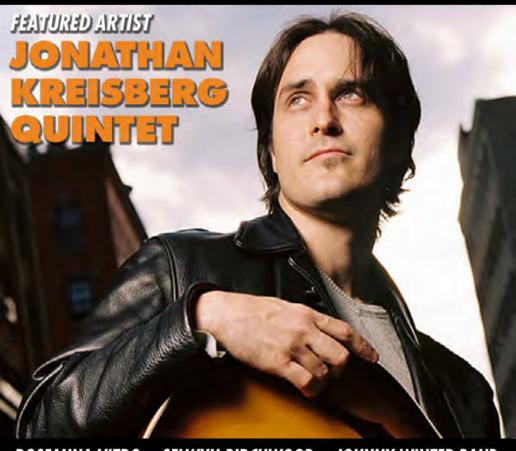


FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES



ROSEANNA VITRO • SELWYN BIRCHWOOD • JOHNNY WINTER BAND
ZACH BARTHOLOMEW TRIO • JOSH GARRETT BAND
DUFFY JACKSON QUINTET • BARRELHOUSE CHUCK • RJ HOWSON BAND
CHRISTIAN McBRIDE TRIO • BOBBY LEE RODGERS JAZZ TRIO

# JONATHAN KREISBERG

by Bill Meredith

### MOST RISING JAZZ ARTISTS PREFER

leading a band to serving as a sideman with a veteran jazz star. But New York City-based guitarist Jonathan Kreisberg is enjoying the best of both worlds, helming his own group and working with 70-year-old Hammond organ icon Dr. Lonnie Smith.

Kreisberg's eighth solo CD, the 2011 release *Shadowless*, has proven a critical and commercial success. Featuring saxophonist and keyboardist Will Vinson, bassist Matt Penman and drummer Mark Ferber, the disc ranges from original burners and ballads to standards. "We'll do some *Shadowless* material during our upcoming South Florida shows, and some new stuff," promises Kreisberg, who spoke with me by phone while touring Europe in July, and who will be performing shows in Miami and Delray Beach this month.

But the hollow-body-guitarist's most recent recording credit is on Dr. Lonnie's self-released live disc, *The Healer*. Kreisberg and drummer Jamire Williams round out the sizzling trio, and Kreisberg mixed the freewheeling CD, the first

release on Smith's Pilgrimage Productions imprint. "I encouraged Lonnie to start his own label," he says, adding that he'll release his future CDs solely on his own New for Now imprint. "You get more of the money that way, and you have control over the material."

Recorded at the Lamantin Jazz Festival in Hungary last summer and at the Jazz Standard in New York City this January, *The Healer* makes listeners wish they'd been there. Smith and Kreisberg trade monumental solos on Dr. Lonnie originals like the loping "Backtrack," and Williams is a buzzsaw on covers like Harold Mabern's frenetic "Beehive." Kreisberg contrasts the trio with Tony Williams' Lifetime, the drummer-led fusion trio from the '60s and '70s with guitarist John McLaughlin and organist Larry Young. "Those guys broke ground, but almost by rejecting certain aspects of jazz," Kreisberg says. "This trio fuses jazz with soul,



funk and psychedelia, which fits Doc's personality."

Fifteen years ago, Kreisberg was a South Florida fusion star. The New York City native started out crafting his blend of guitarist Allan Holdsworth's legato style and pianist Keith Jarrett's harmonic approach after moving south with his family. He further refined it at the New World School of the Arts and at the University of Miami.

Kreisberg kicked off his recording career with his rock group Wyscan's 1995 release *Third Wish*. The guitarist then recruited that quintet's rhythm section — bassist Javier Carrion and drummer Vince Verderame — for his self-named fusion trio. Their eponymous 1996 CD included live and studio originals, as well as covers ranging from The Beatles' "Come Together" to the standard "Someday My Prince Will Come." Scintillating South Florida and East Coast shows

## JONATHAN KREISBERG

followed. But when Kreisberg returned to New York in 1997 to focus on traditional jazz, Carrion and Verderame veered toward other ventures.

