



THE JAZZ.COM BLOG

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Scott Albin Selects the Best Jazz CDs and Tracks of 2008

Several regular contributors to jazz.com will be offering a look back at the best of 2008 in this column. Here Scott Albin shares with us his list of the best jazz CDs and tracks of the year. T.G.



Holiday Horns, artwork by [Suzanne Cerny](#)

Several weeks ago, I submitted to *Jazz Times* my list of the 10 best new CD releases of 2008, which the magazine will use in conjunction with their other contributors' lists to compile a consensus top 50 CDs.

Immediately upon sending it, I had my usual misgivings and second thoughts. These top 10 lists are highly subjective, unscientific creations, and invariably leave off numerous equally worthy CDs, some simply because they were not heard by a particular writer. I will use this blog entry to acknowledge at least some of these other new releases that could have easily qualified for my top ten, but were regrettably squeezed out. Then I will address some of my favorite tracks of the year—in keeping with jazz.com's emphasis—from still another select group of CDs. Quality has no limitation, as usual, in jazz this year.

A sampling of 2008's best new CD releases (in random order):

Dave Holland Sextet: *Pass it On* (Dare2)
 Arturo O'Farrill and the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra: *Song for Chico* (Zoho)
 Steve Kuhn Trio: *Plays Standards* (Venus)
 Bobby Watson: *From the Heart* (Palmetto)
 Cassandra Wilson: *Lover Come Back to Me* (Blue Note)
 Rob Schneiderman: *Glass Enclosure* (Reservoir)
 Tardo Hammer: *Look Stop and Listen: The Music of Tadd Dameron* (Sharp Nine)
 Conrad Herwig: *The Latin Side of Wayne Shorter* (Half Note)
 Joe Temperley: *The Sinatra Songbook* (Hep)
 South Florida Jazz Orchestra: *South Florida Jazz Orchestra* (Mama)
 Brent Jensen: *One More Mile* (Origin)
 Joe Lovano: *Symphonica* (Blue Note)
 James Carter: *Present Tense* (Emarcy)
 Aaron Parks: *Invisible Cinema* (Blue Note)
 George Cables: *You Don't Know Me* (Kind of Blue)
 Miguel Zenón: *Awake* (Marsalis Music)
 Bill Easley: *Businessman's Bounce* (18th & Vine)
 Ahmad Jamal: *It's Magic* (Dreyfus)

The above list includes perhaps the finest CDs in recent years by James Carter, Bobby Watson, Ahmad Jamal, George Cables, and Bill Easley, as well as rewarding big band releases from Arturo O'Farrill, the South Florida Jazz Orchestra, and Conrad Herwig. Cassandra Wilson returns to standards magnificently. Steve Kuhn continues his recent winning streak. Dave Holland's new sextet is graced by the presence of Antonio Hart and Mulgrew Miller. Veteran pianists Rob Schneiderman and Tardo Hammer release gems, as does baritone/soprano saxophonist Joe Temperley with his reverent Sinatra tribute. Young pianist Aaron Parks makes an auspicious debut. Hornmen Lovano, Zenon, and Jensen deliver laudable performances.

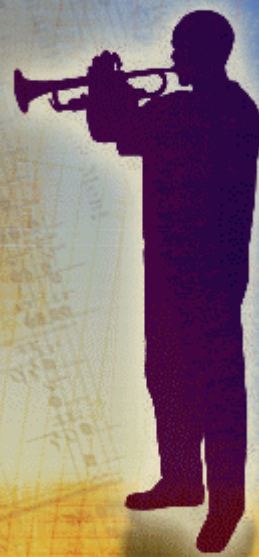
Some favorite tracks of 2008 (in random order):

"Soul Trane": James Moody & Hank Jones (from *Our Delight*)
 "Tea for Two": Martial Solal (from *Longitude*)
 "Pine Creek": Jamie Baum (from *Solace*)
 "Rabo de Nube": Charles Lloyd (from *Rabo de Nube*)
 "The Traveler": Kenny Barron (from *The Traveler*)
 "[Seven Days](#)": Felipe Salles (from *South American Suite*)
 "[Waltz for Debby](#)": Chick Corea & Gary Burton (from *The New Crystal Silence*)
 "[Bachião](#)": Trio da Paz and Joe Locke (from *Live at JazzBaltica*)
 "[Squazin](#)": Antonio Ciacca (from *Rush Life*)
 "[Four Odd](#)": Zdenko Ivanušić (from *Lost in HTML*)
 "[Serenade in Blue](#)": Rachael Price (from *The Good Hours*)
 "[Tethered](#)": Tom Beckham (from *Rebound*)
 "Very Early": Larry Coryell Organ Trio (from *Impressions: The New York Sessions*)
 "[Adiós Nonino](#)": Astor Piazzolla (from *Live at the Montreal Jazz Festival*)
 "[You Must Believe in Spring](#)": April Hall (from *Fun Out of Life*)
 "[Current](#)": Jack Broad (from *Current*)

The above tracks came from a number of highly recommended CDs. Of the lesser-known artists, Rachael Price and April Hall are singers well worth hearing, Salles a fine saxophonist / composer / arranger, Antonio Ciacca an engaging pianist, Tom Beckham an excellent vibist / composer, Jack Broad a versatile, polished guitarist and skilled programmer, Zdenko Ivanušić a significant saxophonist/composer based in Croatia, and Jamie Baum a wonderful flutist and orchestrator. The Astor Piazzolla track is from the first-time-ever release of his quintet's celebrated 1984 Montreal performance, newly available on both CD and DVD.

This blog article posted by Scott Albin.

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of jazz...



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