

An occasional blog about populist politics and popular music, not necessarily at the same time.

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Monday, May 14, 2012

## MUSIC WEEK/JAZZ PROSPECTING

Music: Current count 19915 [19880] rated (+35), 754 [761] unrated (-7). The delays in pulling Michael Tatum's excellent "A Downloader's Diary" together this month have stretched out the usual top-of-the-month posts. My Rhapsody Streamnotes should run tomorrow, completing the set. Thanks to the delays, there is more than usual on tap -- as opposed to my fears two weeks ago when I only found 16 notes stashed away in my draft file. Jazz Prospecting is if anything up a bit this week, partly because I'm feeling sated on non-jazz -- or at least I'm running low on enthusiasm and/or curiosity for the low-hanging new releases that Rhapsody offers.

One thing I've noticed me doing more than usual: getting to the end of a record and going blank for a summation line at the end of the note. More than usual, I'm just letting the grade talk in these cases. If I'm unsure of the grade I'll usually replay the record, but if I'm satisfied with the grade it's usually not worth my while to replay a record just to pick up a probably trivial line. (In Jazz CG I would make the extra effort, but I figure this is mostly triage.) I do, by the way, have a bulging shelf of records waiting for Jazz CG. Don't know what else to say about that right now.

### David Boswell: *Windows*

(2012, My Quiet Moon):  
Guitarist. Born in San Francisco; played in a rock band called Metro Jets; does session work in LA. Fourth album since 2004. Plays synth guitar as well as more conventional ones, backed by



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**Maxine Udall**

piano-bass-drums, dense with no rough edges, brightened up by John Fumo's trumpet near the end. **B-**

**Amit Friedman Sextet: *Sunrise*** (2010 [2012], Origin): Israeli saxophonist, google him and you get lots of cheesecake pics of a buxom Israeli model with the same name. Debut album, recorded in Israel, mostly a bright and jaunty sextet with oud or guitar, piano, extra percussion, but the cuts with extra strings can dampen the mood. **B+(\*)**

**Tord Gustavsen Quartet: *The Well*** (2011 [2012], ECM): Norwegian pianist, b. 1970, not clear how many albums -- e.g., I had his 1999 collaboration with singer Siri Gjaere under his name but it looks like hers came first; five, since 2002, all on ECM, is my best reckoning. This one has Tore Brunborg (tenor sax), Mats Eilertsen (bass), and Jarle Vespestad (drums). **B+(\*\*\*)** [advance]

**Pamela Hines Trio with April Hall: *Lucky's Boy*** (2011, Spice Rack): Hines is a pianist, her trio adding John Lockwood on bass and Les Harris, Jr. on drums. She has seven records since 1998, and sole credit for the nine songs here. The songs have lyrics, sung by Hall, who has three albums of her own (scoring the previous *Hall Sings Hines* for Hall). Hard to put a finger on this, a bit dry, perhaps. **B**

**Florian Hoefner Group: *Songs Without Words*** (2011 [2012], OA2): Pianist, from Germany (I think), first album (as far as I can tell, although his label page says, "His performances are featured on seven CD releases"), a quartet with Mike Ruby (tenor and soprano sax), Sam Anning (bass), and Peter Kronreif (drums), recorded in New York. All originals, mainstream postbop, sax has some blues feel, all very nicely done. **B+(\*\*\*)**

**Philippe Baden Powell: *Adventure Music Piano Masters Series: Vol 2*** (2008 [2012], Adventure Music): Son of the legendary Brazilian guitarist Baden Powell, plays piano, solo on his second album here -- series began with Benjamin Taubkin in 2010. **B**

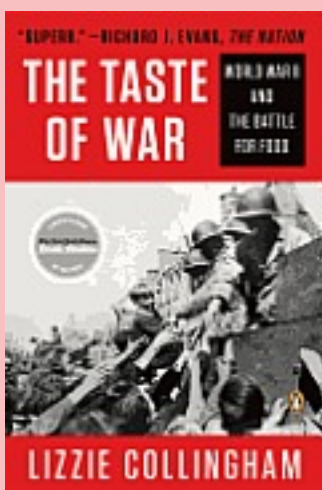
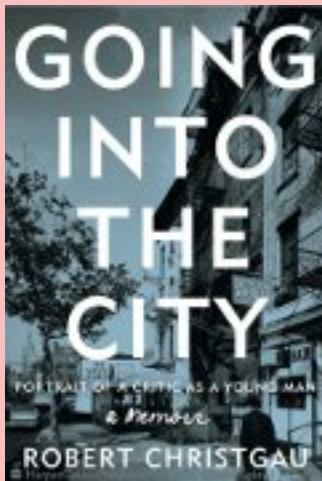
**Anne Mette Iversen: *Poetry of Earth*** (2011 [2012], Bju'ecords): Bassist, b. 1972 in Denmark, moved to New York to study at New School and settled in. Fourth album, 91:25 straddling two

