



**Everything Is Cool**  
Giacomo Gates (Savant)  
by Marcia Hillman

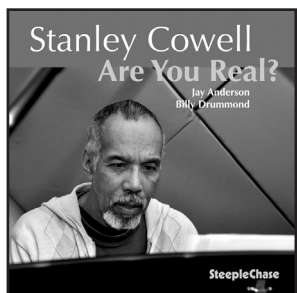
Vocalist Giacomo Gates reverts to his hipster roots to deliver a selection of underdone minor bop standards. Joining him is a band of Grant Stewart (saxophone), John di Martino (pianist), Tony Lombardozi (guitar), Ed Howard (bass) and Willard Dyson (drums).

Gates is at home with the material and because these tunes are not heard very often, almost every one feels fresh. The opening title track – one of three written by singer-songwriter Babs Gonzales (along with “When Lovers They Lose” and “Here Today, Gone Tomorrow”) – has lyrics written in ‘50s hipster ‘slanguage’ Gates inhabits with ease. What follows is such items as alto saxophonist Paul Desmond’s classic composition “Take Five”, with the original lyrics written by Iola Brubeck; “Hazel’s Hips”, a delightful tune by Oscar Brown, Jr. about a waitress in a diner; saxophonist Gigi Gryce’s “Social Call”, with lyrics by Jon Hendricks; and the provocatively titled “If I Were You, Baby, I’d Love Me”, written by Timmie Rogers and recorded by Nat “King” Cole in 1950. The most interesting choice is a touching rendition of “All Alone”, music and lyrics by comedian Lenny Bruce.

Di Martino, known for his skill accompanying vocalists, has notable moments on “Here Today, Gone Tomorrow”, “Hazel’s Hips” and especially “All Alone”, done in duo with Gates. Lombardozi sparkles on “Who Threw The Glue?” (written by Gates and John Eaton) and trombonist Frank Rosolino’s “Please Don’t Bug Me”. Howard and Dyson are a solid rhythm section, the former shining during his solo on “Social Call”. Stewart plays neat fills behind Gates on “When Lovers They Lose” and contributes notable solos on “Take Five” and “If I Were You, Baby, I’d Love Me”.

Everything is definitely cool on this album – the selections, the band and most definitely the leader!

For more information, visit [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com). Gates is at Jazz at Kitano Oct. 1st. See Calendar.



**Are You Real?**  
Stanley Cowell (SteepleChase)  
by Anders Griffen

Originally scheduled to be a Freddie Redd session, pianist Stanley Cowell filled in when Mr. Redd’s health kept him from making the date. The rhythm section of Jay Anderson (bass) and Billy Drummond (drums) was already in place. “I had to put together something very quickly,” Cowell is quoted in Neil Tesser’s liner notes. “I chose some standards and a couple of originals.” Tesser clarifies that, “standards ... for our purposes, includes classic jazz compositions as well as gems from the Great American Songbook.” Except for the title track by Benny Golson and Paquito D’Rivera’s “I Remember Diz”, the program is penned by piano giants – McCoy Tyner, Jaki Byard, Tadd Dameron,

Thelonious Monk and, of course, Cowell himself.

Cowell is a virtuoso pianist and a masterful composer and improviser. The CD opens with “Photon in a Paper World”, an inventive Cowell staple that appeared on his 1969 debut album *Blues for the Viet Cong* (Freedom) as well as two more SteepleChase releases, *Departure #2* (1990) and *Hear Me One* (1996). Tyner’s “You Taught My Heart To Sing” is absolutely beautiful; it’s among the ‘new standards’ but sounds as though it comes from the Great American Songbook. Cowell plays Byard’s “Mrs. Parker of KC” in octaves with the melody in each hand; try this at home. Composed in 1945, Dameron’s “Hot House” is the contrafact of Cole Porter’s “What Is This Thing Called Love” and still sounds fresh here. “The Wedding Recessional” seems to be a reworking of Cowell’s “Wedding March”, which also appeared on the pianist’s debut (as well as Bobby Hutcherson’s *Spiral*). The melody sings on this uptempo treatment, which contrasts the spacious and meditative original, and it features a light funk beat, which, unlike the jazz-funk of the ‘70s, is rarely successful in acoustic jazz settings, but Drummond is able to pull it off. The set closes with an inspired rendering of Monk’s “Off Minor”.

