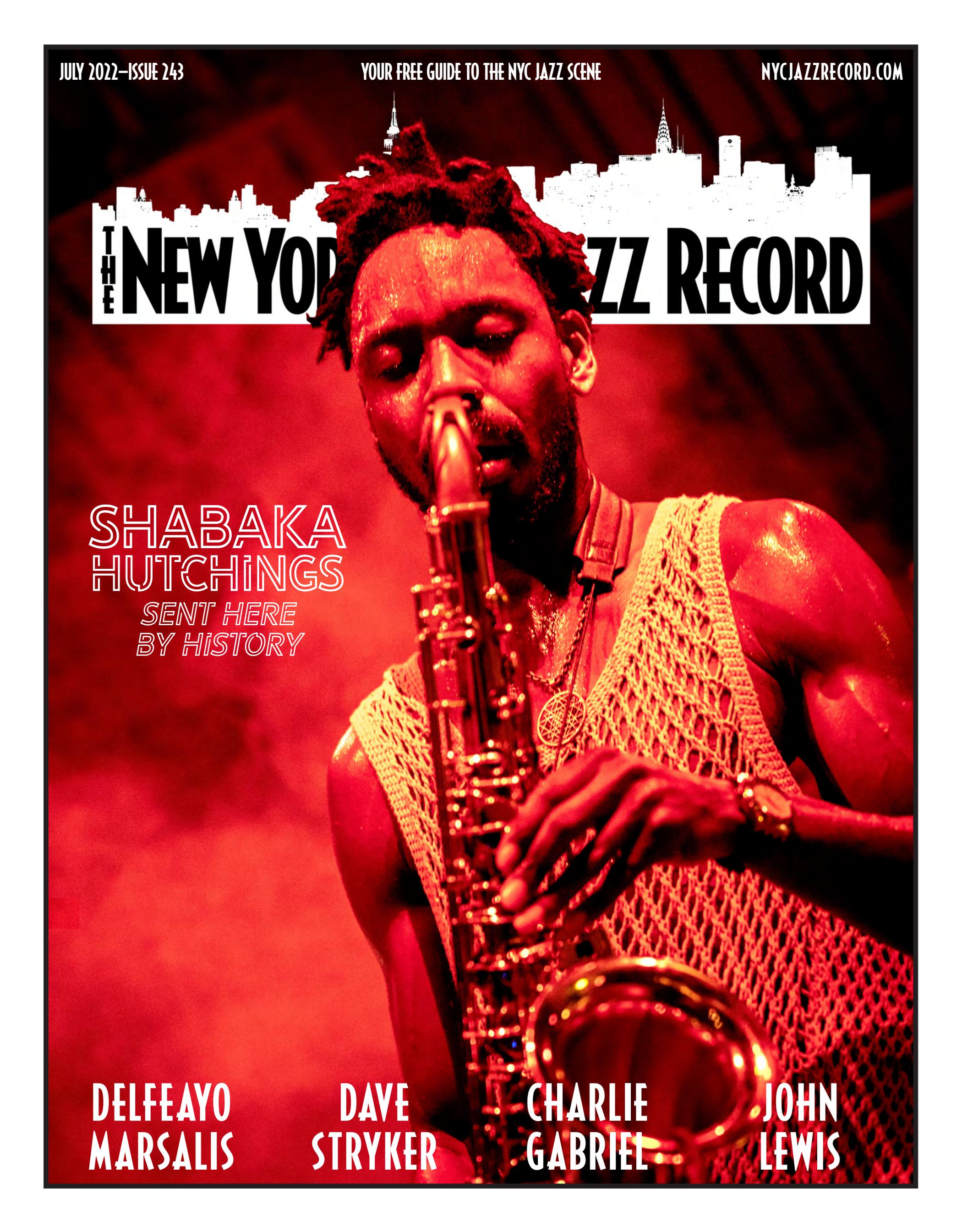


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YOUR FREE GUIDE TO THE NYC JAZZ SCENE

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Estelar
André Matos (Robalo Music)
17 Compositions
Guillaume Gargaud (Panoramic/New Focus)
Glühen
Thomas Maos (Way Out)
 by Tom Greenland

It has been a while since this column treated solo guitar projects (Nov. 2017) but the challenge remains the same: 6 strings, 10 fingers, countless choices. This month features soliloquists from Portugal, France and Germany meeting the challenge their own way.

