



JAZZ & BLUES
F L O R I D A

APRIL 2012

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES

FEATURED ARTIST

ABBEY RADER

AND THE GENERATIONS QUARTET

**ROOMFUL OF BLUES • TOWER OF POWER • DAVE GOLDBERG
TONI LYNN WASHINGTON • MANNISH BOYS • JOHN PRIMER
SERGIO MENDEZ with JOHN SECADA • TURTLE ISLAND QUARTET
HARRY ALLEN QUARTET & BUCKY PIZZARELLI • SOULFONIC
MATT WILSON'S ARTS & CRAFTS • DEBBIE ORTA**

ABBEY RADER

by Bob Weinberg

AS A YOUNG DRUMMER LIVING ON

the Lower East Side, Abbey Rader had the opportunity to witness John Coltrane's incendiary quartet — with the explosive Elvin Jones on drums — at the Half Note club in New York City. "That changed my life," says Rader from his home in Coral Springs. "I walked in and those guys bent my life out of shape."

More than 45 years later, that experience still radiates through Rader's playing. As heard on his latest recording, *Live at PAX*, the drummer's powerful pulses and dynamic stick work propel nine group improvisations by Rader, saxophonists John McMinn and Noah Brandmark and bassist Kyle Motl. Known as the Generations Quartet, the bandmates were captured on-stage last year at the cavernous Miami nightspot PAX, where they perform about once a month. They return for a CD release party on April 11.

McMinn's lacerating tenor gleefully rides the roiling rhythms laid down by Rader and Motl on the opening "Intervallistic." The South Florida jazz vet also performs on soprano sax, bass clarinet, flute, piccolo and piano. On "Piano Surprise," McMinn displays his brilliance on the less-than-Steinway-esque house instrument. A brief yet satisfying musical conversation ensues, as McMinn engages with Rader's rapid sticking and Motl's incisive bowing.

"That's his original instrument, and he doesn't touch it," Rader says of McMinn's keyboard skills. "This guy is a genius pianist. Beyond our capabilities of thought. He can play like Art Tatum."

Brandmark showcases his brawny, edge-walking tenor on "Welcome Home." His tone and phrasing have a spiritual, questing nature, but not in any easy, New Age sense of that undertaking. On the more tranquil "Trane-ing," Brandmark does seem to be following the conception of Coltrane, one of jazz's most spiritual players, as his quiet supplication builds to a triumphant fanfare.

A self-described "spiritual warrior," Rader has been studying Buddhism since the 1960s. The skills he's acquired through meditation keep him rooted in the moment, and thus, able to go where the music takes him. "If I'm



going to play, I want to immerse myself," he says. "All the external things — 'How was this? Did they like it? Is she looking at me? Am I making money?' — have to go away."

Rader has performed with Brandmark and McMinn for years. The musicians' intuitive abilities are impressive, as are the number of reed instruments arrayed on stage and expertly played by the saxophonists. While the interaction may seem telepathic, and spontaneity certainly trumps other considerations, Rader does cue his bandmates as to where he'd like their excursions to go. "There are little triggers," he says. "The idea is, I would say something about the feeling we'd like to establish. And maybe they feel it works well with bass clarinet. Or it could be initiated by Kyle. It could be a rhythm, or it could just be a set of intervals or whatever somebody sets up. So we jump in."

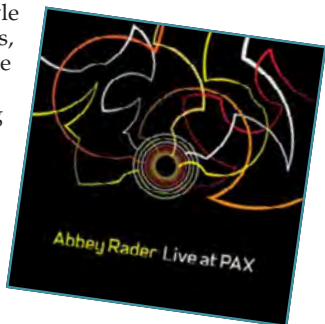
If Rader is close to nirvana playing with his longtime comrades, he's also delighted with Motl, the group's junior member at age 21. The bassist's emotionally resonant arco establishes a haunting mood on "Kyle's Expression." Toward song's end, Rader masterfully strokes cymbals and snare behind the bassist's stark and lovely pizzicato.

ABBHEY RADER

"My pulse is very strange, it's unique," Rader says. "Kyle understands that it's very hard for me to play with bass players, because they want to walk or they're not sure where to sit. But he really gets it. He's very quick to understand what I imply."

The drummer, who spent 15 years performing and teaching in Europe, is highly selective about where and with whom he performs. Having toured and recorded with Mal Waldron, Billy Bang and Dave Liebman, he'd rather wait for the ideal situation than fill his calendar with commercial engagements. That situation arose last year when avant-garde champion Steve Malagodi recruited him to play a monthly showcase at PAX. With luck, the foursome will continue to hone its remarkably empathic music-making at the Miami club.