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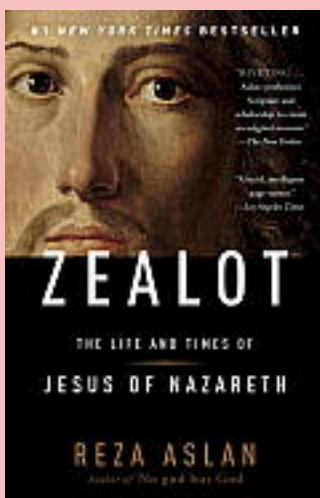
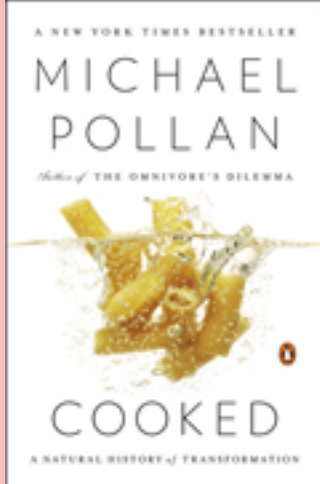


discs; wrote all the music for various poems (Svende Grøn, A.E. Housman, John Keats, Henrik Ibsen, Thomas Hardy, Lene Poulsen) sung by Maria Neckam and Christine Skou. The music has a chamber feel, with Dan Tepfer on piano and John Ellis on reeds. I haven't spent nearly enough time with this, and probably won't: not my thing, but remarkable nonetheless. **B+ (\*\*\*)**

**Jonas Kullhammar/Torbjörn Zetterberg/Espen Aalberg: *Basement Sessions Vol. 1*** (2012, Clean Feed): Tenor/baritone sax, bass, drums, respectively; the leader b. 1978 in Sweden, runs the Moserobie label (which extends well beyond his own work), has at least eight albums since 2000 (*Plays Loud for the People* is one promising title), plus an 8-CD box called *The Half Naked Truth: 1998-2008*. First I've heard by him and I'm duly impressed, first by tone and natural feel which line him up as a worthy follower of saxophonists like Arne Domnerus and Bernt Rosengren -- a bit more avant, but that's what we used to call progress. **B+ (\*\*\*)**

**Steve Lacy: *Estilhaços: Live in Lisbon*** (1972 [2012], Clean Feed): Still waiting for the avalanche of previously unissued recordings promised after the soprano sax legend's death in 2004, and eager to look at every piece that does appear to see how it fits into the puzzle. This one has been released before, first on LP in 1972, then on CD in 1996, both on obscure Portuguese labels. Lacy's quintet has rarely raised such a ruckus, and while much of it is hard to take, it does give you a sense of the thrill of freedom. I doubt that this had any role in triggering the revolution that freed Portugal two years later, but if Salazar had heard it I don't doubt that it would have scared the bejesus out of him -- in which case I'd have to grade it much higher. **B+ (\*)**

**Sinikka Langeland Group: *The Land That Is Not*** (2010 [2011], ECM): Norwegian folk singer, plays kantele (bears a general likeness to a zither or autoharp), sings with great authority. Has at least seven albums since 1994, this being the second on ECM. The group itself is made up of accomplished jazz musicians. The hornwork of Arve Henriksen and Trygve Seim isn't central but is notable when it occurs; same for the rhythm section of Anders Jormin and Markku Ounaskari. **B+ (\*\*)** [advance]



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**Joel Miller: *Swim*** (2011 [2012], Origin): Saxophonist (tenor and soprano), b. in Sackville, New Brunswick; studied at McGill in Montreal. Sixth album since 1998. Covers one piece by Miles Davis and Gil Evans, and wrote the other ten. Quartet includes Geoff Keezer on piano, Fraser Hollins on bass, Greg Ritchie on drums. Upbeat, rich sax tone, lush even. **B+(\*\*)**

**Aruán Ortiz Quartet: *Orbiting*** (2011 [2012], Fresh Sound New Talent): Pianist, b. 1973 in Cuba, moved to US in 2003, has four albums since 2004. Four originals, four covers (Hermeto Pascoal, Charlie Parker, Ornette Coleman, "Alone Together"). Gives them all a delicate, thoughtful reading, supplemented by David Gilmore on guitar, Rashaan Carter on bass, Eric McPherson on drums. **B+(\*\*)**