Lisbon-born André Matos now resides in NYC. *Estelar* is a succinct, spartan introduction to his low-key but highly evocative solo style, a mix of Indian classical sensibility à la Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, wherein each note of a particular mode is sequentially introduced and established as an individual color, and Mississippi Delta blues techniques, high keening, slide-driven melodies soaring over thumb-struck bass notes with minimal chording. The ten short tracks—averaging three minutes—are akin, based on open-string drones (low E-string tuned down to E-flat, D, D-flat or C for contrasting pitch centers) with upper register melodies spooling out leisurely, each tone caressed and lingered over. Three tracks have discreet overdubs; the others are single takes, all close-mic'd to pick up string noises, an integral hue of the sonic palette.

Le Havre-based Guillaume Gargaud takes a relatively purist approach to *17 Compositions*: bare hands (not even a slide) on steel-string acoustic guitar, single takes (no overdubs), every track less than two minutes long. The compositions are abstract and oblique, eschewing droning bass-notes or obvious tonality—though many make indirect references to the pitches C or B—to give the album an intimate, improvisational character: the former due in part to audible breathing marking off each phrase with a faint but clear inhalation, the latter attributable to the elusive compositional structures suggestive of contemporary classical serial works. Gargaud achieves a beautiful balance of contrasting interactive parts, introducing variety via diverse techniques—leaping trills, half-bends, sparkling harmonics, muted tones, slow glissandos, crunchy poly-chords—featured in select spots, or else melded together in quick succession, as on the timbrally rich 13th track.

Thomas Maos' *Glühen* embraces electronica, the Tübingen guitarist using his solid-body electric more as a trigger/conduit for a bevy of samplers, sequencers and signal processors than as an acoustic signature. A multimedia artist who brings cinematic vision to music, he employs various implements and stomp pedals to evoke effects sounding like anything but a guitar: crinkles, crackles, rattles, bangles, squeaks, scratches, chimes, whistles, buzz-saws, dental drills, depth sounders, duck calls, church organs, fire alarms, plunging sirens, fireworks, cascading bombs, low-flying helicopters, breaking waves and the like. The dramatic arc of many of the dozen tracks—which vary in length from just over 2 minutes to just under 12—is largely sustained by contrasts of timbre and texture, mixed so that each distinctive sound is panned to opposite sides of the stereo mix, creating an engaging 'dialogue'.

For more information, visit robalomusic.com, newfocusrecordings.com and elektrogitarre.de



tête-à-tête
Stefan Bauer/Michael Heupel (JazzHausMusik)
 by Anna Steegmann

Stefan Bauer (vibraphone/marimba) and Michael Heupel (flute) played together at the "Vibraphonissimo" festival in Fürth, Germany, in 2020, recorded by Bavarian Radio. Part of it became *tête-à-tête*, their first duo album, and while they have worked together since the late '70s this album feels innovative and new.

Bauer, New York-based since 2001, has been playing piano in local German jazz bands since he was 17. In addition, he studied the trombone and later vibraphone. He has performed with the Vienna Art Orchestra, NDR Big Band and led several ensembles. Heupel, based in Cologne, where he teaches jazz flute at the University of Music, founded a quartet in the '90s, performed as a soloist and in many ensembles and toured Asia, Africa and Latin America with Norbert Stein's Pata Masters. Bauer has also traveled the world and brought his impressions of various cultures into his playing style. This album is a tribute to their musicianship, curiosity and openness.

For the ten-track, 40-minute program, the musicians take on diverse functions, tasks in a traditional ensemble distributed among several players. Bauer states that the duo pursues their often interlocking interests in different styles, forms, sounds and rhythms. The album has individual compositions, three jointly-written tunes and interpretations of Smt. R.A. Ramamani's "Kartik" and Hermeto Pascoal's "Chorinho".

One track is called "Meditation", but, in a way, most of the tracks are meditative. "Kartik", dreamy and exhilarating at once, stands out. Bauer takes center stage until slow, elongated playing from Heupel emerges. Then, the beautiful melody picks up pace, becoming faster and looser until it fades slowly by returning to the theme. "Summer's Embrace" delights with an easy groove, "Miniatur I" is short and minimalistic, "Miniatur II" more experimental and less melodic and "Happy Jack" swirling and turbulent. "Adieu" mesmerizes with melancholy flute tones and "Chorinho" alternates between lively and slow tempi.

The interaction is intricate, vivid and delicate all at once. Listeners will relish this musical meeting.

For more information, visit jazzhausmusik.de. Bauer is at Sunset Park Library Jul. 7th. See Calendar.