This trio’s maiden voyage was successful enough that they’ve already made a followup recording and debuted some of that music at the Village Vanguard back in June. Besides being the appointed leader, Cowell’s artistry and vision drive the group. Art Tatum is one of his major influences and some hear a kinship to Ahmad Jamal, but most of all, his is an original and powerful musical voice, with contributions extending beyond jazz. Not enough can be said about his genius in this forum. Stanley Cowell is among the masters.

For more information, visit [steeplechase.dk](http://steeplechase.dk). Cowell is at Smoke Oct. 2nd-4th. See Calendar.



**Homes**  
Gilad Hekselman (Jazz Village)  
by Tom Greenland

Now entering his second decade on the New York City scene, Israeli-born guitarist Gilad Hekselman adds a fifth album to his leader discography, following close on the heels of four other projects released since 2013. For this date he reenlists drummer Marcus Gilmore, who’s appeared on all but his first recording, and bassist Joe Martin, who’s been on all of them. The lean and clean trio format Hekselman prefers forefronts his tasteful use of space and allows for maximum group interaction.

Like previous albums, *Homes* is thematic, in this case introducing and reprising the title melody – a tune that ‘borrows’ a phrase from “Alone Together” – as a short recurrent vignette that changes form on each reappearance. Hekselman is a compelling writer: his uptempo “Keedee” and the ballad “Dove Song” contain memorable lines with key-centered chord progressions that avoid clichés. Stylistically, his tone color, loose rhythms and lyrical ethos suggest the influence of Pat Metheny while his legato flourishes and unusual intervals bring Alan Holdsworth’s playing to mind. There is a sense of recalcitrance in his improvisations, as if he’s waiting to play not the first but the second thought that pops in his head.

A penchant for deep-echo effects often creates the illusion of a second guitarist ghosting his lines; on Pat Metheny’s “Last Train Home” it sounds as if the

spectral guitarist is actually accompanying him. Hekselman displays a more traditional bebop approach on Clifford Brown’s “Parisian Thoroughfare” and shows his affinity for bossa nova on Baden Powell’s “Samba em Prelúdio”. At album’s end, the final reappearance of the “Homes” theme begins as a disjointed muddle, then slowly coalesces and becomes recognizable, to cadence at last in a gentle minor mood, as if to imply that, of all the homes he’s lived in along his musical travels, Hekselman has found temporary closure here in the city of immigrants.

For more information, visit [jazzvillagemusic.com](http://jazzvillagemusic.com). This project is at Cornelia Street Café Oct. 2nd. See Calendar.



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- John Hébert – *Rambling Confessions* (Sunnyside)
- Ochion Jewell Quartet – *VOLK* (s/r)
- Le Pot (Manuel Mengis/Hans-Peter Pfammatter/Manuel Troller/Lionel Friedli) – *Hera* (Everest)
- James Brandon Lewis – *Days of FreeMan* (OKeh)
- Arturo O’Farrill & The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra – *Cuba: The Conversation Continues* (Motéma Music)
- Olavi Trio – *Oh, La Vie!* (TUM)
- Howard Riley/Jaki Byard – *R&B* (SLAM)
- Jen Shyu & Jade Tongue – *Sounds and Cries of the World* (Pi)
- Harvey Valdes – *Roundabout* (s/r)

Laurence Donohue-Greene, Managing Editor

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- Fred Anderson – *Quintessential Birthday Trio, Vol. II* (Asian Improv)
- Banda de los Muertos – *Eponymous* (Barbès)
- Tom Blancarte/Peter Evans/Louise Dam Eckhardt Jensen/Dan Peck – *The Gauntlet of Mehen* (Destiny)
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- Jacob Garchik – *ye Olde* (s/r)
- Roscoe Mitchell Quartet – *Celebrating Fred Anderson* (Nessa)
- Irène Schweizer/Han Bennink – *Welcome Back* (Intakt)
- The Turbine! – *Entropy/Enthalpy* (Rogue Art)
- Various Artists – *3 Nights at Café Oto* (Matchless)

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