

JAZZ & BLUES

APRIL
2010

F L O R I D A

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES



Joe and Vicki Price



Rachel Z Trio



Bobby Rush



Cheryl Fisher



Magic Slim



Eddie Palmieri



Joe Louis Walker



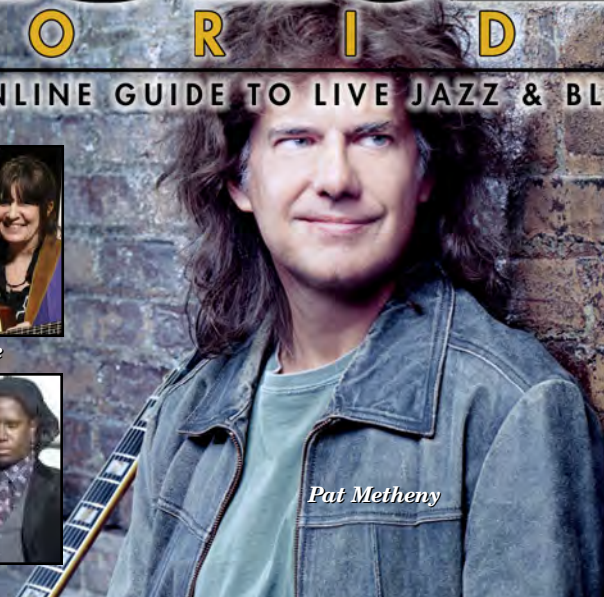
Malcolm Holcombe



Omar Sosa



Michel Camilo



Pat Metheny

WINNING SPINS

By Bill Meredith

AT AGE 55, GUITARIST PAT METHENY

has certainly earned his reputation as a risk-taking artist who rarely does the expected. For the vast majority of his more-than-35-year career, the left turns have been compelling, including the futuristic layered guitars of *New Chataqua* in 1979 and the surging, less-is-more *Trio 99>00* CD with bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Bill Stewart in 2000.

Even missteps like *Song X* (an overly outside 1985 release featuring saxophonist Ornette Coleman) and *Zero Tolerance for Silence* (a feedback-drenched 1994 solo-guitar disc that sounded like Metheny's inside joke on Geffen Records) didn't fail because they were boring. Time will dictate whether his new CD, *Orchestrion* (Nonesuch), attains classic status or spins out. But the unique melding of man and machine is certainly one of the Missouri-born guitarist's most ambitious efforts.

It's not easy to break down what he's doing in simple terms. Metheny is, as usual, playing guitar to accompany parts he's written for keyboards, bass, drums and percussion. The difference here is that he's simultaneously triggering solenoid-and-pneumatic-powered electromechanical robots to play the music with him. It's an idea that stemmed from tinkering with his grandparents' player piano (a late-1800s instrument that moved its own keys via mechanized rolls of paper) as a child, plus the early 1900s versions of Wurlitzer pianos and the original, self-contained orchestrions—as opposed to the new, in-plain-sight orchestrion robotics Metheny will employ to pull this music off during solo concerts.

The shimmering 16-minute title track and subsequent ballad “Entry Point” open the disc by pointing out how closely the guitarist and robots can mimic various Pat Metheny Group lineups. On both tracks, piano and synthesizer lines approximate those of Lyle Mays, the composer's longtime foil. The bass sounds echo Steve Rodby's work; the drums and cymbals are reminiscent of Paul Wertico; and Nana Vasconcelos-like percussive accents also pop up.

“Expansion” quickens the pace, utilizing vibraphone that may be a nod to Gary Burton, who employed Metheny in his group



PAT METHENY

from 1974 to 1977. The piano intro to the poignant “Soul Search” sounds anything but robotic, and provides the guitarist with a cushion for one of his signature hollow-bodied melodies. When the stripped-down ballad segues into a swinging midsection, it sounds surprisingly like an actual improvising jazz band.

The closing “Spirit of the Air” is one of the CD's most orchestral pieces, using fretless bass, keyboards, marimba and orchestral bells to exemplify the album title. And Metheny displays the nimble playing that's defined his career as much as his strong, artistic ideals.

“Orchestrions flourished in the era that directly preceded the advent of sound recordings,” the guitarist writes in the album's liner notes. “In many ways, that period of time stands as an interesting middle zone; the first technology that brought a performer to an

WINNING SPINS

audience once removed, while retaining the essential characteristics of that performer's message."

An early guitar-synthesizer pioneer, and one of the first guitarists to openly phrase more like a horn player than guitarist, Metheny may have learned to think outside the box by never learning how to think within it. He studied at the University of Miami for only a semester before withdrawing to teach both there and at the Berklee College of Music while still in his teens. He's since gone on to win 17 Grammy Awards in 12 different categories, but pulling off *Orchestrion* in concert by himself could be his most impressive feat.



