvin Jones, with whom Fortune played. Fortune's tone suggests the haunting sound of the shakuhachi bamboo flute. He then enters into a duet with Johns, who lays down distant thunder with his mallets

WINNING SPINS

before sticking a sinewy solo. Cochrane and Williams then join in, while Fortune returns to the alto for some emotional playing. Even more than his strong solo, Johns' shimmering cymbals and tasteful restraint offer tribute to Coltrane's great drummer.

Fortune leaves listeners hungry for more as he closes out the set with the vivacious "Laying It Down." The tune, as several before, builds in intensity until Fortune unleashes note-happy frenzies as fast and furious as another major influence, Sonny Rollins. Once again, the right-on rhythm section supplies a solid scaffold.

Last Night at Sweet Rhythm provides a long overdue sampling of Fortune's brilliance on stage. With any luck, he'll record yet another live performance with his name on the marquee.



The Sonny Fortune Quartet performs 5PM May 28 at the Jacksonville Jazz Festival in downtown Jacksonville. For a full schedule, visit the recreation and community services special events section of coj.net.

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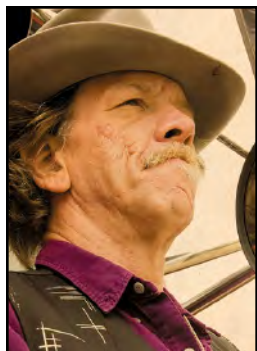
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WATERMELON SLIM AND THE WORKERS BRADFORDVILLE BLUES, TALLAHASSEE/MAY 1 COMMON GROUNDS, GAINESVILLE/MAY 2

The blues has long been known for its eccentric characters, and Bill "Watermelon Slim" Homans is certainly among their number. When Slim performed as part of Mark Hummel's Harmonica Blow-off at Boca Raton's Back Room in October, he damn near stole the show with his whiskey-soaked bellow, razor-wire slide and country-fried harp. The Vietnam vet-turned-anti-war activist earned his blue-collar bona fides as a truck driver, sawmill worker and smalltime hood. His moniker actually comes from a stint farming watermelons in Oklahoma. Also schooled as a journalist, the Boston-born, North Carolina-raised bluesman uses his eye for



detail and narrative skills on the songs that fill recordings like 2009's *Escape From the Chicken Coop* and 2008's *No Paid Holidays*. In 2008, Slim and his Workers won Blues Music Awards for Album of the Year and Band of the Year. And, earlier this year, *Blues Revue* placed their self-titled 2006 release on its list of the Best 25 Blues CDs of the Decade. **BW**

SKYLA BURRELL BAND THE BEACH SHACK, COCOA BEACH/MAY 3 BOSTON'S, DELRAY/MAY 4

While Skyla Burrell, to the best of our knowledge, is no kin to legendary jazz guitarist Kenny Burrell, she definitely plays her ax with an extra helping of chitlins con carne. The Pennsylvania-based blues guitarist and vocalist calls up the likes of T-Bone Walker, Gatemouth Brown and Albert King on her 2008 recording, *Tough Luck*. String-blurring gems such as "Straighten Up Baby," which puts some bite into the jump-blues genre, and Chicago blues-style numbers such as "Painkiller" display Burrell's deep understanding of the genre, as well as the ability to conjure the emotions needed to perform the music convincingly. The Los Angeles native can also shred with the best of 'em, which is especially evident on tracks recorded live at Madam's Organ Blues Bar in Washington, DC. (Visit Myspace.com/skylaburrell.) With the added firepower of guitarist Mark Tomlinson, and the hard-driving rhythm section of bassist Rob Parks and drummer Ezell Jones Jr., Burrell uncorks sizzling solos while keeping the boogie front and center. **BW**



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	<p>SUNDAY May 23, Noon – 4PM</p> <p>Noon Selwyn Birchwood & Duces Wild <i>with RJ Harmon on harmonica</i></p> <p>1PM Beautiful Bobby Blackmon</p> <p>2:30PM Rent Money Blues Band Jam <i>Sunday tickets at the gate \$12 each + tax</i></p>

