



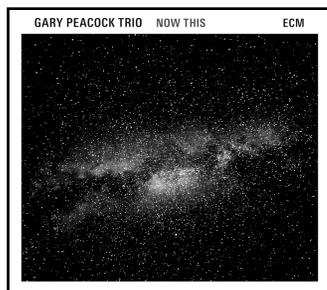
Live at Monterey Jazz Festival
Joe Lovano/Dave Douglas Sound Prints (Blue Note)
 by Russ Musto

The debut disc by Sound Prints, the Joe Lovano/Dave Douglas co-led quintet with Wayne Shorter as its primary inspiration, unveils two new works by the iconic saxophonist first commissioned by the Monterey Jazz Festival. Recorded live as part of that festival's 2013 program, the set bookends the Shorter pieces with pairings of compositions by the band's co-leaders. Aply joined by the inspired rhythm section of pianist Lawrence Fields, bassist Linda Oh and drummer Joey Baron, Lovano and Douglas embark on an exciting journey and confirm their standings as two of the most intrepid improvisers in contemporary jazz today.

The set begins with a medley of Lovano's "Sound Prints" and Douglas' "Sprints", an exploratory journey that manifestly defines the group's identity. While the title of the former linguistically references what is arguably Shorter's most popular composition, musically the piece hearkens more to the strident sound of Ornette Coleman's classic quartet in tone. It is Douglas' song that is more reminiscent of the ethereal atmosphere of the Miles Davis Quintet with Shorter that first recorded "Footprints", the melodic line of which the trumpeter references as a component of his extended improvisatory flight.

Shorter's "Destination Unknown" dramatically recalls the mood of the composer's work with Miles Davis in the unbridled lyricism of the intertwining horns and shifting rhythmic propulsion of the ensemble. His "To Sail Beyond The Sunset" is destined to become another standard, an engaging melody possessing the appealing musicality of his classic Blue Note repertoire, inspiring intensely beautiful solos from Fields and Oh, as well as both the leaders. "Weatherman" is another terse Ornette-ish outing composed by Lovano, a harmonized horn fanfare blending the saxophonist and trumpeter's fiercely individual voices before casually deconstructing into "Power Ranger", a second Shorter-like work by Douglas, which has the quintet members episodically traversing a range of moods, variously subtle and bold, to close the set.

For more information, visit bluenote.com. This project is at The Appel Room May 15th-16th. See Calendar.



Now This
Gary Peacock Trio (ECM)
 by Joel Roberts

Bassist Gary Peacock's storied career has included collaborations with legends like Bill Evans, Miles Davis, Albert Ayler and Paul Bley, along with a 30-plus year stint in Keith Jarrett's trio. Still, it's a bit of a shock to learn that he's turning 80 this month. But as his latest release makes clear, he's still going strong and brimming with energy and exciting musical ideas.

This is a trio album, but for a change under Peacock's own name. He's joined here by pianist Marc Copland, an extremely like-minded artist and longtime colleague, along with the talented drummer Joey Baron. If you're used to hearing Peacock with Jarrett, this is quite a departure. For starters, instead of the standards the Jarrett group exclusively focuses on, the tunes here are nearly all originals—seven by Peacock, two by Copland and one by Baron—plus a cover of the great bassist Scott LaFaro's "Gloria's Step". And instead of the walking basslines he provides for Jarrett, Peacock is out front, sharing the lead role with Copland on these more abstract, postbop compositions.

The overall tone of the album is a quiet, contemplative one, reflecting Peacock's long immersion in Eastern religion and philosophy. Everything is taken at a gentle tempo and the group is unafraid of silence. The trio works extremely well as a unit, improvising freely off one another, never stepping on one another's toes or hitting you over the head with their virtuosity. Standout tunes include Peacock's graceful waltz "Gaia" and "Christa", a ballad of pure beauty. "Noh Blues", meanwhile, is an extremely unorthodox, Japanese-influenced blues.

Copland, a cerebral pianist in the Evans mode, delivers complex harmonic ideas with an extremely light touch. He and Peacock have a rare connection, born of their long years of playing together, and seem to anticipate each other's moves. Baron, an extremely nimble and versatile drummer, is all subtlety and restraint, painting rich colors and shadows, often with cymbals alone. With such deft and sympathetic partners, Gary Peacock has found a most fitting and rewarding way to celebrate his octogenarian status.

