

79TH READERS POLL JAZZ ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1. Pat Metheny Unity Group, *Kin* (NONESUCH)

632



To his already superb Unity Band quartet with saxophonist Chris Potter, bassist Ben Williams and drummer Antonio Sanchez, guitarist Metheny adds multi-instrumentalist Giulio Carmassi, who brings churning keyboard undercurrents and swirling new textures. With this release, the Unity Band concept has coalesced into a unified whole.

2. Ambrose Akinmusire, *The Imagined Savior Is Far Easier To Paint* (BLUE NOTE)

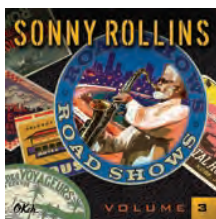
512



Akinmusire's sophomore effort for Blue Note is even more daring than his 2011 label debut. Rather than knock you out with his muscularity, the trumpeter ensnares your attention with intriguing arrangements and captivating performances by guest vocalists Theo Bleckmann and Cold Specks.

3. Sonny Rollins, *Road Shows, Volume 3* (DOXY/OKEH)

448



The latest installment of concert performances by the tenor sax titan offers glimpses from his world tours between 2001 and 2012. It's an excellent collection of Rollins as a senior statesman of jazz—a confident, free and flowing improviser with an encyclopedic knowledge of music and his instrument.

4. Gregory Porter, *Liquid Spirit* (BLUE NOTE)

413



With a rich baritone that rings pure and true, Porter is a once-in-a-generation singer who delivers lyrics with honesty, truth and a rare mastery of phrasing. The only thing better than hearing him sing a standard is hearing him sing one of his own compositions. All are on full display on his Blue Note debut.

5. George Benson, *Inspiration (A Tribute To Nat King Cole)* (CONCORD)

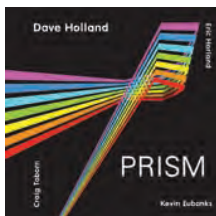
381



The guitarist-vocalist superstar's dream of recording a Nat "King" Cole tribute has come to fruition with the help of the 42-piece Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra. Guest performances, like Wynton Marsalis' romantic trumpet playing on "Unforgettable," make this more than a straight imitation of the influential pianist-vocalist's classic recordings.

6. Dave Holland & Prism, *Prism* (DARE2)

381



For this electrified outing, Holland assembled a quartet of outstanding players and composers who are leaders in their own right: guitarist Kevin Eubanks, keyboardist Craig Taborn and drummer Eric Harland. Together, they created a unique and contemporary musical statement.

7. Chick Corea, *The Vigil* (STRETCH/CONCORD)

368



Corea presents a band of meticulous yet heated improvisers who scale his compositional heights with balletic grace. Drummer Marcus Gilmore, saxophonist Tim Garland, guitarist Charles Altura and bassist Hadrien Feraud frame the keyboardist-leader's muse in dense shades with precise degrees of tension and dynamics.

8. Tom Harrell, *Colors Of A Dream* (HIGHNOTE)

333



This is perhaps the most imaginative recording to date by the prolific trumpeter, flugelhornist, bandleader and composer. The scoring for the piano-less ensemble—which includes saxophonists Jaleel Shaw and Wayne Escoffery, bassist Ugonna Okegwo, bassist-vocalist Esperanza Spalding and drummer Johnathan Blake—is sui generis among Harrell's work.

9. The Bad Plus, *The Rite Of Spring* (SONY MASTERWORKS)

320



The Bad Plus takes on one of the most influential works of the 20th century, a complex score fraught with revolutionary experiments in rhythm and meter, tonality and dissonance. It's a remarkable feat that affirms the trio's preeminence as the one of the most adventurous and imaginative bands of the modern era.

10. The Ed Palermo Big Band, *Oh No! Not Jazz!* (CUNEIFORM)

308



With his internal radar tuned into Frank Zappa's zany frequency, saxophonist Palermo and his dedicated band prove they've mastered the quirky complexities of the late master's intricate, demanding compositions. The eight original tunes on disc 2 are triumphs of serious-minded orchestral jazz, with occasional whiffs of comedy.

11. Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band, *Landmarks* (BLUE NOTE)

304

12. Cécile McLorin Salvant, *WomanChild* (MACK AVENUE)

288

13. Kenny Garrett, *Pushing The World Away* (MACK AVENUE)

277

14. Ai Di Meola, *All Your Life* (VALIANA/SONGSURFER)

259

15. Christian McBride Trio, *Out Here* (MACK AVENUE)

259

16. Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band, *Life In The Bubble* (TELARC)

245

17. John McLaughlin & The 4th Dimension, *The Boston Record* (ABSTRACT TRUTH)

237

18. Trombone Shorty, *Say That To Say This* (VERVE)

229

19. Stanton Moore, *Conversations* (ROYAL POTATO FAMILY)

224

20. Dianne Reeves, *Beautiful Life* (CONCORD)

221

21. 3 Cohens, *Tightrope* (ANZIC)

216

22. George Duke, *DreamWeaver* (HEADS UP)

216

23. Dave Stryker, *Eight Track* (STRIKEZONE RECORDS)

200

24. Kenny Barron, *Kenny Barron & The Brazilian Knights* (SUNNYSIDE)

197

25. John Scofield, *Überjam Deux* (EMARCY/DECCA)

197

26. Eric Alexander, *Chicago Fire* (HIGHNOTE)

189

27. Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, *The L.A. Treasures Project* (CAPRI)

189

28. Alan Broadbent, *Heart To Heart: Solo Piano* (CHILLY BIN)

176

29. Paquito D'Rivera & Trio Corrente, *Song For Maura* (PAQUITO RECORDS/SUNNYSIDE)

160