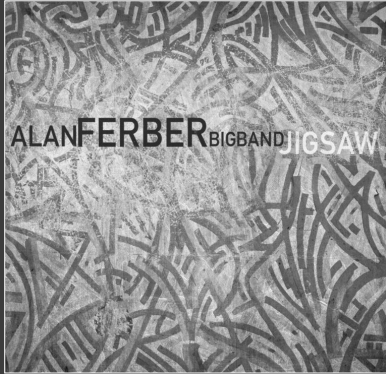




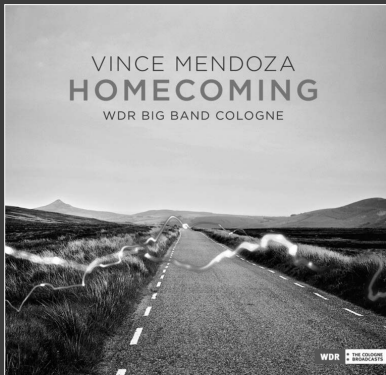
GRAMMY  
NOMINEES



ALAN FERBER BIG BAND  
JIGSAW

SSC 1494 - IN STORES NOW

The band features saxophonists John O'Gallagher, Rob Wilkerson, John Ellis, Jason Rigby and Chris Cheek; trombonists Ferber, John Fedchock, Jacob Garchik and Jennifer Wharton; trumpeters Tony Kadleck, Scott Wendholt, Alex Norris and Clay Jenkins; and the rhythm section of Anthony Wilson on guitar, David Cook on piano and keyboards, bassist Matt Pavolka, drummer Mark Ferber and additional percussion by Rogerio Boccato.



VINCE MENDOZA  
WDR BIG BAND COLOGNE  
HOMECOMING

SSC 1496 - IN STORES NOW

The union of Vince Mendoza/WDR Big Band is as organic as the compositions themselves. They are together at home. A relationship, that has grown over the years and is characterised by mutual respect, the eagerness to work on projects together and the values of cooperation and togetherness, which have known better days. Those better days are back.



iTunes.com/AlanFerber  
iTunes.com/VinceMendoza  
www.sunysiderecords.com



Saxophonist Albert Ayler told critic Nat Hentoff in a 1966 *DownBeat* interview that "I'd like to play something...that people can hum, songs like I used to sing when I was real small. Folk melodies that all the people would understand." Though Ayler's music involves dense passages of free improvisation, allover rhythmic activity and possessed shouts and screams in multiple registers of the horn, simple, often martial themes and maudlin balladic forms are at the core of his long-form suites. Chicago-rooted saxophonist **Mars Williams** (NRG Ensemble, Extraordinary Popular Delusions, The Psychedelic Furs) founded *Witches & Devils* in 1997 as an Ayler repertory ensemble; in 2009, the group began interpolating Christmas tunes as part of holiday-themed sets, which Williams has taken on the road eight years later. For a special concert at The Stone (Dec. 4th), the saxophonist was joined by longtime confrère Joe McPhee on tenor and pocket trumpet, trombonist Steve Swell, bassist Hilliard Greene, guitarist Nels Cline and drummer Chris Corsano for a nearly 90-minute set of familiar hymns shot through with intense passages of lung-busting improvisation and deft interplay. It turns out that there's not a lot of distance between themes like "Bells", "Truth Is Marching In" and "Omega & Alpha" and nuggets like "Jingle Bells", "The Twelve Days of Christmas" and "O Tannenbaum". We could all use a bit of garish full-throttle cheer in our current climate.

— Clifford Allen



Joe McPhee, Nels Cline & Mars Williams @ The Stone



Arun Ramamurthy @ The Appel Room

It's not every day that one gets to review a birthday party—the cake was indeed delicious—but the age of 90 is quite a feat of longevity for a working musician. Tenor saxophonist **Ted Brown** (b. Dec. 1st, 1927) is one of the few living musicians to have worked with pianist Lennie Tristano's groups. In the CD era, his partners have often included younger musicians like cornet player Kirk Knuffke and fellow tenor saxophonist Brad Linde. In 2013, the DC-based Linde assembled a birthday happening at The Drawing Room in Downtown Brooklyn, in which the two saxophonists invited a variety of collaborators to perform two sets of standards and Brown's originals. Luckily the event has continued and for this nonagenarian celebration (Dec. 2nd), the ensemble included guitarist Aaron Quinn, bassist Kris Monson (a visual and sonic ringer for a young Scott LaFaro), drummers Jeff Brown (the saxophonist's son) and Deric Dickens and alto saxophonist Jon De Lucia. Linde provided interesting counterpoint with a huskier and sparser approach to the horn than Brown's upper-register and taffy-like legato, the latter sounding as though Lester Young were channeling Ivo Perelman. In a jam session-like vibe featuring players several generations removed from Brown's initial immersion in bebop and swing, the ensemble often carved out apposite spaces in lengthy improvisations on tunes like "Lester Leaps In", "I Remember You" and the celebrant's classic piece "Smog Eyes".