Pat Metheny performs tracks from *Orchestrion* solo at Ruth Eckerd Hall in Clearwater on April 9 and at The Fillmore in Miami Beach on April 10.

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BODEGA BLUE, VERO BEACH/APRIL 9
UNDERGROUND BLUZ, ORLANDO/APRIL 10
BEACH SHACK, COCOA BEACH/APRIL 11**

Joe and Vicki Price make the kind of stomp-down country blues that defies all efforts to keep still. The Iowa-based husband-and-wife team have been rolling out the boogie for close to 30 years, and have opened for blues legends such as Honeyboy Edwards, Homesick James and John Lee Hooker. Joe Price's latest CD, *Rain or Shine*, showcases his raw, homespun vocals and barbed slide work on a National ResoRocket guitar, among other axes. Vicki adds to the mayhem on National Radio-Tone and Reso-



lectric guitars, and contributes huckleberry-stained backing vocals to Joe's originals. "Hornet's Nest," on which Joe approximates an angry swarm buzzing his guitar strings, is up for an Independent Music Award for Best Blues Song. The album was the IMA judges' choice for Best Blues Album. "Don't stop rockin' that steel guitar," they urge on "Steel Guitar." Seems unlikely. **BW**

**MAGIC SLIM, JOE LOUIS WALKER
TAMPA BAY BLUES FEST**

VINOY PARK, ST. PETERSBURG/APRIL 9-11
The Tampa Bay Blues Fest boasts a true blues-lover's lineup. Magic Slim and the Teardrops (6:30PM April 10) are among the toughest, most consistently engaging Chicago blues bands around. With a voice full of blustery, good-humored menace, Morris "Magic Slim" Holt is the quintessential Delta-gone-Chi-Town artist, his downtuned guitar echoing his deep-chested vocals. While his Teardrops have undergone personnel changes over the past 45 years, Slim soldiers on in top form. On the brand new *Raising the Bar*, Slim and the 'Drops kick it old-school on originals and classics such as "Part Time Love" and "4:59 A.M. Equally consistent in quality, although a bit less predictable, flame-throwing vocalist and guitarist Joe Louis Walker will also scorch the fest (4:30PM April 11). On his 2009 release *Between a Rock and the Blues*, the San Francisco native whipsaws through traditional blues and boogies, as well as soul- and rock-influenced blues, like the place is on fire. Visit Tampabaybluesfest.com for the full lineup. **BW**



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SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2010

12:30PM Joanne Shaw Taylor
 2:30PM Tad Robinson
 4:30PM RYAN SHAW
 6:30PM MAGIC SLIM &
 THE TEARDROPS
 8:30PM KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2010

1:00PM John Nemeth
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**BOBBY RUSH
BRADFORDVILLE BLUES CLUB, TALLAHASSEE
APRIL 23**

As if being the “fonkiest,” most-entertaining bluesman on the scene weren’t enough, Bobby Rush was just named International Ambassador of the Blues by the State of Tennessee House of Representatives. Apparently, the Louisiana-born, Chicago-raised singer’s booty-shaking soul-blues translates on a global level. Just what is it about the old-school R&B vet that speaks so universally? Could it be his salty, seasoned vocals? His mastery of the mouth harp? Or maybe it’s the generously proportioned booty dancers who accompany him on stage and whose gyrations perfectly illustrate his lascivious lyrics. Of course, Rush is no novelty act. With blues creds going



back more than 50 years, Rush, 69, provided expert harp accompaniment to Honeyboy Edwards, with whom he discusses Little Walter and others, on 2008’s *Roamin’ and Ramblin’*. Rush’s latest, 2009’s *Blind Snake*, finds him working the down-home-blues-meets-uptown-funk territory he pioneered. Rush’s records are great fun, but seeing him live is unforgettable. **BW**

**OMAR SOSA
MINIACI PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
FORT LAUDERDALE/APRIL 10**

Cuban-born pianist Omar Sosa celebrates his 45th birthday by performing with his Afreecanos Quartet in a South Florida Jazz presentation. Born in Camaguey, Sosa has charted a singular musical path. Early on, he studied percussion at the city’s music conservatory, which included training on the marimba, a melodic, piano-like mallet instrument he still plays. Raised on classical and traditional Cuban music, Sosa later discovered jazz at the conservatory in Havana. His Afreecanos Quartet—featuring vocalist and Senegal native Mola Sylla, bassist and Mozambique native Childo Tomas, and American drummer Marque Gilmore—mixes Sosa’s creative



traditional Afro-Cuban updates with the improvisational jazz that the band’s name implies. The quartet will also play arrangements of Sosa’s compositions from his new CD, *Ceremony*. Recorded with composer/arranger/cellist Jaques Morelenbaum and the 18-piece NDR Big Band from Germany, the disc blends Sosa’s influences into futuristic world music. **BM**