"I'm building this band," Rader says, lamenting the days when working groups — like Coltrane's — got tighter by performing night after night. "For me, it's about molding together and improvising together and starting to feel together. That's the course I'd like to continue on."



Abbey Rader's Generations Quartet performs at 8:30PM April 11 at PAX, 337 S.W. Eighth St., Miami. Call 305-640-5847 or visit Paxmiami.com. Attendees will receive a complimentary copy of Abbey Rader and Dave Liebman's 1997 duo CD *Inner Voices*. The band will also play at 7PM April 18 in the band room at Florida Atlantic University in Boca.

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 FLORIDA THEATER, JACKSONVILLE/APRIL 12
 PARKER PLAYHOUSE, FT. LAUDERDALE/APRIL 13
 TAMPA BAY BLUES FEST, ST. PETE/APRIL 14

"What is hip?" Tower of Power has asked and answered that question for more than 40 years, and not just on the superfunky tune of the same name. Still helmed by its founding members, tenor saxophonist Emilio Castillo and bari-sax honker Doc Kupka, and anchored by the veteran rhythm section of bassist Rocco Prestia and drummer David Garibaldi, Tower of Power celebrated its 40th anniversary at the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco in 2008. The sweat-raising set was captured on CD and DVD, and



features guest spots from past members Chester Thompson, Lenny Pickett and Richard Elliott. The current incarnation could hardly ask for a better frontman than chill-raising soul vocalist Larry Braggs, who captures the TOP spirit on classics such as "Down to the Nightclub," "You're Still a Young Man," and of course, "What is Hip?" BW

ROOMFUL OF BLUES

FUNKY BISCUIT, BOCA RATON/APRIL 12
 TAMPA BAY BLUES FEST, ST. PETE/APRIL 13
 BRADFORDVILLE BLUES, TALLAHASSEE/APRIL 14
 DOUBLE DOWN LIVE, GAINESVILLE/APRIL 15

Personnel may change, but Roomful of Blues' commitment to good-rockin', horn-driven jump blues remains constant. The little big band with Rhode Island roots parties like it's 1949 on last year's *Hook, Line and Sinker*, as they work out on a set of jukebox gems by the likes of Floyd Dixon, Amos Milburn, Gatemouth Brown and Dave Bartholomew. The big-voiced Phil Pemberton is the latest in a string of superb frontman, which includes alumni Greg



Piccolo and Sugar Ray Norcia. Pemberton's powerful tenor easily crests the roaring horn section, which features the expert sax work of Rich Lataille, a Roomful vet of more than 40 years. For the past 15, the band has been directed by guitarist Chris Vachon, whose fiery licks keep a vibrant legacy burning bright. BW



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April 6 Beth McKee

April 7 Grayson Capps & the Lost Cause Minstrels

April 13 Eugene "Hideaway" Bridges

April 14 Roomful Of Blues

April 20 John Primer

April 21 Victor Wainwright & the Wildroots

April 28 JP Soars & the Red Hots

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TONI LYNN WASHINGTON
SPRINGING THE BLUES, JACKSONVILLE
BEACH/APRIL 13

TAMPA BAY BLUES FEST, ST. PETE/APRIL 14

Toni Lynn Washington is Boston blues royalty. At age 74, the sultry, soulful vocalist continues to win over audiences in Beantown and beyond. Washington was just in her teens when her family moved to Massachusetts from North Carolina. She had gained recognition for her church singing and went on to perform with soul kings Sam & Dave and Jackie Wilson. After taking time off to raise a family, Washington returned to the stage in 1992. She's found late-career success with a string of excellent recordings and seven Blues Music Award nominations. On



2003's *Been So Long*, Washington sang with equal authority on tunes such as Bessie Smith's classic "Back Water Blues," the R&B groover "Down in the Basement" and jazz standards "Willow Weep for Me" and "Angel Eyes." On record and on stage, she receives stellar backing from pianist Bruce Bears, her band director and a Boston blues stalwart himself. **BW**

THE MANNISH BOYS
TAMPA BAY BLUES FEST, ST. PETE/APRIL 14

How often have you heard an incredibly entertaining vocalist backed by subpar musicians? Or seen a searing guitarist or harmonica player who can't sing his way out of a paper bag? Then, there's The Mannish Boys, who present the best of all possible worlds. The rotating dream team of dynamic singers and dazzlingly talented musicians was assembled by Delta Groove label founder Randy Chortkoff, a mean harp blower in his own right. Texas blues vet Finis Tasby showcases a slinky vocal style that bespeaks years on stages alongside the likes of Freddie King, Lowell Fulson and John Lee Hooker. Tasby shares the mic with fellow Texas native Sugarray Rayford, who boasts a huge voice and megawatt charisma. Then there are guitarists Frank Goldwasser and Kirk Fletcher, harp man Chortkoff, bassist Willie J. Campbell and drummer Jimi Bott, each of whom generates plenty of heat. **BW**