(CA)

Indian classical music and jazz, both highly improvised, share as many differences as similarities, so the **Indo-Jazz Festival** (Dec. 10th) at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Appel Room, an exploration of their potential intersections, promised to be interesting. First up was Carnatica Jazz, a trio with violinist Arun Ramamurthy, bassist Rashaan Carter and drummer Sameer Gupta recalling, at first listen, John Coltrane's modal experiments, but soon revealing a stronger South Indian sensibility in the development of the underlying ragas, idiomatic ornamentation of melodies and rhythmic subdivisions and cadences. Next, Parul Shah danced a long choreographed solo accompanied by violinist Trina Basu, cellist Amali Premawardhana and tabla drummer Mike Lukshis that drew equally on her deep training in Kathak and modern dance styles, climaxing in several *tihais* (thrice repeated rhythmic cadences), her bare feet stamping in perfect unison with Lukshis' finger taps. Melodic Intersect, led by sitar player/vocalist Hidayat Khan, driven by the twin tablas of Enayet Hossain and Avirodh Sharma and enlivened by keyboardist Greg Hatza's odd but apposite pitch-slides, was the most eclectic act, performing in a style, which, while patently steeped in Hindustani (North Indian) influences, defied facile categorization. Moving through rapid segues and short solo interludes, the group eschewed slow and steady melodic development for a mercurial pastiche of changing moods and modes.

— Tom Greenland

Billed as Forever Weird, The Kitchen's Dec. 9th triple-header gathered three extraordinary veteran bands. **Kamikaze Ground Crew**, a six-horn septet co-led by multi-instrumentalist/composers Gina Leishman and Doug Wieselmann, began the event with a slow-burning set of the leaders' compositions, mostly somber chorales and tone poems of blended reeds and brass—up until the closer, when they swaggered through trumpeter Steven Bernstein's setting of the New Orleans standard "Blow Wind Blow", impelled by the second-line beat of tuba player Marcus Rojas and drummer Kenny Wollesen. **The Jazz Passengers** were more capricious as they rattled off strings of eccentric solos: Roy Nathanson's zany saxophones (baritone, alto, soprano—sometimes two at once!), Curtis Fowlkes' robust trombone, Sam Bardfeld's angular violin, Bill Ware's quicksilver vibraphone and Brad Jones' singing bass. Tough but spare drummer Ben Perowsky was the only one not singing harmony on '70s soul-flavored "Reunited", followed by Ware crooning "Spring Flowers", his psychedelic ode to hemp. **The Microscopic Septet** trotted out pianist Joel Forrester and Phillip Johnston's impeccable tunes with casual precision, the four saxophones (Johnston, Don Davis, Mike Hashim, Dave Sewelson on soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, respectively) swinging hard over the rhythm section. For the finale, nine musicians joined the Micros onstage for a rousing F-blues, horns afloat, solos in pairs or threes.

(TG)

**Jeremiah Cymerman** is a musician whose clarinet playing is both informed by and directly affected by his concurrent work as a sound-sculptor. Like a small coterie of improvisers, his chosen instrument is purely a means to an auditory end rather than a continuation of any particular lineage. That said, he does have a particular affinity for the way that reed instruments vibrate the air around them and how their acoustic properties are ripe for electronic transmogrification. At Roulette (Dec. 5th), Cymerman presented another in a long line of fascinating projects, his *Systema Muditotius* piece written for four clarinets and a pair of percussionists. While he picked three strong musical personalities in Matt Bauder, Patrick Holmes and Aaron Novik to join him in the clarinet section, the foursome congealed into one heaving, panting unearthly being, crawling around the dank hallways constructed by drummer Brian Chase and eerily lit by percussionist Russell Greenberg, who played or bowed xylophone, cymbals and gongs. Overtones were created in gaseous explosions, primordial wails echoed from bygone ancient eons, waves of clarinet exhortations lapped up against alien shores, all this processed by the composer in real time. Cymerman alchemically juxtaposed sections where the disparate sound sources worked in unsettling tandem against ones where they were spatchcocked, existing alongside or even opposed to each other. Gentler moments subverted the palate for later squalls.