For his upcoming South Florida appearances, Kreisberg brings the underrated and lyrical Vinson; the intense-yet-controlled Ferber; and bassist Joe Martin, part of the rhythm-section cast that rotates through his regular Wednesday trio gig at La Lanterna in Greenwich Village. "Joe's great, and we've been playing together for years," Kreisberg says. "He just hasn't shown up on any recordings yet."

Slated for release this fall, Kreisberg's next recording will be a solo-guitar album. But with a band at his back, he remains a force of nature. During a May 2010 performance with Vinson, Penman and drummer Eric Doob, the guitarist nearly leveled Miami's Tobacco Road. Fortunately, the Road still stands, as Kreisberg and company return and try to beat the rumored wrecking ball that threatens the nearly 100-year-old venue.

The Jonathan Kreisberg Quartet performs on August 24 at Tobacco Road in Miami. Call 305-374-1198 or visit Tobacco-road.com. They'll also perform on August 25 at the Arts Garage in Delray Beach. Call 561-450-6357 or visit Artsgarage.org.





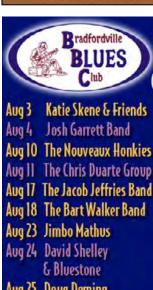
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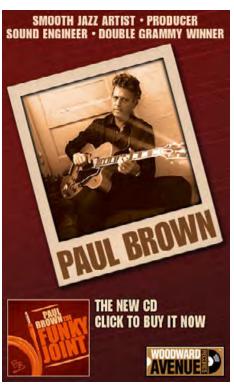
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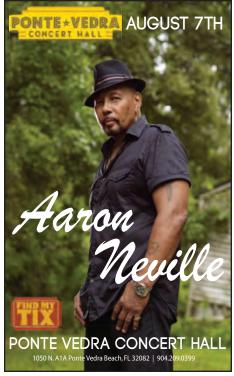
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BAMBOO ROOM, LAKE WORTH/AUG. 3 BRADFORDVILLE BLUES, TALLAHASSEE/AUG. 4 PARADISE BAR & GRILL, PENSACOLA/AUG. 5 Josh Garrett's blues are shot through with the humidity

of his hometown of Houma, La. The title song to his 2011 recording, *String of Problems*, showcases his prickly-heat lead guitar and roughhewn vocals against a backdrop of burbling B-3 organ and the relentless rhythms of his Bottom Line band. Other tunes from his songbook, such as "Take Me Home" and "Zydeco Boogaloo," are fueled by a turbocharged horn section, while emotional ballads, such as "Damn Shame,"



are lent poignancy by biography. Garrett's A few years ago, the guitarist served with the Army in Iraq before resuming his career in Nashville. But the bayou was in his blood, and he returned to Louisiana in 2010. Garrett will share the bill at Lake Worth's Bamboo Room with Florida's own cigarbox-guitar virtuoso Ben Prestage. BW

#### SELWYN BIRCHWOOD THE ALLEY, SANFORD/AUG. 3 BOSTON'S, DELRAY/AUG. 7

JAZZ ON MOORE'S CREEK, FORT PIERCE/AUG. 10 Selvyn Birchwood's cutting leads draw blood like razor-edged sawgrass. That's only appropriate for a Sunshine State native, who titled his 2011 debut recording FL Boy. Fired up after after witnessing a Buddy Guy show in Orlando, a then-17-year-old Birchwood set about trying to capture the intensity of his blues heroes. Apparently, he got pretty good at it, as Texas blues vet Sonny Rhodes took him on the road with his band. Birchwood then assembled his own crew of Florida blues experts and snared opening spots on shows by Guy, Robert Cray and



John Lee Hooker Jr. genuine triplethreat, Birchwood also boasts a river-deep blues voice and serious songwriting skills in a variety of styles, as the oftenautobiographical tracks on FL Boy reveal. Birchwood and his band also made it to the finals of this International Blues Challenge in Memphis. BW







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#### BARRELHOUSE CHUCK W/THE NUCKLEBUSTERS ARTS GARAGE, DELRAY/AUG. 18

Barrelhouse Chuck Goering was living in Gainesville when he first heard a Muddy Waters album with Otis Spann on piano. His mind blown, the Ohio native devoured blues LPs and taught himself the rudiments of blues piano. Goering relocated to Chicago in 1979, where he had access to piano masters such as Sunnyland Slim, Little Brother Montgomery, Blind John Davis, Detroit Junior and Erwin Helfer. A devoted disciple, Barrelhouse Chuck has kept their traditions alive. And as the pioneers pass away, his mastery is prized all the more by colleagues such as Buddy Guy, Eddy Clearwater, James Cotton and Kim Wilson, with all of whom he's performed or recorded.



