



GET IT NOW JAZZ IMPROV® MAGAZINE WITH CD ON NEWSSTANDS AND BY SUBSCRIPTION

FREE

JAZZ IMPROV'S

JAZZIMPROV.COM OCTOBER 2006

NEW YORK JAZZ GUIDE

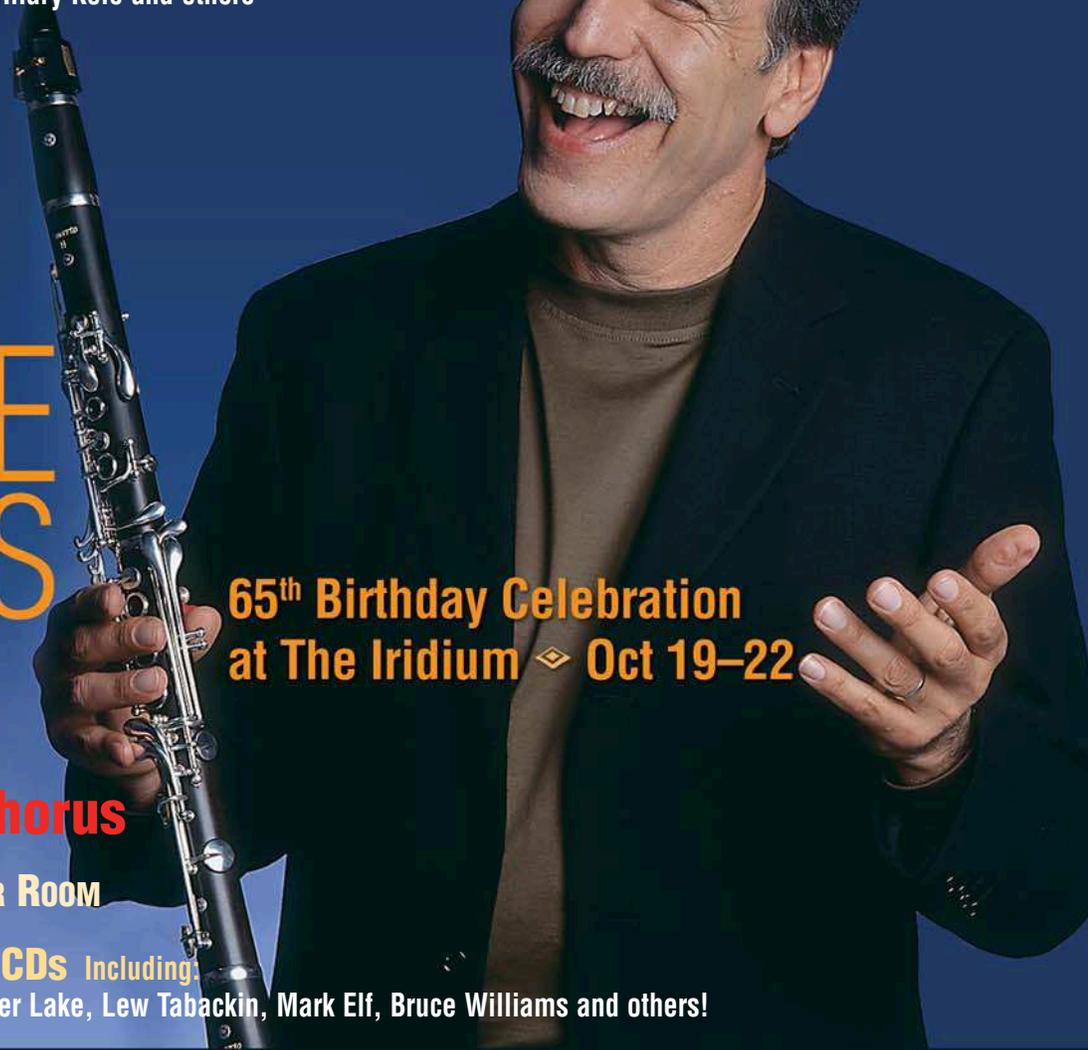
The Ultimate Directory of NY Area Jazz Club, Concert & Event Listings

Interviews with:

- Ravi Coltrane
- Jack Kleinsinger
- Chris McNulty
- Pat Metheny
- Don Sickler
on Jazz Icons DVD Release
- Elise Wood

Performance Reviews:

- Grassella Oliphant, Ralph Towner, Hilary Kole and others



EDDIE DANIELS

65th Birthday Celebration at The Iridium ♦ Oct 19–22

Ira Gitler's Apple Chorus

Jazz Club Profile: THE RIVER ROOM

Plenty of Reviews of Cool CDs Including:

Thelonious Monk & John Coltrane, Oliver Lake, Lew Tabackin, Mark Elf, Bruce Williams and others!

RAVI COLTRANE



with Alice Coltrane
NJPAC
October 22

PAT METHENY



Carnegie Hall
October 21

ELISE WOOD



Remembering John Hicks

KEVIN MAHOGANY



at OSPAC Jazz Fest
Photo Gallery Inside

Grassella Oliphant Quintet Live at Johnny's On The Green at The Short Hills, NJ Golf Course August 25, 2006

By Winthrop Bedford

In the 1960s among the many activities that occupied the busy schedule of drummer Grassella Oliphant, was his recording of a couple of albums *Grass Roots* (1965) and *Grass Is Greener* (recorded 1967) for Atlantic Records—long out of print—and now re-issued on Collectables as a double CD. A quick look at the personnel will give you a bird's eye-view of the

voices of Gras' quintet were audible and defined. The group rendered interpretations of a host of standards and jazz tunes. Norman Simmons on piano, Takashi Otsuka on bass, and Oliphant on drums provided the rock solid foundation and accompaniment for the interpretation of the straight-ahead swinging music, Bossas, and ballads that comprised the music for three foot-tapping sets. The group opened the second set with a medium groove rendition of "Bye Bye Blackbird." Saxophonist Abraham Burton expressed the well-known melody with aplomb, and delivered a magnificently-crafted solo. The aforementioned description aptly described the absolutely consistent and relaxed intensity throughout the group's music-making all eve-

Chertkoff and Simmons was palpable, if only by the smiles they shot at each other throughout the evening. Among the other compositions that I enjoyed tremendously this evening were the ballad interpretations of "Old Folks" and "Easy Living", the swinging version of "I Remember You," "All Blues" (in 3/4 time) and others. Meanwhile, 40 years after recording his own albums on Atlantic, Grassella Oliphant is as energetic as ever. His burning swing groove, his facility in getting around the "cans," and his fiery, syncopated solos defined the kind of youth and energy that we are probably all blessed with—if only we can maintain the drive, enthusiasm for life, and have the sensitivity to tap into these. In these areas of understanding, talent and ability, Grassella Oliphant is a monster—and one of the youthful "elders" you must hear.



Grassella Oliphant

kind of company he kept (and still does), and the kind of quality musician he is. His albums featured Grant Green on guitar, Harold Ousley on tenor saxophone, Clark Terry on trumpet, John Patton on organ, Bobby Hutcherson on vibraphone, Major Holley, and others.

Now you can hear "Gras," as friends call him, with his quintet, a couple of times a month, at Johnny's On The Green, in Short Hills, New Jersey. It is about a 20-minute drive from Manhattan and well worth the trip. For one thing, parking is free and the parking lot on premises is spacious. The upscale venue, is elegantly designed, and graciously hosted by Johnny Marrone. The menu offers tempting continental and Italian entrees. My associate had the rack of lamb, salad and calamari, which I had a chance to taste and savor. The breads and salads are all fresh and hand prepared. Menu items and recipes are extraordinary in taste, and very reasonably priced.