—*Andrey Henkin*



Jeremiah Cymerman @ Roulette

Despite a more than half-century career, appearances by **Bill Easley** fronting his own group remain a rarity. So an appearance by the saxophonist's quartet at Tribeca's recently opened 75 Club (Dec. 14th) at Bogardus Mansion was well worth the trip to the depths of Manhattan. Offstage Easley confessed, "Leading a band isn't all that hard. All you have to do is choose the right musicians, the right songs and how to play them." In selecting pianist Michael Kanan, bassist Lee Hudson and drummer Steve Williams to accompany him, Easley proved that he had that first element covered. And with an enormous repertoire of standards and jazz classics under his belt, the second part of the equation presented little difficulty. But it was his handling of that third variable that confirmed he was indeed a first-class bandleader. Starting off on tenor he displayed his swing to bop roots, dancing straightahead on Benny Carter's "When Lights Are Low" and burning through a calypso-infused rendition of Charlie Parker's "Anthropology". On "My Foolish Heart" he played with a cool airy tone, revealing an affection for Lester Young. Switching to alto he got down and dirty for David Fathead Newman's "Hard Times" and sweet and pretty on "Stars Fell On Alabama" (a reference to the week's Senate race). Back on tenor he dug deep into the blues with an original dedicated to Sonny Stitt, before closing out proclaiming his old-school pedigree with "Taking A Chance On Love" and "The Continental".

—*Russ Musto*



Bill Easley @ Bogardus Mansion's 75 Club

To inaugurate his new improvised music series *Inside Out* at Brooklyn Conservatory of Music (Dec. 3rd), curator Aryeh Kobrinsky aimed for the moon with the duo of trumpeter **Peter Evans** and drummer **Mike Pride**. The pair are two-thirds of Evans' *Pulverize The Sound* and it is to their great credit that they used the absence of electric bassist Tim Dahl to present radically different music than expected. Instead of brash, bloodying vignettes, a single through-composed piece of nearly 50 minutes entranced a refreshingly crowded auditorium. Pride began on glockenspiel and Evans piccolo trumpet, both players with music stands full of densely notated sheet music in front of them, flanked by harsh globe lights, the resonance of the two metal instruments creating wondrous overtones. Evans then moved to ghostly whispers and *Pride* to the conservatory's concert bass drum. As Evans' lines increased in density, a marching fanfare segmented as if through a prism. It was bracing to see these two navigate such a rigorous chart, hear roto-toms outside of fusion and attempt to discern the improvised portions from the composed sections birthing them. If Evans' precision is a known yet always compelling quantity, *Pride* was equally impressive matching the cadences of the trumpeter's lines. A section with brushes was almost jazzy while a part with mini-gongs and railroad nail chimes became ritualistic. A return to the opening gambit led to pastoral simplicity and a series of quick, plucky lines in tandem to close. (AH)

While his annual residencies at the Village Vanguard are always joyously festive, this year's holiday season engagement by **Kenny Barron** offered listeners an added cause for celebration, with the NEA Jazz Master pianist presenting several new works from his forthcoming new release. Barron opened up the third night of his quintet stand (Dec. 13th) with a delicately evinced solo piano prelude to the standard "How Deep Is The Ocean", which had his bandmates looking on with reverence. As the tempo brightened the group joined in to play the classic melody. Trumpeter Mike Rodriguez took the first eight bars with brassy clarity and tenor saxophonist Dayna Stephens followed, first in an airy Prez-ish tone, then diving deep into lower register to solo over the double-time walking bass and driving drums of Kiyoshi Kitagawa and Johnathan Blake. Then Rodriguez took another turn with well-chosen notes mining the rich harmonies before the trio took over to close with grace and power. The band danced vivaciously over the Latin-tinged rhythms of Barron's "Baile", then slowed down for his dramatic film score excerpt "In The Dark". Another new piece by the pianist, "DPW" (fêting his Ditmas Park West Brooklyn address) had the group interacting with soulful verve in a manner recalling the hardbop glory days of Blue Note bands. Barron spelled the band with a lithe solo reading of Thelonious Monk's "Light Blue", then brought them back to swing hard on his fiery closer "Blue Waters". (RM)

## WHAT'S NEWS

Basketball legend and jazz champion Kareem Abdul-Jabbar has been selected to give the keynote address at the **First Annual Jazz Congress**, taking place Jan. 11th-12th at Jazz at Lincoln Center and co-produced by *JazzTimes*. For more information, visit [jazzcongress.org](http://jazzcongress.org).