While We Were Gone (Live at Soapbox Gallery)
Paul Jost Quartet (Jammin' Colors)
 by Marilyn Lester

Several things about Paul Jost inform his singing style and music choices. Foremost, his vocalizations are unique and individual, derived from a lifetime as a drummer. He is also a thinker; intelligence permeates the lyric and narrative of his music and he is political in a positive way. Jost deeply cares about social issues. The subtitles of the two CDs that make up *While We Were*

Gone (Live at Soapbox Gallery) declare that last point; "Poetic Justice" and "An Appeal for Reason" are titles but also dramatic, assertive and heartfelt recitations, the latter about the events of Jan. 6th at the Capitol. The former begins with a soulful "Shenandoah" (traditional), ending with a few bars of "The Star Spangled Banner" before the recitation of "Lies of Convenience". There follows a balladic "Forever", in memory of George Floyd, ending with a burst of an excerpt from "Who Says?" The narration of "An Appeal for Reason" is followed by a beseeching a cappella "If I Ruled the World" (Leslie Bricusse-Cyril Ornadel). A number Jost wrote in 1995, "Livin' in the Wrong Time", a folk-style ballad, still relevant today, follows next.

Yet, all of Jost's output is deeply felt, often with raw emotion. It would be easy to imagine him in the bohemian Greenwich Village scene of the '50s-'60s, but he is an updated version and most certainly of this age. The two CDs are largely composed of standards, but transformed through the lens of creative expressionism. He scats and produces various vocalizations that sometimes glance sideways at singing. "Bye Bye Blackbird" (Ray Henderson-Mort Dixon) begins as a parlando to Jim Ridl's haunting piano. It bursts into swing and a fair amount of scat, ending on a slow tempo with Jost in melancholy sentiment. This kind of arrangement is prime Jost. He has the capacity to think out of the box and while he may not be everyone's cup of tea, for those who appreciate his fearless creativity, his material is an eye-opening treat. A bluesy, hip "Centerpiece" (Harry Edison-Jon Hendricks) is full of scat and talk-singing, plus shows off Jost's mastery of the harmonica. There is also an extended piano solo by Ridl and others by bassist Martin Wind and drummer Tim Horner. An egalitarian, Jost uniformly gives his band ample opportunity to shine in their solos; in fact, they are seldom in the background, instead playing with Jost as an integrated, synergistic whole. Closest to a standard interpretation of material is "My Foolish Heart" (Victor Young-Ned Washington) in a light swing version with the energetic bass of Lorin Cohen providing a steady, toe-tapping rhythm. Jost delivers the song with a strong feel for jazz and vocal dynamics, which work with emphatic phrasing to give the number zest along with emotional depth. "Sunshine Superman" (Donovan) is transformed into an extravaganza of rhythm. An extended drum solo opens it, followed by Jost singing several bars of the tune as a story song. The rest is instrumental and some scat, for a total of more than seven minutes of musical exploration. Define Jost as you will, but what is indelibly true is that in all ways he is a remarkable storyteller.

For more information, visit jammincolors.com. This band is at The Bitter End Jul. 10th and Soapbox Gallery Jun. 26th. See Calendar.

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 Jam Session with Diego Voglino

Wednesdays: 8 & 9:30 pm
 Dezron Douglas (Jul. 6th) | David Weiss (Jul. 13th)
 Willerm Delsifort (Jul. 20th) | Matt Pavolka (Jul. 27th)

Thursdays: 8 & 9:30 pm
 Adam Kolker/Jeremy Stratton with guests
 Dick Oatts (Jul. 7th) | EB Silverman (Jul. 14th)
 Sasha Dobson (Jul. 21st) | Hery Paz (Jul. 28th)
 5-7 pm: Happy Hour with Marta Sanchez

Fridays: 8 & 9:30 pm
 Loren Stillman (Jul. 1st) | Spin Cycle (Jul. 8th)
 Jonathan Michel (Jul. 15th) | Gil and Any Defay (Jul. 22nd)
 Simon Willson (Jul. 29th)
 5-7 pm: Happy Hour

Saturdays: 6-7:30 pm
 Neal Kirkwood (Jul. 2nd) | Michael Kanan (Jul. 9th)
 Santiago Liebson (Jul. 16th) | Steve Cardenas (Jul. 23rd)
 Bruce Barth (Jul. 30th)

8 & 9:30 pm
 Michael Weiss (Jul. 2nd) | Ron McClure (Jul. 9th)
 Garvin Blake (Jul. 16th) | Caleb Wheeler Curtis (Jul. 23rd)
 Kazemde George (Jul. 30th)