Listening to music at Johnny's On The Green is a joy. The acoustics are warm in this carpeted environ. Each of the instrumental

ning long. Burton's influence by such tenor saxophonists as John Coltrane and Hank Mobley—the cornerstone hornmen in the classic Miles Davis groups of the 1950s and early 1960s—was evident. Up-tempo versions of "Cherokee" and an original on "I Got Rhythm" changes featured beautifully-articulated solos by pianist Norman Simmons and guitarist Matt Chertkoff. Takashi Otsuka has a big sound on bass, and created the powerful underpinning for the solo excursions and musical dialogues that ensued. While the presence of two chord instruments—piano and guitar—have the potential for getting in each other's way, and in the way of the soloist—Chertkoff and Simmons "danced" magnificently together. The simpatico between

Reuben Hoch-Chassidic Jazz Project Live at Makor July 20, 2006

By Dan Adler

Reuben Hoch formed the Chassidic Jazz Project (www.chassidicjazz.com) in 1998 with the goal of bringing traditional Jewish music to a larger audience and to use it as a basis for improvisational musical expression. While there have been many attempts to fuse Klezmer music with Jazz, Hoch's group concentrates more on traditional Jewish prayer themes and some melodies by the famous Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach based on liturgical texts.

The Chassidic Jazz Project show at Makor (www.makor.org) featured the distinguished Jazz Dignitary (as Hoch respectfully called him): Dave Liebman. Hoch's collaboration with Liebman dates back to the 1980's, a period when Liebman frequently visited Israel and influenced an entire generation of local players there including Hoch who played with him back then, and they continued to collaborate over the years. The evening opened with an imaginative solo guitar intro by the group's musical director Tom Lippincott (tomlippincott.com). Lippincott is a master musician and guitarist with a dazzling command of his custom-built 8-string electric guitar, which he played finger-style, and often embellished by using electronically enhanced sounds. As the group gradually joined in and Liebman played the melody along with the viola and cello, the audience immediately recognized the song as "Avinu Malkenu"—one of the most famous Jewish prayer melodies. The minor tonality of the song soon turned into a Coltrane-style minor modal vamp, which was perfect for Dave Liebman to develop an incredibly expressive solo, with Hoch providing a robust Elvin-style rhythmic wall of sound, and Lippincott comping with much energy and excitement.

Liebman's depth of expression was brought into the spotlight with an abstract wooden-flute intro to one of the songs, and of course the range of sounds he gets from the soprano saxophone is

Advertise

Jazz Improv's® New York Jazz Guide,
Jazz Improv® Magazine
Deadline: 15th of the month
CALL: Jamie Cos, 212-889-0853

unparalleled. In this context, Liebman added a lot of Jewish elements to his usual improvisational language, making frequent use of harmonic minor modes and evoking Klezmer-style clarinet effects at times.

Another crowd-pleaser was "Adon Olam", which Hoch strung together from two different versions: a modern Israeli version by the late great Israeli composer Uzi Chitman, and the more traditional Russian version from the early 1900's.

The violin and viola added a great dimension to the music, with Lippincott's arrangements making great use of all the sonorities that such a great instrumental combination has to offer. Zhurbin demonstrated some great solo chops on the viola as well, though Liebman and Lippincott handled most of the solos. World-renowned bassist Ed Schuller demonstrated his full command of the instrument and high level of musicianship both in propelling the group forward as well as in his solo features.

Leader Reuben Hoch took it upon himself to give some background on each song, he explained the source of the liturgy and the melodies and when these songs are usually sung in Jewish tradition. This was very educational and made the Jewish aspect more accessible to those who just came to hear some great jazz. Of course, it also helps that he is a great jazz musician himself and can instantly switch gears from the boom-chick-boom straight rhythm of traditional Jewish song forms to the swinging, syncopated rhythms of jazz.

Overall, this was a very enjoyable evening both for lovers of Jewish music and for die-hard jazz fans. With Dave Liebman at the front line, there was no chance of disappointment on the jazz side, and indeed Liebman played even better than the many times I heard him with his own group. He was clearly feeling some elation at playing these particular arrangements of these songs and his solos were very inspired. Lippincott, though not Jewish himself, managed to capture the essence of the music and find their jazz side, through imaginative harmonies and interesting orchestration. Liebman was clearly impressed with Lippincott's fantastic solo chops as well, seeking out opportunities to trade fours and create a musical dialog. Check out Reuben Hoch's web site for future performances and CD's.

Hilary Kole July 21, 2006

By Dan Bilawsky

Hilary Kole's sultry singing was on display during her recent stint. Kole, who received strong acclaim for her performances in "Our Sinatra" and "Singing Astaire", came armed and ready with a strong arsenal of love songs and top-notch musicians.

