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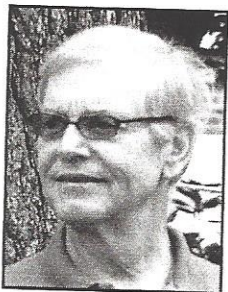


Michael Hashim leads the Billy Strayhorn Orchestra at the Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown on June 14. Photo by Mitchell Seidel.

A Strayhorn Centennial Salute

NJJS presents an afternoon of Billy Strayhorn's music at Morristown's Mayo PAC

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Other Views

By Joe Lang
Past NJJS President

I just got back from a great jazz event in California, but now its back to reality, and reviewing some tasty CDs.

■ **GLENN CRYTZER'S SAVOY SEVEN** is one of the many groups on the New York City scene who are harking back to danceable early jazz styles for their repertoire. The Savoy Seven have one unique aspect to their music; most of their book is made up of original tunes, written in the Hot Jazz style, by their guitar-playing leader. Their first full self-produced album is titled **Uptown Jump**, and is indeed jumping and swinging. Crytzer's compatriots in this endeavor are Mike Davis on trumpet, Dan Levinson and Evan Arntzen on reeds, Jesse Gelber on piano, Andrew Hall on bass and Kevin Dorn on drums. This is music that would have swing dancers drooling at the prospect of being on the dance floor when these cats are blowing. Put this disc on, and you will find it impossible to listen without feeling a need to move to the music. (www.savoyseven.com)

■ Jule Styne was a composer of great melodies, and **SCOTT HAMILTON** is among the most melodic players in jazz, so the pairing of these musical talents on **Scott Hamilton Plays Jule Styne (Blue Duchess - 005)** is a natural merger. With assistance from pianist Tim Ray, bassist Dave Zinno and drummer Jim Gwin, Hamilton lends his naturally swinging style to nine Styne tunes, "You Say You Care," "The Party's Over," "Time After Time," "All the Way," "Sunday," "Just in Time," "People," "It's You or No One" and "Bye Bye Baby." This is a relaxed blowing session that will bring a smile to your face, and get your toes tapping. When you put this disc on, you will say you care time after time and all the way until the party's over! (www.blueduchessrecords.com)

■ Trumpeter Lee Morgan was a magnificent jazz trumpet play who died too young. His drug addiction was an ongoing problem, and he died at the hands of his common-law wife from a gunshot. Despite his personal difficulties, he produced a lot of memorable music. On **Brotherlee Love: Celebrating Lee Morgan (Capri - 74138)**, **TERRELL STAFFORD** and his trumpet address seven Morgan tunes, "Candy," a favorite Morgan song, and his own "Favor." Stafford has enlisted

saxophonist Tim Warfield, pianist Bruce Barth, bassist Peter Washington and drummer Dana Hall for this salute to one of his trumpet heroes, fellow Philadelphian Lee Morgan. The band is infused with the kind of musicianship and energy that marked Morgan's recordings. Stafford is one of the shining lights among contemporary trumpet players, and his band comprises a group of equally talented musicians. Together, they bring their own perspective to music mostly associated with Morgan, and do so with intelligence and flair. (www.caprirecords.com)

■ Bassist Mike Peak has a music room at his home in California that is set aside as a performance space that he calls Lucy's Place. He established this venue in 1997, and often uses it to stage performances to raise funds for some of his favorite charities. One such event was recorded, and the result is **Live at Lucy's Place (Joyspring Music - 301)** by **PEAK EXPERIENCE JAZZ**. The group includes Peak on bass, Ricky Woodard on tenor sax, Ann Patterson on alto sax and flute, Ron Kobayashi on piano and Kendall Kay on drums, with Andrea Miller adding vocals on five of the nine tracks. The music is fine straight-ahead jazz. The program includes four standards, "Angel Eyes," "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Cry Me a River" and "Just One of Those Things," all with Miller vocals; Miller's vocal imagining on John Lennon's "Imagine," a bristling take on "Tenor Madness" by Sony Rollins; and three Peak originals. With music like this, I am sure that they have had many successful fundraisers. (www.Joyspringmusic.com)

■ The self-produced **Crepuscle Variations (On Songs Our Parents Gave Us)** finds **THE LALAMA BROTHERS**, saxophonist Ralph and pianist Dave, imaginatively ruminating on 13 standards. The duo format is a challenging one, and it takes a special empathy on the part of the musicians to make it work. These chaps are not only brothers by birth, but they are brothers musically. They take familiar songs on musical voyages that are always interesting, and often surprising. Occasionally joining them on their journey is Nicloe Pasternak-Lalama, brother Ralph's wife, to add some impressive vocals, understated and spot on. It is nice to listen to these musicians interact while bringing their sensitivities to songs like "Just in Time," "The Days of Wine and Roses," "All of Me," "I'm Confessin'," "There Will Never be Another You" and "Here's That Rainy Day." The tracks with vocals are "Time After Time," "Moon River," "The Shadow of Your Smile," "I Love You for Sentimental Reasons," "A House Is Not a Home," "Embraceable You" and "I Don't Know Why (I Love You Like Do)." You will find additional nuances with every listening, and that should keep you coming

back to the disc time and again. (www.cdbaby.com)

■ Pianist **AARON DIEHL** is not only an exceptional pianist, but on **Space Time Continuum (Mack Avenue - 1094)** he demonstrates his impressive powers as a jazz composer. The album contains eight tracks of originals. It is a collection that defies being placed into a genre of jazz; it is simply good, engaging music. Diehl's trio with David Wong on bass and Quincy Davis on drums is supplemented on several tracks, with baritone saxophonist Joe Temperley present on "The Steadfast Titan;" tenor saxophonist Stephen Riley playing on "Flux Capacitor" and "Kat's Dance;" and both tenor saxophonist Benny Golson and trumpeter Bruce Harris contributing on "Organic Consequence," the most ambitious track, and "Space, Time, Continuum," with vocalist Charlene Wade also present on the latter. This is a powerful release from Diehl, one that should garner much airplay and positive critical attention. (www.mackavenue.com)

■ Presenting jazz in the format of a good piano trio is a wonderfully satisfying experience. Ideally, there is a creative pianist up front, a bassist who is always there with the right selection of notes to support the pianist, and a drummer who keeps great time, adding just the right accents, but most importantly, they function as an organic unit, not just three individuals who are playing together.

Take One (Linn - 504) is an album by just such a group, a trio of British jazzmen who go by the moniker **BIG SCREEN**. The members of the group are David Newton on piano, Tom Farmer on bass and Matt Skelton on drums. For their initial recording, they are focused on tunes from the movies, but they are quite liberal in their definition of movie songs. Only two were actually written for films, "Chariots of Fire" and "When Somebody Loves Me," a song from Toy Story 2 by Randy Newman. There are six selections that were performed on the big screen, but were originally written for stage musicals, "Get Me to the Church on Time," "Heather on the Hill," "Hello Young Lovers," "Old Man River," "On the Street Where You Live" and "Wouldn't It Be Lovely." The remaining song, "Bewitched," is from the television series of the same name. Enough with the quibbling! The performances of these songs by Big Screen are a joy to hear. They are sometimes swinging and sometime contemplative, but always hold your attention in a most wonderful manner. It will be interesting to hear takes two, three, four and on. (www.linnrecords.com)

■ When you see the names of guitarists **FRANK VIGNOLA** and **VINNY RANIOLO** on an album, you can be certain that the music will be swinging and fun. **Swing Zing (Frank Vignola - 15)** will

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