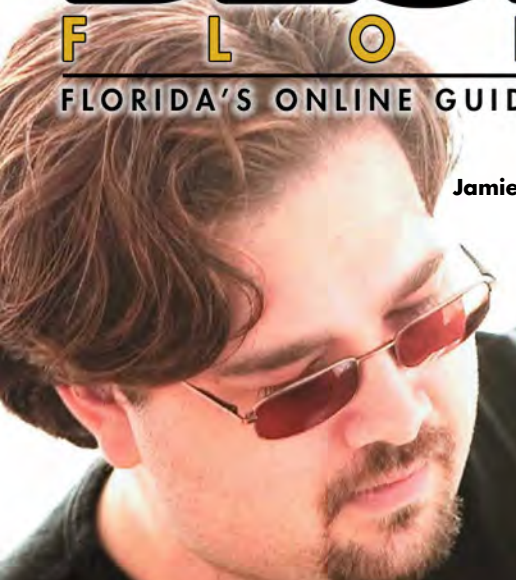


JAZZ & BLUES

AUGUST
2010

F L O R I D A

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES



Jamie Ousley



Maria Rivas



Piano Bob Wilder



Joe Caruso



Nicole Henry



Tab Benoit



Ramsey Lewis



Orlando Jazz Orchestra



Mac Arnold and Plate Full o' Blues

WINNING SPINS

By Bill Meredith

BASSISTS JUST MIGHT BE THE MOST commonly overlooked musicians on the bandstand, mostly because of the misperception that their instrument is easier to play than others. Listeners also tend to ignore the fact that bassists and drummers can rarely lay out to create space, unlike guitarists, keyboardists and horn players. But South Florida bassist Jamie Ousley splits the difference between support and spotlight on his sophomore CD, *Back Home* (Tie Records), with very impressive results.

As he did on his last disc, 2008's *O Sorriso Dela*, Ousley returned to Osaka, Japan, to record with longtime trio mates Phillip Strange and Larry Marshall, on piano and drums, respectively. Both musicians were staples of the South Florida jazz scene before relocating, and the threesome share an unmistakable synergy.

Rather than relying on familiar standards, Ousley includes just one and creatively rearranges it. On Rodgers and Hammerstein's "My Favorite Things," multi-instrumentalist Ira Sullivan plays the melody on alto flute with all the sophistication expected of a 79-year-old jazz icon. Strange's solo is brief but compelling, as is Ousley's, yet the bassist spends most of the seven-minute track doing his job—locking in with Marshall.

Ousley also rearranges Chopin's "Nocturne in E flat major, Op. 9, No. 2." In the process, he turns the classical piece into a playful romp with Strange and percussionist Carlomagno Araya.

But Ousley creates the most interest with his original compositions. On the bassist's opening composition, "A Tune, Sir?" Sullivan's fluid flugelhorn perfectly complements the bounce provided by Strange and the rhythm section. A New Orleans-flavored stroll, "This Is It!" employs the same personnel, only this time Sullivan adds spice on soprano saxophone—an instrument he uses to completely different effect on the ballad, "Clearing."

Sullivan hired Ousley for his own band, and the unselfish bassist seems like he's returning the favor throughout *Back Home* by placing the spotlight directly on his esteemed elder. (Of course, prominently featuring someone of Sullivan's stature won't do



JAMIE OUSLEY

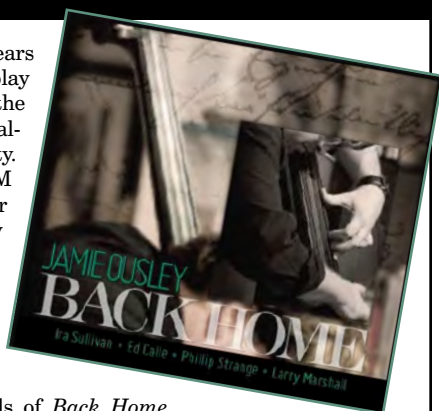
Ousley any harm, either.) The venerable South Florida musician also lends instrumental warmth to a couple of vocal ballads. On "So Long," Ousley's ode to his uncle Lea Ousley, who died of cancer last year, LeNard Rutledge's soulful voice is augmented by the bassist's cadence, Marshall's brushwork, Strange's chording and Sullivan's poignant soprano sax solo. Perhaps an indication that Ousley is a minister's son, "Prayer" again features Sullivan on alto flute during an extended intro, before vocalist Nanami Morikawa sings the familiar recitation of "Now I lay me down to sleep."