"Close Your Eyes", which began with Alan Broadbent's slow and seductive piano playing, opened up the program. Kole followed this up with a stunning rendition of Cole Porter's "In The Still Of The Night". This particular song featured Broadbent's piano and some nice

bowed bass playing from Paul Gill. Kole's diction, enunciation, breath support and control are simply astounding. Light and breezy bossa nova rhythms swam underneath Kole during the performance of "So In Love." Paul Meyer's guitar received greater emphasis on this tune and Broadbent's subtle trills added the perfect musical nuances to the song.

One of the strongest performances of the evening was Kole's rendition of Irving Berlin's "What'll I Do". The song opened with voice and piano, and Kole's delivery was strong, sorrowful and sincere. The brief guitar solo from Meyer was over a slight waltz feel, but the ensemble still maintained the solemn air that this song deserves.

"You Are There," "Love Me or Leave Me," and "I'll Be Around" made up the perfect trio of songs to show three different facets of Kole's style. She took her voice down to a whisper for portions of "You Are There" and then cranked up the intensity during "Love Me or Leave Me." Clayton Cameron, who is by far one of the finest vocal accompanists on drums, gave this song the propulsion and strong sense of swing that it needed. Kole demonstrated her stronger side with her slightly raspy delivery and strong, if somewhat short, demonstration of her scatting skills. "I'll Be Around" featured a much rounder and broader sound from Kole, whose voice managed to gently disappear at the word "gone."

Kole introduced almost every tune from the evening with a slight history and background which helped the audience to put things in context and attach the songs to a specific era, singer and/or composer. "I'm A Fool to Want You" began with Alan Broadbent's light block chords and then opened up when the rest of the ensemble joined in. Kole's utterance of the word "devil" sent Broadbent on a quick descent into the lower depths of the piano and, once again demonstrated how lyrically attuned a fine piano player can be. Tom Waits seems to have become the king of modern torch songs and Kole's take on "Old Boyfriends" joins the pantheon of fine jazz takes on the Waits songbook. Kole took over piano duties and was spellbinding during her performance of "Haunted Heart". "Blackberry Winter" followed and the idealism in Kole's performance made this song the high point of the show for this particular listener. Broadbent returned to the piano for his arrangement of "You and the Night and the Music", and Kole introduced "Two for the Road" as her current favorite song in an ever-changing and growing list. The guitar was the sole accompaniment on this tune and Meyer's solo was gorgeous. "I Only Have Eyes for You," which schizophrenically moved back and forth between an Afro-Cuban-influenced groove and a strong swing pulse, closed out the set.

Kole, returning to the piano for one encore, performed a Jeremy Lubbock composition that was written one week prior to the show. "Nothing's Left To Do But Put My Heart Away" was the title as introduced by Kole, and it perfectly captured the mood of the whole evening's music. What a fine ending to an impressive performance!

Mahavishnu Project The Music of Jan Hammer Live at The Cutting Room July 13, 2006

By Dan Adler

Gregg Bendian formed the Mahavishnu Project (www.mahavishnuproject.com) in 2001 and began performing the entire repertoire of John McLaughlin's original Mahavishnu Orchestra. These extraordinary musicians have transcribed and performed complete renditions of classic Mahavishnu albums like "Birds of Fire", "Inner Mounting Flame", "Visions of the Emerald Beyond" and others. Their renditions are true to the spirit and style of the original albums, but they are all great improvisers in their own right, and when they take solos the music takes on a whole new dimension.

This particular show at the Cutting Room (www.thecuttingroomnyc.com) was part of an annual three-day "Vishnu Fest" where the group plays a completely different repertoire selection each night. I attended the show celebrating the music of Jan Hammer, which included some his classic Mahavishnu Orchestra compositions as well as some of his later work like "Oh, Yeah." Jan Hammer himself was in the audience this evening and that made it an even more festive occasion. Hammer had actually played with the Mahavishnu project a few weeks earlier at Moogfest at BB King's club, and the group wanted to showcase Hammer's amazingly expressive and melodic songbook, as well as give their own take on the compositions. The evening opened with a recorded version of Hammer himself playing his own "Intro: Light/Sun."