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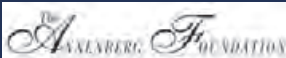
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**JOHN PRIMER
SPRINGING THE BLUES,
JACKSONVILLE BEACH/APRIL 14**

Willie Dixon knew it. So did Muddy Waters. And Magic Slim. Each of these Chicago blues giants recognized the talents of guitarist and vocalist John Primer, gave him a prominent spot in their bands and encouraged him to develop his skills. The Camden, Miss., native followed his blues heroes to Chicago in 1963. Over the years, he played in the house bands at Theresa's and the Checkerboard Lounge, honing his lead, slide and rhythm guitar skills. Since 1995, Primer has been showcasing his sizzling chops and man-sized vocals on recordings under his own name. His excellent 2009 release, *All Original*, contained a dozen self-penned tracks and was nominated for a Blues Music Award. And his stellar contributions to the all-star *Chicago Blues: A Living History* show just how much he absorbed from the masters. **BW**



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**SERGIO MENDES W/JON SECADA
NAPLES PHILHARMONIC CENTER/APRIL 10
KRAVIS CENTER, WEST PALM BEACH/APRIL 11
KING CENTER, MELBOURNE/APRIL 12
VAN WEZEL HALL, SARASOTA/APRIL 15,
ARSHT CENTER, MIAMI/APRIL 13 (W/Eliane Elias)**

At age 71, Brazilian keyboardist and composer Sergio Mendes stands as an enormously influential figure. His impact spans from Brazilian jazz — which he helped to pioneer — through hip-hop. Mendes' 2006 CD *Timeless* featured cameos by the Black-Eyed Peas, John Legend and Stevie Wonder, and his latest release, *Bom Tempo*, has already spawned a remix CD. Mendes' Brasil '66 group found success in the U.S. in



the 1960s by mixing samba and bossa with pop and funk on hits like "Mas Que Nada" and "The Look of Love." Cuban-born vocalist Jon Secada joins Mendes on most of his South Florida shows. However, for the themed A Night in Rio, in Miami, Brazilian pianist and vocalist Eliane Elias joins the bill. **BM**

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S P O T L I G H T

HARRY ALLEN QUARTET & BUCKY PIZZARELLI BROWARD CENTER, FORT LAUDERDALE/ APRIL 13

Tenor saxophonist Harry Allen, 45, is a throwback to swinging predecessors like Stan Getz, Zoot Sims and Al Cohn. With a résumé that includes recording and touring stints with Rosemary Clooney, Tony Bennett, Ray Brown, Hank Jones and John Pizzarelli, that isn't surprising, although Allen's work with pop stars James Taylor and Sheryl Crow might be. For this Gold Coast Jazz Society presentation, expect Allen and his quartet to lean toward standards, if for no other reason than their esteemed guest. Guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli, John's 86-year-old father, helped create the template



for how standards are played on guitar while working with Benny Goodman, Les Paul, Stephane Grappelli, and as part of Doc Severinsen's *Tonight Show* Band. The way Pizzarelli plays his signature seven-string Benedetto guitar will approximate a second pianist and bassist within Allen's band. **BM**

MATT WILSON'S ARTS & CRAFTS MINIACI CENTER, FORT LAUDERDALE/APRIL 14

Matt Wilson is not the stereotypical jazz drummer who leads a band with a poker face and an iron fist. Animated and exuberant, he's difficult not to watch. But there's a method to his madness. While upping the entertainment ante of his talented Arts & Crafts quartet — with trumpeter Terell Stafford, keyboardist Gary Versace and bassist Martin Wind — the gifted drummer is also acquainting listeners with highly unpredictable improvised music. On his original composition "Bubbles," from the quartet's new CD *An Attitude for Gratitude*, Wilson breaks into a poetic recitation inspired by Carl Sandburg. The standard "There's No You" gets a solo read by the inimitable Stafford;



Jaco Pastorius' "Teen Town" is downshifted through Wind's acoustic bass and Wilson's brushwork; and, on an unrehearsed, one-take version of "Bridge Over Troubled Water," Versace's piano turns the folk-pop classic into a bluesy hymn. For their South Florida JAZZ series performance, Wilson will also discuss his creative process. **BM**

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TURTLE ISLAND QUARTET
SOUTH MIAMI DADE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER,
CUTLER BAY, MIAMI/APRIL 21

