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Branford Marsalis Quartet &amp; Maria Schneider Orchestra at NJPAC

**THIS WEEK - FEATURED**

**PERFORMANCE:** Branford Marsalis Quartet, Maria Schneider Orchestra

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Jazz Inside Monthly NY - December 2009

**INTERVIEW:** Bob Brookmeyer

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**CD Review:** Vijay Iyer

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**Jazz Inside Monthly NY -  
December 2009**



## THIS WEEK - FEATURED PERFORMANCE

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**Jazz**

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*For this NJPAC exclusive, Grammy-winning saxophonist and composer Branford Marsalis leads his longtime group—pianist Joey Calderazzo, bassist Eric Revis, and drummer Justin Faulkner—in music from their recent *Metamorphosen*, a CD loaded with scintillating original compositions by each member of the quartet. In recent years, Grammy winner Maria Schneider has risen to become the most acclaimed big-band jazz composer of her generation, mentioned in the same breath as greats like Duke Ellington and Gil Evans. The Los Angeles Times credits Schneider's evocative work for taking “the first truly novel approach to big jazz band composition of the new century.”*

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This issue of *Jazz Inside NY Magazine* - December issue features pianist Junior Mance on the cover and an in-depth interview. Mance anchored the piano chair in the Cannonball Adderley Quintet in the late 1950s, and then spent three years with Dizzy Gillespie.

Composer, Arranger, Valve Trombonist Bob Brookmeyer celebrates his 80th Birthday this year. In this interview, he talks about his life and career, and shares the wisdom of his years.

The CD Spotlight section highlights new releases by ARC Trio, Mike Arroyo, George Benson, Joshua Breakstone, Jack Cortner Big Band, Paul Gormley, Angela Hagenbach, Rick Helzer, Monika Herzig, Vijay Iyer, Oliver Jones, Hank Jones, Beat Kaestli, Saltman & Knowles, Babatunde Lea, Howard Levy, Steve Lewandowski, Dan McMillion, Amanda Monaco, James Moody, Roy Nathanson, Miles Osland and Raleigh Dailey, Rob Panuzzi

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## INTERVIEW Bob Brookmeyer

This is an excerpt from the interview that appears in *Jazz Inside NY* magazine, December 2009 - available in print or [DOWNLOAD a copy by going here:](#)



<http://jazzinsidemagazine.com/publications/guide/december-2009>

*Photo of Bob Brookmeyer and Clark Terry by Ken Weiss*

Bob Brookmeyer: I'm a big fan of Morton Feldman, and of his philosophy – as opposed to Stockhausen, who is creating now the music for the world, forever. Morty quietly wrote quiet music. He began expanding durational concepts. He went from an hour, to an hour and a half and finally up to six hours for a piece of music. There was an interview on the web dealing with two guys in their 30s, yuppies, for a California concert. They played one his longer pieces, named after a painter. They described how they had grown and gone into the music. They didn't listen to it. They walked into it, which is a composer's dream. They felt some changes in their thinking and their feeling and their life. So with that in mind, I'm trying to figure how I can get a listener make the trip with me. There is so much noise and so much activity – especially since Charlie Parker and Coltrane. The

Herbie Hancock, Bob D'Aquila, Chris Pasin, Bud Shank, Daniel Smith, Curtis Stigers, Mads Tolling, Sofia Tosello, Sachal Vasandani, Melissa Walker, Wayne Wallace, Anthony Wilson, Phil Woods and more.

Ira Gitler focuses on Manhattan School of Music Jazz Philharmonic, Illinois Jacquet, Arturo O'Farrill, and Steve Grossman.

An excerpt from the full interview with George Klabin (full interview is slated for the quarterly Jazz Inside Magazine), founder of Resonance Records, includes a discussion about the new CD by Scott LaFaro on the label, and the companion biography.

Comprehensive monthly calendar and event listings for the number one jazz market in the world - New York - span 16 pages.