Even though the music was very loud and played at rock-concert volume, the audience was not your typical young rock-concert crowd. Most people were in their 40's and 50's, some even bringing their teenage kids along as if to show them that hip music existed way back in the 70's and that loud music was not invented yesterday. The musicians in the Mahavishnu Project are all first-class players. Glenn Alexander on guitar was able to reproduce all of McLaughlin's intricate lines and complex rhythms without ever missing a beat. When it came time to solo, Alexander made no attempt to emulate McLaughlin's style. Instead, he developed thoughtful and exciting solos of his own—demonstrating a strong command of rock, jazz and everything in between.

Keyboard player Adam Holzman was clearly in the spotlight, recreating Jan Hammer's complex compositions and multi-keyboard parts with the maestro himself sitting and listening intently a few feet away. Holzman proved that he was more than up to the challenge. Alternating between a Wurlitzer electric piano and an authentic Moog Voyager synthesizer, Holzman played the compositions impeccably and soloed with great facility, using Hammer's style and general approach, but bringing his own personality and musicianship into his solos. At the end of the performance, Jan Hammer warmly congratulated him on his great playing, though he did manage to point out a few glitches here and



THE KITANO
NEW YORK



and
present
LIVE JAZZ EVERY
WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY

NO COVER - \$10 minimum/set
unless indicated
2 sets - 7:30 pm and 9:15pm

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4

ROBERTA PIKET TRIO
Roberta Piket, Ratzo Harris, Billy Mintz

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5

RANDY JOHNSTON QUARTET
Randy Johnston, Jill McCarron, Jon Burr, Gene Jackson

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6 & 7

ROSEANNA VITRO QUARTET
Roseanna Vitro, Allen Farnham, Dean Johnson, Tim Horner
\$20 cover + \$10 minimum

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11

KUNI MIKAMI TRIO
Kuni Mikan, Bryce Seabastein, Tony Jefferson

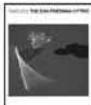
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12

MATTHIAS BUBLATH TRIO
Matthias Bublath, Massimo Biolcati, Ernesto Simpson

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13 & 14
DON FRIEDMAN QUARTET

Don Friedman
Dave Glasser
Santi Debriano
Billy Drummond

Don Friedman Trio
Timeless
FFD-29



\$20 cover + \$10 minimum

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18

LESLIE PINTCHICK TRIO
Leslie Pintchick, Scott Hardy, Mark Dodge

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19

MIKE LONGO TRIO
Mike Longo, Santi Debriano, Ray Marchica

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20 & 21

BILL MAYS TRIO

Bill Mays, Martin Wind, Tim Horner
\$20 cover + \$10 minimum

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25

BEN MARKLEY TRIO
Ben Markley, Ron McClure, Jordan Perlson

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26

DAVID BERKMAN TRIO
David Berkman, Ed Howard, Ted Poot

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27 & 28

RICHARD WYANDS TRIO

Richard Wyands, Lisle Atkinson, Leroy Williams
\$15 cover + \$10 minimum

CDs AVAILABLE
AT BAR COUNTER

Inquiry - 212-885-7119

www.Kitano.com

email: jazz@Kitano.com
66 Park Avenue @ 38th St.

there, which surely no one other than himself could hear.

Violinist Rob Thomas dazzled the audience with his solos. He stayed quite close to the original style of Jerry Goodman in the Mahavishnu Orchestra, and kept stringing together exciting and inventive pentatonic lines that have become the hallmark of that style to the audience's delight. Bassist Dave Johnsen provided a powerful substrate for the entire band and took some wonderfully inventive solos.

Leader Gregg Bendian demonstrated his incredible chops at the drums through all the complex rhythms and played electric piano on one of the compositions. He also introduced the musicians and gave some background on the compositions and the albums from which they came, helping the audience follow along.

