

Listen, Learn & Love Jazz

At the 16th Annual

Litchfield Jazz Festival

AUG 5-7, 2011 • KENT SCHOOL • KENT, CT

Trombone Shorty &
Orleans AvenueRoy Haynes Fountain
of Youth Band

Jimmy Heath Big Band

The Clayton Brothers
QuintetRay Charles Tribute
with Davell Crawford

Joe Lovano Nonet

Dr. Lonnie Smith

Vijay Iyer Trio

Matt Wilson Quartet
plus Strings

Dena DeRose Trio

The Bronx Horns

Champion Fulton
QuartetAlbert Rivera
Organ Quintet

And many more!

*line-up subject to change



- Tickets start at \$22
- Children 12 & under free on the lawn
- Great Food, Fine Art & Crafts
- Artist Talks with Festival Stars
- After Parties & Jams
- And more...

Just 2 hours from
NYC by car or
Metro-NorthLITCHFIELDJAZZFEST.COM
860-361-6285
f litchfieldjazzfestival
t litchfieldjazz

To this point, guitarist **Rez Abbasi** has focused overwhelmingly on original material and although his work could be said to sit within the modernist mainstream of jazz, he's spent little time in public playing standard tunes. That changed when he appeared in a trio setting with bassist Johannes Weidenmueller and drummer Adam Cruz at Bar Next Door (Jul. 2nd). Revisiting the bop and postbop canon might have been unexpected, but it was perfectly logical - Abbasi's fluid, rhythmically buoyant lines have always shown a rootedness in swing, even when he's drawing on South Asian musics in the company of Vijay Iyer, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Dan Weiss and others. The trio led off with a brisk "What Is This Thing Called Love" and Abbasi chewed up the changes with laid-back precision, forming long strings of ideas with the benefit of a deep, resonant electric guitar sound. No bold-stroke arrangements here: "Alone Together", "Solar" and Joe Henderson's angular blues "Isotope" found the group sticking to simple solo rotations and trading of eights and fours. If there was hesitancy at times during the first of three sets, it was due to the newness of the lineup and the casual nature of the gig. But for a warmup, this was strong and searching music. Abbasi ventured some backwards effects on his intro to Alec Wilder's ballad "Moon and Sand" and Cruz found just the right vibe for the tiny room, keeping the volume low without sacrificing intensity.

- David R. Adler



Photo by Jim Anness

Rez Abbasi Trio @ Bar Next Door

It's impressive in itself that bassist **John Hébert** could gather pianist Fred Hersch, altoist Tim Berne, cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum and drummer Ches Smith under one roof for a Charles Mingus tribute at The Stone (Jul. 2nd). This was Hersch's debut at the club, his first-ever gig with Berne and a golden opportunity to hear the pianist grapple with the legacy of his mentor Jaki Byard, a key Mingus sideman. Berne, for his part, was no slouch in the implicit role of Eric Dolphy (perhaps also Jackie McLean or Charles McPherson). But it was Hébert's achievement that stood out: his way of featuring these unique voices from across the aesthetic spectrum of jazz while still capturing the swinging integrity of Mingus' ingenious works. There was a suite-like structure to the set and a good deal of reading involved, as the band made its way through Hébert's arrangements of "Sue's Changes", "What Love", "Duke Ellington's Sound of Love" and "Remember Rockefeller at Attica". Melodies sang out beautifully, as did Hersch's richly voiced chords, although there was plenty of unvarnished bite and snarl. Hébert gave everyone, including himself, room to roam unaccompanied. He tacked on clever sonic details, including a glockenspiel line (played by Smith) matching Berne's alto during "What Love". The music flowed in and out of defined meter and seemed to revel in its messy, multi-stylistic flux, echoing something Mingus once said to Nat Hentoff: "Why tie yourself to the same tempo all the time?" (DA)

Trumpeter **Brian Carpenter's Ghost Train Orchestra** was founded way back in 2006 to play music from way back in the '20s-30s for a vaudeville show in Massachusetts. Carpenter may not at the time have expected the project to carry on for five years, but here they were (Jul. 15th) for a semi-regular engagement at Barbès and with an album to promote no less. They opened with fanfare of harmonica through megaphone and bowed tenor banjo, which quickly gave way to an eruption of brass and reeds and Tiny Parham's 1929 "Mojo Strut". With a nine-piece band that included Rob Garcia, Curtis Hasselbring, Brandon Seabrook and Mazz Swift - all of whom appear on the record - as well as Marty Ehrlich subbing for Matt Bauder, there was plenty of versatility crammed onto the stage. The set list, nicely introduced by Carpenter with city and year of origin, was comprised largely of obscurities but included a take on "Gee Baby, Ain't I Good to You?" with wonderfully lazy vocals by Swift. They by and large kept the faith, if with outré moments: a quick conduction here, an unlikely solo there. A round robin of single-chorus fills was faithfully and passionately delivered, Seabrook wasn't entirely revisionist but retrofitted nevertheless. The out moments didn't seem anachronistic within Barbès' confined classiness. Instead, it was as if the band had been caught on some crazy speakeasy night, less disciplined than what might usually have been captured on cylinder or celluloid.