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Pianist Kenny Werner is known for a rare combination of playing that's cerebral and intuitive, yet swinging and interactive. "Perfection," says Quincy Jones. "Three-hundred-sixty degrees of soul and science in one human being. My kind of musician." The Brooklyn-born pianist recorded a single with a 15-piece orchestra when he was 11; attended the Manhattan School of Music while in high school; then made lasting associations at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. Now 58 and a member of New York University's Jazz Piano and Composition Faculty, Werner continues to tour with his longtime rhythm section of bassist Johannes

Weidenmueller and drummer Ari Hoenig. For his South Florida Jazz concert, Werner also will be joined by saxophonist Joe Lovano—a friend and colleague from Werner's Berklee days—and Lovano's singing wife Judi Silvano for a nostalgic journey through far-reaching jazz standards and original compositions.

BM



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There's no shortage of musical package deals during the four days of the Jacksonville Jazz Fest, and two of the prime shows occur on its final two days. The May 29 (3:30PM) salute to the late crossover star Grover Washington Jr. is in the capable hands of fellow saxophonists Tom Scott and Andy Snitzer, who will perform with vocalist Maysa, keyboardist and musical director Jason Miles, bassist Gerald Veasley and drummer Buddy Williams. Expect material from throughout Washington's influential discography—including a superb read of the slinky "Mr. Magic" as sung by Maysa—which was explored on a pair of all-star recorded salutes

helmed by Miles. On the festival's final day (1:30PM) a jazz-fusion supergroup comprising vibraphonist Roy Ayers, saxman Ronnie Laws and keyboardist Lonnie Liston Smith teams up with trumpeter Tom Browne, trombonist Wayne Henderson and others to revisit classics from the sub-genre that they helped to pioneer. For a full lineup, visit coj.net. **BM**



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FLORIDA THEATER, JACKSONVILLE/MAY 9

Having just wrapped a tour with Buddy Guy, you might think B.B. King would take it easy. After all, the "Beale Street Blues Boy" turns 85 in September and has publicly battled diabetes. But that's not King's style. The veteran road warrior—with Lucille by his side—is back out this spring with a sweep through Florida, a dip into Georgia, then a jaunt to Morocco. Blues fans remain eager to gain an audience with the King, whose main concession to age is that he now sits during performances. King's also more loquacious these



days, as he tells tales from his long career or jokes about getting old. But he's still playing and singing beautifully, as evidenced on 2008's *One Kind Favor* CD. Here, the blues legend revisits tunes by the artists that influenced him, and the album sits easily alongside the best of King's vast discography, and even won him a Grammy for Best Traditional Blues Album. **BW**

SOULPHONICS AND RUBY VELLE

ATLANTIC, GAINESVILLE/MAY 14
TROPICAL HEATWAVE, YBOR CITY/MAY 15

A renewed interest in vintage soul music has given rise to artists such as Bettye Lavette and Sharon Jones. Add to their number the Atlanta-based Soulphonics, a horn-fueled octet fronted by the big-voiced Ruby Velle. The core of the group—Velle, guitarist Scott Clayton and Hammond organ wizard Spencer Garn—came together in Gainesville in 2005, before relocating to Hot'lanta. Their self-titled 2007 release showcases a dynamic ensemble sound that pays loving, funky homage to classic, dancefloor soul of the '60s and '70s. Cuts such as "Bump and Boogaloo," "Still Feels Naturally" and "Fever" (not the Peggy Lee tune), almost sound as if they could be emanating from the grooves of a treasured stack of 45s. But the young musicians also subtly slip in go-go and hip-hop rhythms among the scratching guitar and spanking horns, all of which is designed to keep booties wagging. A recent single, "Feet on the Ground," finds Ruby and the boys stronger than ever. And it's available, of course, on vinyl. Catch the band at 11:55PM at El Pasaje Plaza as



part of Ybor City's annual Tropical Heatwave. For a full lineup, log on to Wmnf.org/heatwave/schedule. **BW**