For those of us who grew up listening to McLaughlin, Hammer, Goodman, Laird, Cobham and other incarnations of the Mahavishnu Orchestra—it's nice to see that music brought back to life by a group of contemporary musicians who recreate it faithfully and respectfully, yet bring their own interpretation and conception to the music. As violinist Rob Thomas eloquently said of this music: "It's the horse we rode in on." Check out the Mahavishnu Project website for future performances, and check out the individual websites of the Mahavishnu Project musicians linked from the Band Bio section.

Alex Minasian

Live at Kitano

August 30, 2006

By Dan Bilawsky

The instrumentation of a piano trio, with the clear sonic distinctions of the piano, bass and drums, lends a strong degree of intimacy to the music created in this format. This quality was continuously evident during a recent performance by the Alex Minasian trio, featuring Yoron Israel and Ron McClure, at Kitano. Minasian, opening the set with some tension-filled runs over the piano, settled in for a comfortable ride as soon as McClure and Israel joined in. "It Could Happen To You" was the first tune in the set and Israel's brushwork on the snare drum gave the piece a nice bouncing quality. The drummer seemed to lock in with Minasian's right hand figures while McClure was rock solid with his time. Minasian's mix of soft staccato jabs and lightly sustained chords was the perfect background for McClure's fine solo work. The strong groove established by these three musicians was most evident during their performance of "Dat Dere" by Bobby Timmons. Israel's triplet figures perfectly melded with Minasian. McClure's solo on this tune was his strongest of the set. The greatest attribute of this trio performance was their ability to make all of the songs feel good. Too many performances today are built on technique at the expense of a strong group dynamic. These three musicians did a fine job of balancing these two areas.

Minasian, citing McClure's role in the late-1960's Charles Lloyd quartet, lead the trio in a song from the legendary saxophone guru's vast

catalog. McClure's bent notes seemed to land and evaporate while Minasian glided over the piano. Israel, who spent most of the tune in a minimalistic supporting role, used his brushes on the snare drum and ride cymbal to create a tension-drenched sonic cloud over a small portion of the music. The trio burned through their performance of "But Beautiful." Israel, who began the piece playing some fragmented patterns and switched to a strong swing pulse, stole the show when he traded fours with Minasian. Minasian spoke warmly of the late James Williams before launching into a performance of "Alter Ego." Minasian's introductory piano statement and his subsequent performance during the tune were the highlight of the show. The trio closed out the set with a performance of "On Green Dolphin Street." The Richie Beirach/Ron McClure version, as Minasian referred to it, hinged on the simple introductory-ostinato from McClure and the harmonic movement around this small degree of musical stasis. Minasian's light trill figures provided the right amount of ornamentation when employed. The energetic interplay, when Minasian traded eights with Israel, was a terrific end to a great set of music. Alex Minasian is a name to remember and Gino Moratti, the artistic director at Kitano, should be commended for the variety of music being booked at this gem of a performance venue.

A Jazz "Love-In" for Richard M. Sudhalter

St. Peter's Church

September 10, 2006

By Michael Steinman

The benefit for Richard M. Sudhalter held on September 10, 2006, at St. Peter's Church, should have been a melancholy affair. A degenerative illness currently without a cure and oppressive medical bills that result are hardly cheerful subjects. If you didn't know, Sudhalter, 67, is a Renaissance man of hot jazz. First, he is an extraordinary trumpeter and cornet player whose lyricism summons up Bobby Hackett. The bands he's led (The New California Ramblers, the Anglo-American Alliance) and been a part of (Classic Jazz Quartet) have been memorable here and overseas for four decades. He is also one of jazz's finest scholars, responsible for the definitive biographies of biographies of Hoagy Carmichael and Bix Beiderbecke, as well as *Lost Chords*, a beautifully-documented study that stirred up controversy by delineating the invaluable contributions white players have made to jazz. His WBAI broadcasts have generously made rare music and even rarer insights available to all, and his reviews in the *New York Post* told the truth with wit and grace.

But his playing career has been sidelined by illness—several strokes in 2003 followed by Multiple System Atrophy (MSA).

However, the tribute to Sudhalter was a night of joyous music, even when the tempos were languorous. Even the band names coined for the occasion were lively: Dan Levinson's Lost Chord Seekers, Healey's Happy Harmonists, Ed Polcer's Gang from 54th Street, and The