A Tennessee native who relocated in 1998 to study at the University of Miami, Ousley combines his Southern origins with South Florida's Latino culture on a pair of compositions. "Nashvillatino" features Araya's array of propulsive percussion instruments, plus statement-making solos by Ousley and Strange amid the salsa-flavored rhythms. "Pasaje Tennessee" lures the listener in with a traditional jazz intro before Jhonny Mendoza introduces South American flavors via mandolin, violin, maracas and cuatro (four-stringed guitar).

WINNING SPINS

Of all Ousley's gifts as a musician, his keen ears may be the most impressive. Few bassists can play comfortably in a duo with a vocalist, since being the lone rhythmic, harmonic and melodic instrumentalist is often about as comfortable as public nudity. But Ousley and West Palm Beach-based singer SAMM have dueted at various South Florida venues for more than five years. SAMM's smoky delivery proves the perfect vehicle for the wistful title ballad, this time in a quartet with Ousley, Strange and Marshall. An instrumental bonus-track version, with ace Miami saxophonist Ed Calle playing the vocal melody on soprano, provides the CD's coda.

On paper, the serpentine themes and moods of *Back Home* might appear to lack continuity. But thankfully they appear on disc, where they add up to one of the more impressive recordings by a South Florida-based jazz artist.



Jamie Ousley and SAMM perform Mondays at the Palm Beach Steakhouse, starting at 6:30PM. Call (561) 671-4333. For more on Ousley, visit Jamieousley.com.

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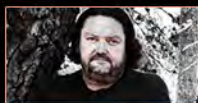
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JOE "SURVIVAL" CARUSO AND THE BOOGIE-WOOGIE BOO-FAY EARL'S HIDEAWAY, SEBASTIAN/AUG. 6

Growing up in New Orleans, Joe "Survival" Caruso lived right across the street from a happening blues club, where stars such as Ray Charles, Dinah Washington, Fats Domino and Guitar Slim would work their magic. Understandably inspired, and from a musical family himself, the teenaged guitarist and vocalist started his own band and was soon opening for Etta James, Hank Ballard and Ernie K-Doe. After serving in Vietnam, Caruso helmed his own bands and worked as a sideman, in Oakland, Calif., as well as in New Orleans. The guitarist lived in the Crescent City until Katrina chased him out in 2005, and he's since relocated to the



Volusia County town of DeBary. His 1990s recording, *I'll Never Get Out of These Blues Alive*, showcases his powerful vocals and a guitar style very much rooted in the Texas-Louisiana style of Long John Hunter and Phillip Walker. His Boogie-Woogie Boo-Fay Band has been lighting up the blues clubs of Daytona, St. Augustine, Sanford and Sebastian. **BW**

MAC ARNOLD AND PLATE FULL O' BLUES BRADFORDVILLE BLUES, TALLAHASSEE/AUG. 21 SKIPPER'S SMOKEHOUSE, TAMPA/AUG. 22

Bluesman Mac Arnold embraces his down-home roots on *Country Man*, his excellent 2009 recording with his Plate Full o' Blues band. On the title track, as well as on tunes such as "Farmer" and "This Ol' Tractor," he revels in the dirt-under-the-fingernails values he learned while growing up in rural South Carolina. Of course, once Arnold had learned to play his brother's homemade gas-can guitar, he embarked on a decades-long adventure that included stints in bands with everyone from James Brown to Muddy Waters, and recordings with the likes of John Lee Hooker and Otis Spann. (That's also Mac's bassline on the *Sanford and Son* theme song.)