As part of the annual **Winter Jazzfest**, there will be a number of panel discussions: "Jazz on the Border: International Musicians and U.S. Visas" (Jan. 14th at 2 pm at The New School Starr Foundation Hall with Antonio Sanchez, Alexis Cuadrado, Lucia Cadotsch and moderated by Matthew Covey); "Jazz and Gender: Challenging Inequality and Forging a New Legacy" (Jan. 15th at 2 pm at The New School Tishman Auditorium with Angela Davis, Lara Pellegrinelli, Arnetta Johnson, Vijay Iyer and moderated by Terri Lyne Carrington); and "The Long March: A Conversation on Jazz and Protest Through the Generations" (Jan. 16th at 6 pm at Le Poisson Rouge with Archie Shepp, Nicole Mitchell, Samora Pinderhughes and moderated by Ras Moshe Burnett). For more information, visit [winterjazzfest.com](http://winterjazzfest.com).

Nominations for the **2017 Grammy Awards**, to be presented Jan. 28th, have been announced. Relevant categories are: Best Contemporary Instrumental Album: Jerry Douglas Band, Alex Han, Julian Lage/Chris Eldridge, Jeff Lorber Fusion and Antonio Sanchez; Best Improvised Jazz Solo: Sara Caswell, Billy Childs, Fred Hersch, John McLaughlin and Chris Potter; Best Jazz Vocal Album: The Baylor Project, Jazzmeia Horn, Raul Midón, Randy Porter Trio With Nancy King and Cécile McLorin Salvant; Best Jazz Instrumental Album: Bill Charlap Trio, Billy Childs, Joey DeFrancesco & The People, Fred Hersch and Chris Potter; Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album: John Beasley, Alan Ferber Big Band, Christian McBride Big Band, Vince Mendoza & WDR Big Band Cologne and Chuck Owen And The Jazz Surge; Best Latin Jazz Album: Antonio Adolfo, Jane Bunnett & Maqueque, Anat Cohen & Marcello Gonçalves, Miguel Zenón and Pablo Ziegler Trio; Best Instrumental Composition: Pascal Le Boeuf, Vince Mendoza, Nate Smith, Arturo O'Farrill and Chuck Owen; Best Arrangement, Instrumental or A Cappella: Chuck Owen, Nate Smith, John Beasley; Best Arrangement, Instruments and Vocals: Shelly Berg, Gregg Field, Gordon Goodwin & Clint Holmes. For more information, visit [grammy.com](http://grammy.com).

Vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater received the 2017 **ASCAP Foundation** Champion Award, "established to celebrate ASCAP members whose contributions extend beyond music to significant charitable and humanitarian efforts." while David Leon received the Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award. For more information, visit [ascapfoundation.org](http://ascapfoundation.org).

**Issue Project Room** has announced its 2018 Artists-In-Residence, among the recipients are bassist Brandon Lopez. For more information, visit [issueprojectroom.org](http://issueprojectroom.org).

The 2018 class of **Lincoln Center Awards for Emerging Artists** recipients have been announced with pianist Isaiah Thompson named by Jazz at Lincoln Center. For more information, visit [LincolnCenter.org/LCAwards2018](http://LincolnCenter.org/LCAwards2018).

Faculty have been named for the inaugural year of Carnegie Hall's **NYO Jazz**, a four-week intensive summer program for young American jazz instrumentalists (ages 16-19) beginning in summer 2018. Workshops and classes will be led by drummer Obed Calvaire, trumpeter Etienne Charles, pianist Gerald Clayton, trombonist Wycliffe Gordon, saxophonist Erica von Kleist, bassist Mimi Jones, guitarist Matthew Stevens and ensemble coach Reggie Thomas. For more information and to apply by Feb. 1st, visit [carnegiehall.org/nyojazz](http://carnegiehall.org/nyojazz).

**Cosmic Communities: Coming Out Into Outer Space—Homofuturism, Applied Psychedelica & Magic Connectivity**, an exhibition at Galerie Buchholz running through Jan. 13th, includes works by Sun Ra and Hartmut Geerken. For more information, visit [galeriebuchholz.de](http://galeriebuchholz.de).

As part of MoMA PS1's VW Sunday Sessions, **Monastic and Ecstatic: A Glimpse Into The Life and Legacy of Alice Coltrane** will take place Feb. 11th from 1-6 pm. For more information, visit [moma.org](http://moma.org).

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