- Kurt Gottschalk

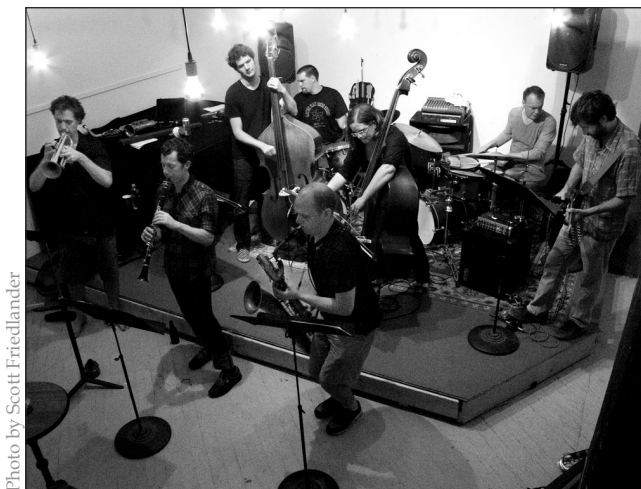


Photo by Scott Friedlander

Ghost Train Orchestra @ Barbès

Saxophonist **Matana Roberts** is only halfway through her ambitious Coin Coin project and already it's more than can easily be gathered and put in a single basket. At The Jazz Gallery (Jul. 9th) she presented Chapter Six of her musical family history, *Papa Joe*, based on the words and compositions of her great grandfather. Roberts has a way of using musical styles that seem vaguely period, something like what Rahsaan Roland Kirk did at times, which work well to advance her story settings. Such deft craftsmanship is more apparent on *Coin Coin Chapter One: Les Gens de Couleur Lebres*, released in May on Constellation Records and to a lesser degree in *Papa Joe*. Brief "hallelujah" interludes were interspersed throughout, along with recitations that seemed two parts poem to one part sermon, eventually rousing into a gospel. She stripped it down to bass and her tambourine, with audience and band [Shoko Nagai (piano), Thomson Kneeland (bass), Daniel Levin (cello) and Tomas Fujiwara (drums)] repeating the "hallelujah" while she raised the rafters. Roberts can seem a bit hesitant in her spoken word, but has a powerful singing voice when the material calls for it. She brought the band back in slowly, then from the back of the room (and this 45 minutes into the set) Montreal trumpeter Ellwood Epps came in and played his way to the stage, aiding in a fiery climax. With that peak crossed, the band carried on with a half-hour epilogue, the story told and the music now playing them off. (KG)

The **Holus-Bolus** and **Cylinder** quartets are compatriots, even if they come from opposite sides of the country. Unlike the East Coast-West Coast rap wars of the '80s, both groups peacefully coexist in the compelling realm of composed avant garde music. At Douglass Street Music Collective (Jul. 9th), each played a set to a damp audience. The final third of the evening was a joining of both groups, a potentially tantalizing prospect given the musicians involved: Josh Sinton and Aram Shelton (saxes and clarinets), Darren Johnston (trumpet), Jonathan Goldberger (guitar), Peter Bitenc and Lisa Mezzacappa (basses) and Mike Pride and Kjell Nordeson (drums). What was a great relief was the now-octet's ambitious plan. Rather than just blow, which was probably what most of the crowd was expecting, three pieces by members of the groups were performed, a good opportunity to appreciate simultaneously their similarities and contrasts. Shelton's "It's a Tough Grid" slowly layered its instruments and felt like something from a BYG-Actuel LP, with Pride and Nordeson invoking Sunny Murray and Claude Delcloo and frontline soloists supported by counterpart rhythm sections. Sinton's "Late at Night with 30 Minutes To Go" was finished the day before and was a moody dirge for most of its spacious duration. Mezzacappa's closing "The Deep Disciplines" had perhaps the most conventional approach, a perky melody swept up by a forceful hurricane but still breaking up against musical levees. - **Andrey Henkin**



Holus-Bolus & Cylinder @ Douglass Street Music Collective

Despite, or perhaps because of, having the highest population density of jazz musicians in the world, many players have never worked together, even those of the same generation. Trying to fix this 'problem' are the folks from Search & Restore, the non-profit group that helps bring New York the annual Undead Jazz Festival. Each Friday late night, a quartet of artists who have never played together take the Blue Note stage for an unplanned set of music. The first-time aggregation that took place Jul. 8th included alto saxist **David Binney**, bassist **Jason Roebke** and drummer **Mike Pride**. Pianist **Orrin Evans** was nowhere to be found so the group started out as a trio, but hardly as lead voice and rhythm section. Roebke and Pride actually play together quite frequently so it was their combined efforts with/against Binney, creating tension in what seemed like a lengthy prelude to some obscure standard. Right after Roebke's solo, Evans snuck in and with a few broad chords completely changed the dynamic of the music. The improvisation continued in loose fashion, following the typical peaks and valleys of most open music but never (d)evolving into textural displays or free-for-squalls. If Evans molded the first piece in his own image despite having missed half of its 30-minute duration, for the second and final 14-minute number, he took control immediately, laying out the foundations of a balladic excursion, Binney unfurling licks as the group morphed a bit too easily into a typical saxophone-piano quartet. (AH)