Residing once again in his hometown of Pelzer, S.C., the rich-voiced blues singer continues to draw on the substance of the soil for his music. His tunes run the gamut from country ballads to hard-charging, twin-barrel blasts featuring the stinging leads of guitarist Austin Brashier and the gritty harmonica of Max Hightower. **BW**

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TAB BENOIT

PLAZA THEATRE, ORLANDO/AUG. 20

SKIPPER'S SMOKEHOUSE, TAMPA/AUG. 21

Born and raised in Louisiana, Tab Benoit has long expressed concern about the fragility of the ever-shrinking, environmentally sensitive wetlands. Even prior to Hurricane Katrina, the guitarist and vocalist has been a passionate advocate for the Voice of the Wetlands organization, honoring his home with album titles such as *Wetlands* and *Power of the Ponchartrain*. In 2008, he even traveled to Washington, D.C., to make sure that Congress doesn't forget about this precious ecological resource. Now, with the BP oil spill threatening the already-endangered coastal territory, Benoit's voice is needed more than ever. Of course, the



bluesman does most of his lobbying with his biting ax and brawny vocals as he calls on his Cajun background, as well as Crescent City boogie and R&B influences. On 2008's *Night Train to Nashville*—recorded live before a hometown crowd with guest stars such as Kim Wilson and Jim Lauderdale—Benoit unspools barbed-wire licks and sings with soul and depth. **BW**

BOOGIE-WOOGIE FEST

FRITZ & FRANZ BIERHAUS, CORAL GABLES/AUG. 20-22

Barrelhouse-blues expert Piano Bob Wilder has put together a sterling lineup for his inaugural Boogie-Woogie Fest. The South Florida blues fave has invited Ann Rabson, Joe Crown, John "Papa" Gros and Eden Brent to join him and local blues stalwart Motel Mel for the event. Blues fans might recognize Rabson from her days with Saffire—The Uppity Blues Women; the pianist often stole the show with her sly and dexterous boogie and blues playing. New Orleans keyboardist Crown established himself with Gatemouth Brown's band, and was a staple of the Maple Leaf bar's Traditional Piano Night. Known primarily as the Hammond-organ-ripping vocalist of New Orleans'



Papa Grows Funk, Gros will trade in his B3 for the grand piano Wilder will have on hand. Last year, the Mississippi-based Brent won Blues Music Awards for Acoustic Album and Acoustic Artist of the Year, and this year the BMAs honored her with a trophy for Pinetop Perkins Piano Player of the Year. A don't-miss for piano-blues fans. **BW**