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**RACHEL Z TRIO with JESSE JONES JR.
FORT PIERCE MARINA SQUARE/APRIL 11,
THOMAS CENTER, GAINESVILLE/APRIL 13**

Keyboardist Rachel Z received a great deal of fanfare by touring with Peter Gabriel throughout the mid-2000s, but her career shouldn't be defined by work with a pop star. A graduate of the New England Conservatory, her often textural sound was ingrained through work with Steps Ahead and Wayne Shorter during the 1990s. She was Shorter's keyboardist for his 1995 CD *High Life*, which won a Grammy for Best Contemporary Jazz Album. The influence of the venerable saxophonist inspired the pianist's 2000 release *On the Milky Way Express: A Tribute to the Music of Wayne Shorter*. The Rachel Z Trio's new CD, *I Will Possess Your Heart*,



features longtime bassist Maeve Royce and the drumming tandem of Omar Hakim and Marcus Gilmore (with former Shorter and Santana drummer Rodney Holmes filling in recently on tour). For its Sunshine State dates, the trio will be joined by veteran South Florida saxophonist and flutist Jesse Jones Jr. **BM**

**EDDIE PALMIERI, MICHEL CAMILO
with ALFREDO RODRIGUEZ
ARSHT CENTER, MIAMI/APRIL 16**

The monthly *Jazz Roots* series presents an evening of music by three Latin jazz pianists with generational and geographical differences. The concert introduces Alfredo Rodriguez, a dynamic 23-year-old from Cuba who was discovered by Quincy Jones. Dominican Republic native Michel Camilo's dexterity is evidenced by his varied Grammy Awards: The 56-year-old's 2003 release *Live at the Blue Note* won for Best Latin Jazz Album, and his 2006 CD *Rhapsody in Blue* won a Latin Grammy for Best Classical Album. The Manhattan Transfer scored a 1983 Grammy for their vocal rendition of his tune "Why Not!," the leadoff track on his latest release, the live big band set *Caribe*. The buoyant playing of New York City-born Eddie Palmieri, 73, won him his ninth Grammy, for *Simpatico*, the Best Latin Jazz Album of 2006. The ageless pianist's blend of salsa, Afro-Cuban, classical and traditional influences has resulted in his own signature brand of Afro-Caribbean jazz. **BM**



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David Shelley Band

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In a voice as black and flinty as a coal-miner's lung, Malcolm Holcombe mines a rich seam of American music. Holcombe grew up in the foothills of North Carolina, and the shadow of the Appalachians falls across just about everything he sings, writes and picks on guitar. On his latest recording, *For the Mission Baby*, Holcombe approximates the gasoline-throated yowl of Howlin' Wolf on tracks such as "Bigtime Blues." Image-laden lyrics to tunes such as "Hannah's Tradin' Post" and "Leonard's Pippen" conjure dusty backroads, rural towns and the folks who inhabit them with affection and humor, and are brought to life with the assistance of top



Nashville sessions cats. In fact, humor plays a big part in Holcombe's craft, as when he tells his lady to pick her panties up off the floor on "Short Street Blues." Holcombe's SoFla performances have been wildly entertaining and deeply moving, as this unique artist accompanies his potent-yet-vulnerable vocals with deft acoustic guitar work. Love great songwriting? Don't miss him. **BW**

ERIC ALLISON & CHERYL FISHER
VAN DYKE CAFE, MIAMI BEACH/APRIL 21

Canadian vocalist Cheryl Fisher earned her Master's degree in Jazz Vocal Performance from the University of Miami in 2000, and she makes great use of South Florida's instrumental talent on her new CD, *Moments Like This*. Area multi-instrumentalists Eric Allison (saxophones, flute, percussion) and Ira Sullivan (trumpet, saxophone, flute), bassist Jamie Ousley and drummer Danny Burger join Canadian pianist Oliver Jones in augmenting Fisher's silky delivery on several standards. The disc builds in intensity throughout, with Sullivan's trumpet elevating the title track, and the husband-and-wife team of Allison and Fisher adding percussion to a creative



arrangement of Cole Porter's "I Concentrate on You." Allison's tenor sax is a force on the Duke Ellington classic "I Got It Bad," and he switches to alto to form a horn section with Sullivan's flugelhorn on "Jordu." All should be highlights at the CD release party at the Van Dyke, along with the vocalist's soaring take on the ballad "Blame it on My Youth." **BM**

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Friday 9.....	Bobby Nathan Band
Saturday 10.....	Albert Castiglia
Friday 16.....	Iko Iko
Saturday 17.....	AZ Kenny Tsak & SG Deluxe
Friday 23.....	Albert Castiglia
Saturday 24.....	David Shelley Band
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