With recordings honoring John Coltrane and Jimi Hendrix, the San Francisco-based Turtle Island Quartet have exploded the dimensions of the chamber ensemble. Featuring violinists David Balakrishnan and Mads Tolling, cellist Mark Summer and violist Jeremy Kittel, the quartet earned a second Best Classical Crossover Grammy in 2008 for their jazzy CD *A Love Supreme: The Legacy of John Coltrane* (the theme of this South Florida performance). And their latest release is no less adventurous. *Have You Ever Been...?*, from 2010, honors rock-god Hendrix through transformational covers of his classic compositions



and original material by Balakrishnan, the band's founder and principal writer. Cellist Summer displays jaw-dropping percussive and pizzicato techniques throughout. And Tolling and Kittel certainly hold their own; violinist Tolling graduated with honors from Berklee College of Music, and violist Kittel is a three-time national fiddle champion. **BM**

DEBBIE ORTA
SINGS BILLIE HOLIDAY & ELLA FITZGERALD
BANYAN BOWL, PINECREST GARDENS,
MIAMI/APRIL 28

Bronx-born, Miami-raised vocalist Debbie Orta formed her eponymous jazz group five years ago, and her long-awaited debut CD is set for imminent release. The disc will feature originals and standards, so this themed show of Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald classics could serve as a preview. Billie and Ella are arguably the greatest, most recognizable jazz singers of all time — Holiday, with her hushed, expressive, breathy delivery; Fitzgerald, with her warm embrace of ballads and multi-octave scat-singing. Orta's seasoning came as a backup singer for international



Latin stars Chayanne and Jose Luis Rodriguez prior to her solo career. The core of her band comprises the remainder of Miami's first family of Latin jazz: bassist and husband Nicky Orta, and pianist and brother-in-law Mike Orta. Saxophonist and flutist Troy Roberts and drummer Carlomango Araya complete her quintet. **BM**

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DAVE GOLDBERG
GLOBE CAFE, CORAL GABLES/APRIL 14

Hailing from Hollywood, tenor saxophonist Dave Goldberg was a fixture on the South Florida jazz scene in the 1990s. Now residing in Los Angeles, Goldberg displays limitless ideas on standards — check out his YouTube take on “Softly, As in a Morning Sunrise” — and the original compositions on his handful of Tritone Records releases, the latest of which is the new *Random Occurrences*. For this homecoming appearance, Goldberg performs in a trio with bassist Rick Doll, a South Florida jazz vet who played upright bass with an early version of Jaco Pastorius’ Word of Mouth band, and drummer Mike



Piolet. A University of Miami student from Chicago, Piolet has been part of UM bass instructor and faculty mentor Chuck Bergeron’s Stamps Jazz Quintet in recent years, touring to California and Colorado, and appearing at Festival Miami with vibraphone icon Gary Burton. **BM**

SOULFONIC
SATCHMO, FORT LAUDERDALE/APRIL 14

You want a Chicago-blues/Memphis-soul band with portfolio? Check out Soulfonic, an all-star South Florida group with deep musical roots. While based in San Diego with Professor Oak and the Hurricanes blues band, singer and guitarist Billy Seward (below) shared stages with Etta James, James Cotton, Junior Wells and Smokey Wilson. His exceptional 2011 CD *Better Place* was recorded at the famed Ardent Studios in Memphis and showcases his expressive pipes on mostly original, classic-sounding material. Rounding out Soulfonic are area blues vets Phil Bithell on keys,



Vinnie Fontana on bass, Jason Rozner on trumpet and Seward’s former Hurricanes bandmate Stan Waldman on sax. Drummer Ron Wilson lays down the big beat, as he did with Johnny Rawls, Johnnie Marshall and William Bell, and the group is frequently joined by Miami soul great Betty Padgett. **BW**

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- Thur. 4-5 Open Jam Session
Fri. 4-6 Troy "Satchmo" Anderson
Sat. 4-7 Urban Blues Express
Sun. 4-8 In the House comedy night
Mon. 4-9 The John Branzer Orchestra
- Thur. 4-12 Open Jam Session
Fri. 4-13 **Wade Baker Memphis Blues & Rock**
Sat. 4-14 SoulFonic with Stan Waldman
Mon. 4-16 **Orqestra Nostalgia**
- Thur. 4-19 Open Jam Session
Fri. 4-20 **Michael Sean Allman**
Sat. 4-21 **Rockin Jack Blues & Rock**
Mon. 4-23 **The Bobby Rodriguez Jazz Orchestra**
- Thur. 4-26 Open Jam Session
Fri. 4-27 Liz Sharp
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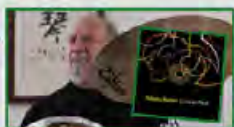
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