**Kate Reid: *The Love I'm In*** (2011, self-released): Singer, plays piano (but also employs Otmoro Ruiz on three cuts), based in Los Angeles, second album: standards, starting with "Just Squeeze Me," includes a long and touching "I Loves You Porgy," a slow and smoldering obligatory Jobim ("Portrait in Black and White"). Striking voice, holds your focus even when she goes real slow (but there's a bit too much of that). Doesn't make much use of the band beyond piano -- Ernie Watts is on the roster but scarcely noticeable. **B+(\*\*)**

**Alan Rosenthal: *Just Sayin'*** (2011 [2012], self-released): Pianist, from New York. First album as far as I can tell, a trio with Cameron Brown (bass) and Steve Johns (drums). Wrote 8 of 9 songs, one dedicated to Mal Waldron; the cover is "Red, Red Robin." **B+(\*)**

**Amanda Ruzza: *This Is What Happened*** (2009 [2012], Pimenta): Electric bassist, born in São Paulo, Brazil, Chilean mother, Italian father, speaks all those languages plus English. First album, recorded in Brooklyn. Starts with fuzzy funk and electric piano and Brazilian percussion, later adding some sax bits by Dave Binney. I wouldn't call it smooth jazz, but doesn't push very hard. **B**

**Elliott Sharp Trio: *Aggregat*** (2011 [2012], Clean Feed): Seventh album by Sharp (or, as he bills himself here, "E#") that I've heard, all since 2004, which must get me up into the 6-8% range -- let's see: Wikipedia lists 99 albums not counting ones he

produced or played as a sideman on, with the earliest album a solo from 1979, but that 99 does include a couple of "collaborative groups" I have filed elsewhere (John Zorn: *Downtown Lullaby*, Satoko Fujii: *In the Tank*, Tomas Ulrich: *TECK String Quartet*); drop them and I'm back at 7 of 90, almost 7.8%. Point is he's someone I know of but have hardly met. For instance, I never knew he sax (tenor and soprano) before, but he does here on nearly half of the album, and he makes much of his efforts, like a slower and more rugged Evan Parker. The rest of the time he plays guitar, where he is faster and develops a harmonic overhang that gives his figures a rich shimmer. With Brad Jones on bass and Ches Smith on drums. **A-**

**Andrew Swift: *Swift Kick*** (2011 [2012], D Clef): Drummer, from Australia, based in New York. First album. Has 17 people on album, mostly recognized names -- Ryan Kisor, Wycliffe Gordon, Eric Alexander, Sharel Cassity, Yotam Silberstein are a few -- but aside from George Cables (piano) and Dwayne Burno (bass) most are only a couple cuts each. Moves along at a nice pace, lots of postbop texture, a bit too much kitchen sink but consistently enjoyable. **B+(\*)**

**Rafael Toral/Davu Seru: *Live in Minneapolis*** (2011 [2012], Clean Feed): B. 1967 in Lisbon, Portugal, Toral works with a variety of amplifiers and oscillators, in other words electronics. Has at least 15 albums since 1994. This was done live with a drummer (Seru), has the feel of improv. Fooled me a couple times into wondering who was playing sax. **B+(\*\*)**

**Andrea Veneziani: *Oltreoceano*** (2011 [2012], self-released): Bassist, from Italy, based in New York. First album, a piano trio with Kenny Werner expertly filling the hot seat, and Ross Pederson on drums. Veneziani wrote 4 pieces, filling the album out with three brief "Free Episode" group improvs and covers from Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, and Bill Evans. **B+(\*\*)**

**Tom Wetmore: *The Desired Effect*** (2011 [2012], Crosstown): Pianist (electric here), based in New York, first album, with alto sax (Jaleel Shaw or Eric Neveloff), two guitars, bass, and drums -- a group he calls (not on the album cover) the Tom Wetmore Electric Experiment. Describes his style as combining "the advanced harmony and rhythm of jazz and classical with the

visceral groove of funk and other popular music." That's evident but has yet to develop into something particularly interesting. **B**

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**Unpacking:** Found in the mail last week:

- **J.D. Allen Trio:** *The Matador and the Bull* (Savant)
- **Bruce Barth:** *Three Things of Beauty* (Savant)
- **Cactus Truck:** *Brand New for China!* (Public Eyesore)
- **Isaac Darche:** *Boom-Bap!tism* (Bju'ecords)
- **Christian Escoudé Plays Brassens:** *Au Bois de Mon Coeur* (Sunnyside): June 19
- **Matt Garrison:** *Blood Songs* (D Clef)
- **Diego Schissi Quinteto:** *Tongos* (Sunnyside): June 19
- **Jeremy Siskind:** *Finger-Songwriter* (Bju'ecords)
- **Wadada Leo Smith:** *Ten Freedom Summers* (Cuneiform, 4CD)
- **Miguel Zenón & Laurent Coq:** *Rayuela* (Sunnyside)

Posted by Tom Hull in [Music](#) at **14:24**

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