For more information, visit ecmrecords.com



Feelin' Good
Mary Stallings (HighNote)
 by Ken Dryden

Mary Stallings acknowledges numerous mentors in her fourth CD for HighNote. The veteran vocalist has recorded or performed with Cal Tjader, Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry, James Williams and Billy Eckstine, along with recording over a dozen albums of her own. At 75, her alto is as expressive as ever with no evidence of wear and tear, effortlessly swinging and conveying the essence of each lyric.

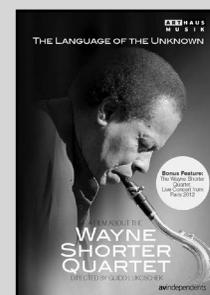
She is accompanied by musicians she has utilized on earlier dates: pianist and arranger Bruce Barth (who excels at working with vocalists) and the in-demand rhythm team of bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenny Washington (no relation). Her novel use of "Try a Little Tenderness" to serve as an introduction to "Girl Talk" works beautifully, with her sublime vocal complemented by the addition of master vibraphonist Steve Nelson. She follows it immediately with another hit associated with Count Basie, a surprisingly breezy romp compared to the bandleader's famously deliberate recording. She salutes Eckstine with a romantic interpretation of his signature composition "I Want To Talk About You", savoring every note.

Although she never personally knew Thelonious Monk, she feels inspired by his work. Stallings delivers a poignant rendition of "Reflections", accompanied only by Barth, and shows the influence of Carmen McRae in her sassy take of "Monk's Dream", with Washington's inventive bass solo adding to its charm.

Trumpeter Freddie Hendrix and Latin percussionist Ray Mantilla are added for a decidedly hip setting of Dizzy Gillespie's timeless "A Night in Tunisia", Hendrix delivering an expressive solo that honors the composer without copying his style. Stallings best displays her craft with her stunning concluding number, a melancholy, world-weary version of the standard "Yesterdays", which should serve as a master class for young jazz vocalists. Stallings has proven herself time and again on her recordings and *Feelin' Good* is one of the landmarks of her career.

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com. Stallings is at Smoke May 28th-31st. See Calendar.

ON SCREEN



The Language of the Unknown
Wayne Shorter Quartet (Arthaus Musik)
 by Anders Griffen

Consisting of Wayne Shorter (tenor and soprano saxophones), Danilo Pérez (piano), John Patitucci (bass) and Brian Blade (drums), the Wayne Shorter Quartet fosters courage while sharing the concept of "Zero Gravity", challenging one another to abrogate the familiar so that it takes courage to embark. Pérez likens it to jumping into a pool without knowing whether there is water while Shorter compares it to a dare to open a door—it's not a dare if you know what is on the other side. Virtuosity and the individual are mindfully set aside in favor of the harmony of their collective spirit.

The Language of the Unknown consists of the artists talking about the band, sometimes while watching concert footage. They talk about their process and Shorter's mentorship. "I actually, literally flew," Pérez recounts, "I am sure of that; because I moved out from the piano, away, and when I looked down, I saw them, but I saw myself. I told Wayne, 'I was flying today.' He said, 'that's what I was telling you, that with Miles Davis, we were flying all the time.'" This experience comes from not only the musical space, but also the personal and spiritual space they give one another and the humane practice of sharing in order to reach something new. "There has to be mystery," says Shorter. "We have to play like we don't know everything, we don't know, so the mystery of it is way better than explaining it." The viewer gets some sense of how special this music is to the artists creating it.

One would never guess that this is Guido Lukoschek's first film. "It's going to take as much courage for the audience to seek the unexpected," asserts Shorter. After getting rare and intimate insight into this ensemble, one almost needs the concert, live in Paris at Salle Pleyel on Nov. 3rd, 2012. The result is a unique experience. "What do you give as a present to life, in celebration of life, when life has it all?" asks Shorter. To be humane takes significant courage. This band leads by example with music as their vehicle.

For more information, visit arthaus-musik.com. Shorter is at Rose Theater May 14th-16th with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. See Calendar.