Earlier this year, the Viola label released the second volume of a Barrelhouse Chuck retrospective titled 35 Years of Chicago Blues Piano, while last year's Blues Calling provides a taste of modernday Chuck. For his show in Delray, he'll be capably assisted by South Florida blues veterans The Nucklebusters. BW

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Bradenton-based bluesman RJ Howson boasts a big, bruising guitar sound forged on the Chicago blues scene. Of course, you have to command more than volume and flash to thrive in Windy City nightspots such as Rosa's, Kingston Mines and Buddy Guy's Legends. And certainly, Howson brings a rootedness to his welt-raising leads and emotionally invested vocals. His intense approach bears echoes of bluesrockers such as Hendrix and Johnny Winter, as



can be heard in his interpretations of tunes such as "Little Wing" and "Killin' Floor." They're also threaded into the DNA of his impressive original tunes. Howson's been wowing audiences throughout central Florida with his trio, and holds down regular nights at various spots, as listed above. BW





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### JOHNNY WINTER BAND ROCK 'N' BLUES FEST

### FLORIDA THEATER, JACKSONVILLE/AUG. 27

Fans of Johnny Winter needn't be concerned about the abilities of the 68-year-old blues-rock giant. As captured on the newly released *Live From Japan* DVD, which was recorded last year, the Texas guitarslinger is in excellent shape as he rips through favorites such as "She Likes to Boogie Real Low," "Blackjack" and "Bonie Maronie." While Winter's voice might not bear quite the same throat-ripping intensity it once did, he remains a superb blues singer. And while he now stays seated, he's certainly lost none of his dexterity, as he thumbpicks one fiery lead after another. Energized by an expert four-piece band, Winter



reminds you why he once fueled bidding wars for his contract and was a cherished associate of Muddy Waters. For the aptly named Rock 'N' Blues Fest, Winter's band will share the bill with the band of Johnny's vounger brother, the multitalented Edgar Winter, plus blues-rock kings Rick Derringer Kim Simmonds, BW

#### ROSEANNA VITRO W/RANDY NEWMAN PROJECT CORAL GABLES CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MIAMI/AUG. 2

Jazz artists who cover the pop-music canon often produce interesting results, especially when they delve beyond the expected. Count vocalist Roseanna Vitro among them. Her latest CD, last year's *The Music of Randy Newman*, salutes the 68-year-old California curmudgeon who's best known for penning satirical hits such as "Short People" and "I Love L.A." Whether engaging in hushed ballads or energetic scat-singing, Vitro's soaring vocal prowess on the album certainly defies expectations. Newman's somber "Sail Away" is lifted by her pristine, expressive delivery, and she excels on "Baltimore," which gets a Brazilian makeover



courtesy of pianist Mark Soskin, bassist Dean Johnson and drummer Tim Horner. That trio, with violinist Sara Caswell, joins the freespirited, spontaneous vocalist for her Miami performance. They'll likely prove why the Grammy-nominated recording ranks with Vitro's other tribute, 1997's Catchin' Some Rays: The Music of Ray Charles. BM



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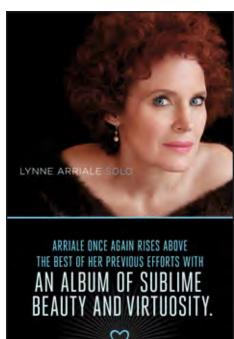
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With paragons such as Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett setting the template, it isn't easy for young piano trios to distinguish themselves. But the Zach Bartholomew Trio are more than up to the challenge. On their debut CD, Out of This Town, 26-year-old pianist and composer Bartholomew displays a lyrical piano style that draws from iconic and modern influences alike. He's complemented by the supple support of bassist Brandon Robertson and drummer Miles Bozeman, both of whom contribute compositions to the album. Robertson's hip-hop-



influenced lines apply modernism, while Bozeman ranges from intense to subtle. And Bartholomew insists that he and his bandmates play everything —even standardsfrom memory rather than from charts, to encourage focus and improvisation. Out This Town is strong enough that "out of this country" may be in the cards. BM