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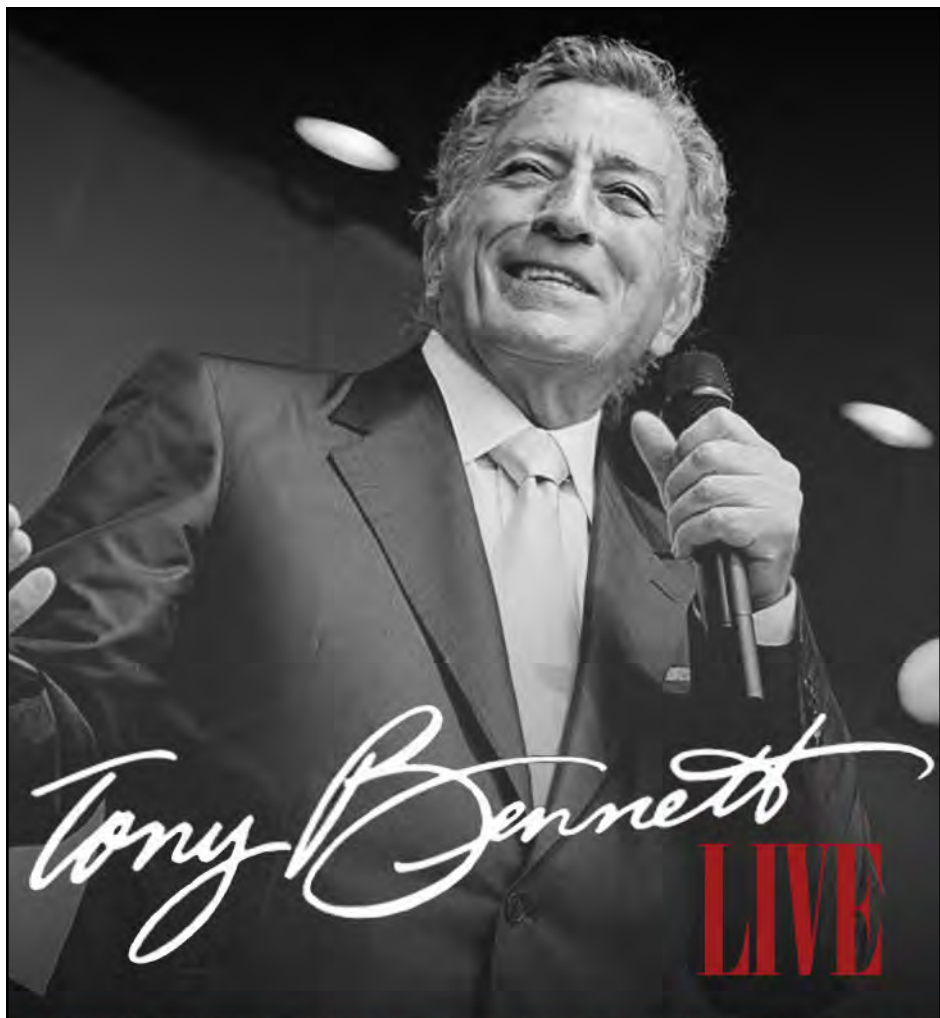
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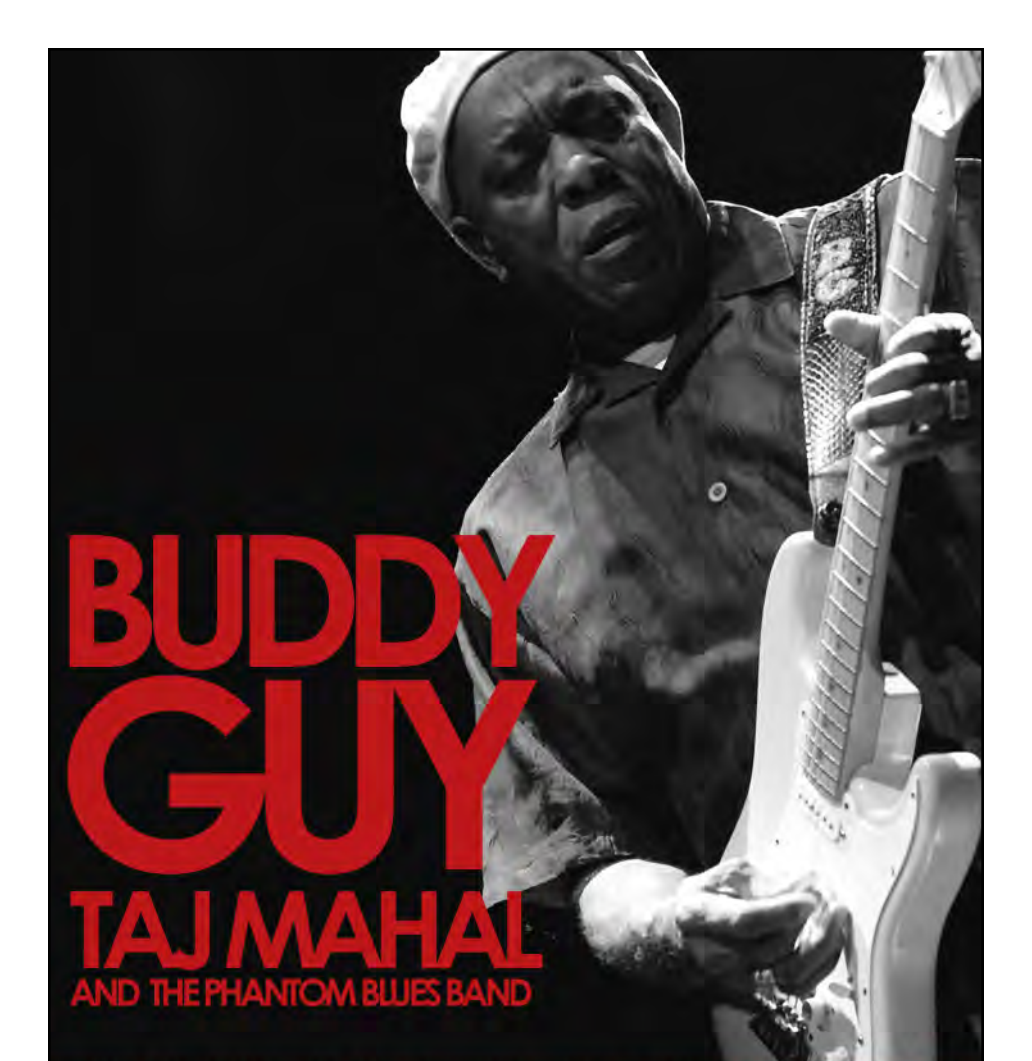
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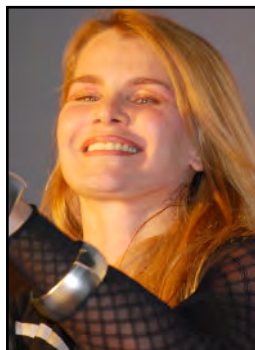
ORLANDO JAZZ ORCHESTRA WITH ALLAN VACHE, TERRY MYERS and REX WERTZ: TRIBUTE TO THE CLARINET GREATS PLAZA THEATRE, ORLANDO/AUG. 15