The rare jazz musician who has managed to achieve a popular following without compromising his artistic integrity, it is the intensely honest passion inherent in his music that would seem to be the key to the success of **Kenny Garrett**. Opening his second Saturday night set at Dizzy's Club (Jul. 2nd) with an incendiary saxophone duet ignited by the fiery drumming of Ronald Bruner, the former Art Blakey and Miles Davis sideman pushed his thick-toned alto to its limits with a sound and fury more often associated with the avant garde of the lower east side than a premier midtown jazz club. By the time bassist Nat Reeves and pianist Benito Gonzalez joined the pair on the original "2 Down & 1 Across", the driving music was in high gear, with Gonzalez' unabashedly McCoy Tyner-influenced piano underscoring the piece's Trane-ish intensity. On the Eastern-tinged "Qing Wen" the foursome played with an appealing sweetness that was enthusiastically directed by Bruner's shifting rhythms. The band swung "Chief Blackwater" with hardbopping precision and got bluesy on the soulful Shorter tribute "Wayne's Thang", which had the audience clapping in funky time. Garrett took out his all-too-rarely-heard soprano sax for "Asian Medley", the acappella recital showcasing his beautiful sound and heightening the music's spiritual references, resolving in Gonzalez' idyllic hymnlike accompaniment. The closing "Sounds of The Flying Pygmies" brought the set full circle to a fiery conclusion. - **Russ Musto**



Kenny Garrett Quartet @ Dizzy's Club

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Summergarden series of free outdoor concerts, now in its 40th year, was a fitting setting for the presentation of **The Fringe**, as the cooperative trio entered its fourth decade of creating cutting-edge, collectively improvised music. George Garzone, arguably the most renowned saxophone instructor in the field of jazz education today, has sadly never achieved the recognition as a player on the level of some of his more famous students, such as Branford Marsalis and Joshua Redman. Best known for his triadic chromatic approach to composition, the saxophonist revealed his considerable skills as a writer premiering a new work, "Art, Music and Life", commissioned by MoMA specifically for the performance (Jul. 17th). Beginning with a unison line for tenor sax and John Lockwood's bowed bass, the piece promptly evolved into an unbounded extended improvisation, typifying the unit's "twin ideals of openness and free expression". With drummer Bob Gullotti alternately coloring his colleagues' melodic lines and soloing with forceful originality, the trio conversed at length with inspired abandon, Garzone's dark tenor cutting through the steamy night air as he traversed the cool marble stage to spotlight his colleagues' contributions. The new work was complemented by a moving reading of the Coltrane-associated ballad "I Want to Talk About You", which showcased the traditionalist roots of the band, before they ended with a terse uptempo encore. (RM)

WHAT'S NEWS

The final class of **National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters** has been announced (the honor has been eliminated due to budget cuts, jazz musicians now eligible for the more generic Artist of the Year Awards). The recipients are drummer Jack DeJohnette, saxophonist Von Freeman, bassist Charlie Haden and vocalist Sheila Jordan. The recipient of the 2012 AB Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Award for Jazz Advocacy is trumpeter Jimmy Owens. For more information, visit arts.gov.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has announced that **John Coltrane's** final home, located in Dix Hills, NY, is among the 11 most endangered historic places in the country. The house, owned by the town, is badly in need of repair but thus far no funds have been made available. For more information, visit preservationnation.org.

Jim McNeely, longtime pianist and Musical Director of the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, has been named the new Musical Director of the Frankfurt-based hr Bigband in Germany. For more information, visit hr-online.de.

Continuing the saga of the recently-cut categories in the **Grammy Awards**, a boycott of CBS and a lawsuit against the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) has been announced, spearheaded by percussionist Bobby Sanabria. In related news, pianist Marc Levine, in protest of the actions of NARAS, has returned his 2003 Grammy Nomination medal and plaque and 2010 Latin Grammy Nomination parchment. For more information, visit grammywatch.org.

The Jazz Gallery is offering \$35 Summer Passes, which will allow entry for the entire month's concerts. Additionally, the pass can be upgraded to a membership at the end of the summer. For more information, visit jazzgallery.org.

It has been announced that saxophonist **Branford Marsalis** has joined the creative team for the upcoming Broadway play *The Mountaintop* by Katori Hall starring Samuel L. Jackson and Angela Bassett. Marsalis will compose music for the production, which will open Sep. 22nd at Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre. Tickets go on sale Aug. 11th. For more information, visit katorihall.com.

The **Jazz Education Network**, what rose from the ashes of the International Association for Jazz Education, is planning its third annual conference for Jan. 4th-7th in Louisville, KY and is calling for submission of research papers related to its theme "Developing Tomorrow's Jazz Audiences Today". Submission guidelines require a short abstract by Aug. 15th. For more information, visit jazzednet.org/1/en/Research_Papers.

Submit news to info@nycjazzrecord.com