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Vocalist Jacqueline Jones has been a popular performer on the Central Florida jazz and blues scenes since the Gary, Indiana, native moved to the Orlando area in the late 1970s. But to call her a regional artist would sell her short. The singer started out in Chicago nightclubs while earning a nursing degree from Purdue; sang the national anthem to a global TV soccer audience during the 1994 World Cup; and has appeared in several stage musicals—including a tribute to her jazz hero titled *Jacqueline Jones Celebrates Billie Holiday*. On several self-released CDs, Jones has displayed the sass, melancholy and attitude to merit comparisons to Lady



Day. Jones can lay claim to a comparable worldliness, as she was one of 50 U.S. citizens who attended the annual Forum for U.S.-Soviet Dialogue in 1989. And this lady also sings the blues, having recovered from brain surgery a decade ago. Catch her with Queenie and the Blues Krewe at 7:30PM May 22. For a full schedule, visit MountDoraBluesandWineFest.com. **BM**

**SAMMY FIGUEROA PRESENTS SALLY'S TOMATO:
A TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF CAL TJADER
HEIDI'S, COCOA BEACH/MAY 8**

The late vibraphonist Cal Tjader might have been better-known among Latin jazz bandleaders—if only he'd actually been Latin. But Sammy Figueroa, a New York-born, South Florida-based percussionist of Puerto Rican descent, certainly appreciated the contributions of the St. Louis-born Tjader, whose bands included stars such as Willie Bobo, Mongo Santamaria and Vince Guerald. Figueroa's tribute band, Sally's Tomato, was formed in 2008 and named for a Tjader song from director Blake Edwards' classic 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Featuring musicians like vibraphonist Brian Potts, pianist Alexander Hoyt, timbale player Richard Bravo and



bonguero Freddy Lugo, Sally's Tomato plays soulful yet lighthearted Tjader staples like "Mambo Terrifico," "The Continental" and "Tu Crees Que." Figueroa's last two solo releases, *And Sammy Walked In* and *The Magician*, were nominated for Grammys, and his session credits include Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, David Bowie, Mick Jagger and James Taylor. **BM**



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PHOTO CREDITS: Sammy Figueroa cover and Spotlight by Joe Winchester, Sonny Fortune cover by Dmitry Scherbie, Soulphonics Spotlight by JR Ward

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Presenting



THE 3rd Annual EARL'S RIVERFRONT MUSIC FESTIVAL

Memorial Day Weekend
May 29, 30 and 31
Featuring Special Guest Hostess Dj Dar

Free Admission
Food - Arts - Crafts



Saturday, May 29th

ALL Veterans Bike Parade. Noon Line Up - Location TBA
1pm All Veterans Memorial Day Ceremony

Live Music Starting at 2pm

- The Dahli Llamas
- Nico Wayne Toussaint Band - South Florida's IBC Winner
- Victor Wainwright & Wild Roots
- J.P. Soars & The Red Hots - All IBC Memphis 2009 Winner
- Stacy Mitchart Band - Nashville's Own Blues Doctor
- Dave Shelley Pro Jam

Sunday, May 30th

- Starting at 2pm
- Diddle Squat from East Tx.
 - The Queen Bees
 - Deb Callahan
 - The Nouveaux Honkies
 - Jon Justice in Harper

Monday, May 31st

- Starting at 2pm
- The Randy Skirvin Band
 - IN A GADA DA VIDA w/ Mike Pinera formerly of Iron Butterfly

Schedule Subject to change without notice.

SUNDAYS EARL'S ROCKS THE RIVER!

2ND - TERRY HANCK BAND
w/ JOHNNY (THE CAT) SOUBRAND



9TH - SHAUN ROUNDS
BLUES BAND



16TH - DWAYNE DOPSIE
& THE ZYDECO HELL RAISERS



23RD - BRIAN STOLZ & THE ALLIGATOR ALLEY ALL STARS



DELICIOUS LUNCH AND BREAKFAST ON THE RIVER • OUTSIDE TIKI BAR

1405 Indian River Drive, Sebastian 772-589-5700 www.EarlsHideaway.com