Composed of what drummer and leader Greg Parnell calls “some of the best jazz players in Central Florida,” the Orlando Jazz Orchestra specializes in themed tribute shows, often performed at the Plaza Theatre. The downtown facility opened in 1963 and remains the area’s only two-screened theater among a city of multiplexes. The 17-piece big band’s “Tribute to the Clarinet Greats” will spotlight selections from the swinging songbooks of Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Woody Herman, Buddy De Franco and beyond. Guest specialists Allan Vaché, Terry Myers and Rex Wertz will lend their expertise on the “licorice stick,” as will members of the sax section. In addition to Parnell, the orchestra includes saxophonists John Orsini, Dave MacKenzie, Jerry Kalper, George Weremchuk and Dave Weaver; trumpeters Tom Parmeter, John Robinson, John DePaola and Matt McCarthy; trombonists Rick Abbott, Frank Wosar, Rob Harrover and Dale Edwards; pianist James Navan and bassist Ben Kramer. **BM**



MARIA RIVAS HEIDI'S JAZZ CLUB, COCOA BEACH/AUG. 7

Being able to sing in English, Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese has certainly helped Venezuelan vocalist Maria Rivas’ stature as a world-music star. A recent relocation to South Florida, and appearances with Miami-based trumpet star Arturo Sandoval, have also heightened the singer’s Sunshine State profile. On an April broadcast on WLRN-FM (91.3), South Florida’s public radio affiliate, Rivas dazzled during a performance with a collective of regional and Venezuelan jazz all-stars, which included a multilingual version of “My Funny Valentine.” Her eighth and latest CD, *Pepida Queen*, offers similar thrills through voice, piano, bass and traditional Japanese drums. Rivas started her singing career in the nightclubs of her native Caracas in the mid-’80s, and especially developed her technique after moving to Aruba and presenting her “Sentimental Journey Through Jazz” concerts for almost three years. And as if singing in five languages weren’t enough, Rivas also possesses an Ella Fitzgerald-inspired scat-singing ability. **BM**