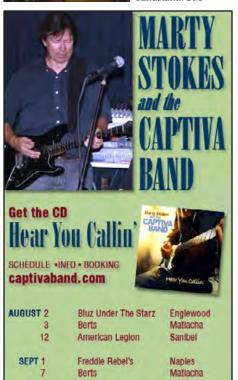
#### DUFFY JACKSON QUINTET ARTS GARAGE, DELRAY BEACH/AUG. 11

Tutored by three of the greatest drummers in jazz history—Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa and Louie Bellson —Duffy Jackson was born to swing. The everanimated Jackson got his first drum set at age 4, from his father, famed swing bassist Chubby Jackson. Since then, the drummer, pianist, bassist, vibraphonist, vocalist and bandleader has worked with a who's-who of jazz artists—from Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Artie Shaw and Count Basie to James Moody, Grover Washington Jr., George Benson and Harry Connick Jr. Now living in Nashville, the longtime South Floridian returns to the area to lead a quintet of area stalwarts: tenor saxophonist John



Michalak, trumpeter Dave Gibble, pianist Dolph Castellano and bassist Rick Doll. A superlative soloist, Jackson is likely to perform standards and originals from dynamic releases like 1994's Swing! Swing! Swing! 1998's and French Connection, as well as tunes by the many jazz greats with whom he's shared the bandstand, BM





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#### CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE TRIO CORAL GABLES CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MIAMI/AUG. 16

In recent years, Christian McBride has cemented his reputation as one of jazz's most-versatile bassists. Whether playing burning hardbop, molten fusion or soaring swing, McBride has more than lived up to the promise he showed as a teen phenomenon. Having played with everyone from Freddie Hubbard to Pat Metheny to Sting, McBride at 40 has done it all. However, he realized a long-held dream last year when he recorded with a big band under his leadership. The resulting album, *The Good Feeling*, earned him a Grammy. Another 2011 release, *Conversations With Christian*, presented the bassist in a series of duets with



collaborators such as Chick Corea, Hank Jones, Roy Hargrove and Regina Carter. McBride's eponymous trio features young guns in pianist Christian Sands and drummer Ulysses Owens Jr., both of whom play beyond their years the way McBride did when he was studying at Juilliard and was hired by saxophonist Bobby Watson. BM



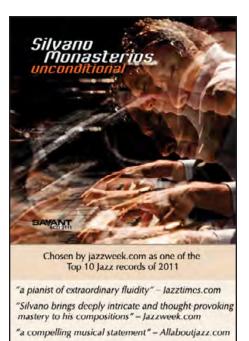
#### BOBBY LEE RODGERS JAZZ TRIO THE MUSIC OF CHARLIE PARKER GREEN ROOM, FORT LAUDERDALE/AUG. 23

Guitarist Bobby Lee Rodgers continues to pay homage to his jazz heroes, as he and his trio take on the music of Charlie Parker this month. The Georgia native has been hosting a tribute series at the Green Room in Fort Lauderdale and has thus far honored Miles Davis, Wes Montgomery, John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk and others. Rodgers achieves a unique tone by playing his vintage 1949 Gibson guitar through a Fender Super Reverb amplifier, an Echoplex and a whirling Leslie cabinet. He also receives sterling accompaniment from seasoned sidemen such as bassist Don Coffman



and drummer Pete Lavezzoli. While Rodgers, who fronted the quirky pop band The Codetalkers, also performs original iam-band material in other incarnations, he returns to his roots with the jazz trio. After all, at age 23, he was among the youngest professors at Berklee College of Music in the early '90s. BM



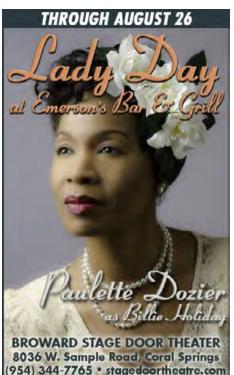


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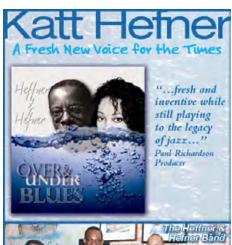
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