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3	9/23/08	Captain Reese	36	5/12/2009	Joel DaSilva	69	12/29/2009	Biscuit Miller & The Mix
4	9/30/08	JP Soars & Billy Burns	37	5/19/2009	The Nucklebusters w/ Jeff Watkins	70	1/5/2010	Bobby Nathan Band
5	10/7/08	Mario LaCasse & George Lily	38	5/26/2009	The Nouveaux Honkies	71	1/12/2010	Jeff Prime w/2B3!
6	10/14/08	The Nucklebusters w/Jeff Watkins	39	6/2/2009	Damon Fowler Group	72	1/19/2010	Damon Fowler
7	10/21/08	Albert Castiglia	40	6/9/2009	David Shelley	73	1/26/2010	Nucklebusters - Extended & Horny
8	10/28/08	Tim O'Donnell & Rebecca Dawkins	41	6/16/2009	Jon Justice Band	74	2/2/2010	Jason Ricci & New Blood
9	11/4/08	Jason Ricci & New Blood	42	6/23/2009	Al Stone	75	2/9/2010	Art Harris & The 2-Tones
10	11/11/08	Frank Ward & Nantucket Goobers	43	6/30/2009	Jason Ricci & New Blood	76	2/16/2010	Josh Smith, John Yartling, Jason Rozner
11	11/18/08	Shawn Starski & Captain Reese	44	7/7/2009	Motor City Josh	77	2/23/2010	Pat Pepin
12	11/25/08	Terry Hanck w/JP Soars & The Red Hots	45	7/14/2009	Ben Prestage	78	3/2/2010	Damon Fowler
13	12/2/08	Albert Castiglia & Graham Wood Drout	46	7/21/2009	Raiford Starke	79	3/9/2010	Motor City Josh
14	12/9/08	Danny Morris	47	7/28/2009	Ben Robinson	80	3/16/2010	Delta Highway
15	12/16/2008	Damon Fowler Group	48	8/4/2009	The Weld Featuring Nicole Yartling	81	3/23/2010	Walker Smith Group
16	2/23/2009	Ben Prestage	49	8/11/2009	Terry Hanck	82	3/30/2010	Shawn Kellerman
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28	3/17/2009	Terry Hanck w/JP Soars & The Red Hots	61	11/3/2009	Jon Justice Band	94	6/22/2010	Nouveaux Honkies
29	3/24/2009	The Shakers	62	11/10/2009	Jamvia Magnes	95	6/29/2010	Jeff Prime Group
30	3/31/2009	The Nucklebusters	63	11/17/2009	Roger Hurricane Wilson	96	7/6/2010	Nicole Hart
31	4/7/2009	Joey Gilmore	64	11/24/2009	Sktlya Burrell	97	7/13/2010	Ken Burkhardt & The Nucklebusters
32	4/14/2009	Groove Thangs	65	12/1/2009	Walker Smith Group	98	7/20/2010	Big Poppa & Band
33	4/21/2009	Capt Reese & John Harris	66	12/8/2009	Stew Arvey	99	7/27/2010	David Shelley & Bluestone

NICOLE HENRY
VAN DYKE CAFE, MIAMI BEACH/AUG. 25

American jazz stars have been finding more receptive audiences overseas for more than 50 years, which puts Miami vocalist Nicole Henry in good company. The Philadelphia-born, University of Miami-trained singer displayed a soaring delivery on her debut CD *The Nearness of You*. The album climbed to No. 2 on the HMV Japan Jazz Chart, earning her the "Best New Jazz Artist of 2004" distinction from the Japanese music retailer. Her sophomore effort, *Teach Me Tonight* (with the Eddie Higgins Trio), reached No. 1 and earned Henry the HMV award for "Best Vocal Jazz Album of 2005." But her latest release, a collection of standards titled *The Very Thought of You*, helped Henry reach



more ears here in the U.S. Henry invests plenty of emotion into familiar jazz tunes such as "All the Way," "At Last" and the lovely title track, the latter of which features pianist Mike Orta. The album peaked at No. 7 on the *Billboard Jazz Chart* in September of 2008—putting her between two American stars of international renown, Diana Krall and Tony Bennett. **BM**

RAMSEY LEWIS
CORAL GABLES CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
AUG. 12

At age 75, Ramsey Lewis was born into the generation following that of Marian McPartland (92) and Dr. Billy Taylor (89). But he's one of the few who've followed their leads as iconic pianists, educators, historians and radio jazz hosts (*Legends of Jazz With Ramsey Lewis*, which was also broadcast on television). The Chicago native's playing style is a vibrant blend of early classical training, gospel influences, 60 years of jazz performing and recording, and an open mind as well as open ears. Known for his lively instrumental versions of pop hits such as "Hang on Sloop" in the mid-'60s, as well as the cuts collected on the recently released *Ramsey Lewis*



Plays The Beatles Songbook, the pianist showed off his compositional skills on his first all-original album, last year's *Songs From the Heart: Ramsey Plays Ramsey*. His educational work has earned him four honorary doctorates to go with his three Grammy Awards and seven gold records. For his Coral Gables concert, Lewis will be performing solo. **BM**

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