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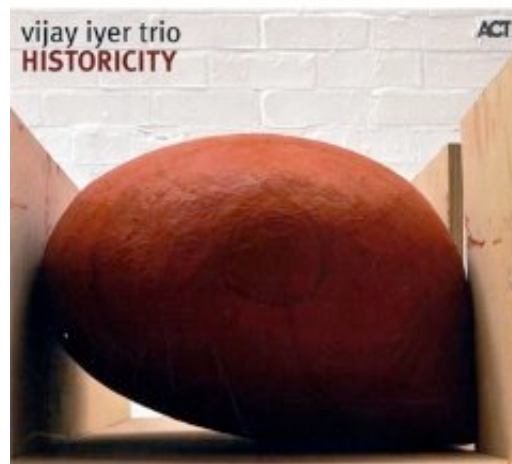


filling of space constantly, for a composer, is almost antithetical. Space should be there, and contemplation, and time to have the music almost look at itself. So that's probably why you're hearing more spaces. And, also I'm very happily married now for 21 years – and that could change your concept too. It is settling and inspiring. I found out a funny thing. I was living in New York in Gramercy Park about 30 years ago. I might have to have four celli, a couple clarinets and add something. Then I'd go out to see Manny Albam in the country and I'd bring the piece with me – all of a sudden it only needed one cello. I was living near a fire station and police station – all the normal stuff you have in the city. Then, I moved to Brooklyn and I still didn't have quiet. So I moved to the country – in Goshen – and it really got quiet. That's kind of a pre-requisite.

## CD Review

### Vijay Iyer

VIJAY IYER TRIO  
HISTORICITY -  
ACT Music ACT  
9489-2.



www.actmusic.com. Historicity; Somewhere; Galang; Helix; Smoke Stack; Big Brother; Dogon A.D.; Mystic Brew; Trident: 2010; Segment For Sentiment #2. PERSONNEL: Vijay Iyer, piano; Stephan Crump, bass; Marcus Gilmore, drums.

By Ronald Lyles

On his most recent recording, *Historicity*, pianist Vijay Iyer takes a look back in a very refreshing manner. On a program highlighted by covers from a range of genres including standards, pop music and the jazz avant garde, Iyer looks at the past as a means of informing how we got to where we are today and our place in the continuum of that history. The result is an engaging portrait combining seemingly incongruent sources into a singularly original



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presentation.

On his first recording entirely featuring a piano-bass-drums trio, Iyer is joined by frequent collaborators bassist Stephan Crump and drummer Marcus Gilmore. Throughout the three make a persuasive argument that it is one of the most invigorating piano trios on the scene. Not simply adhering to the traditional roles limiting the bass and drums to rhythmic support while piano is featured, the trio frequently flows to an implied internal rhythm freeing Crump to weave contrasting lines through Iyer's improvisations while Gilmore provides percussive color.

The ten track program consists of covers of compositions by Andrew Hill, Julius Hemphill, Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, Stevie Wonder, soul jazz keyboardist Ronnie Foster and popular artist M.I.A. Iyer also revisits two of his own previously recorded compositions and two additional originals are played here for the first time. Familiarity with the original versions is not necessary to appreciate the music on *Historicity*, but the trio's performance of the standard "Somewhere" is an excellent example of what he refers to as "versioning" – the cover is a mix of the original work and something else entirely. To the non-musician ear, Iyer sounds to omit some notes in his statement of the melody at a tempo somewhat slower than the trot established by Crump and Gilmore. The effect is to add a degree of tension to the otherwise longing nature of the tune. This is heightened during his improvisation which mixes Iyer's penchant for a slightly percussive and rhythmic approach to the keyboard with a densely clustered and virtuosic flow of ideas.

The performances of "Galang" and "Mystic Brew" share infectious grooves that even non-jazz fans of the original M.I.A. performance of the former, or the Tribe Called Quest sampling of the latter on "Electric Relaxation" can enjoy. The trio avoids the potential monotony in these tunes by adding surprises such as the subtle shifts in tempo on "Mystic Brew". The trio's performance of Stevie Wonder's "Big Brother" retains the character of the Wonder tune while again demonstrating the inventiveness of the trio. Andrew Hill and Julius Hemphill were two artists associated with the so called jazz avant garde whose compositions should be performed more frequently by contemporary musicians. On Hill's "Smoke Stack", Iyer submerges the theme within his improvisation. Although filled with more overt technique than Hill typically displayed, Iyer pays ample tribute by still recalling Hill's distinctive sound. The deceptively simple backbeat played by Gilmore underneath the alternated bowed and plucked bass vamp of Hemphill's classic "Dogon

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A.D.” serves as the perfect foundation for Iyer’s exploration on the piano. The eclectic covers distinguish *Historicity* from other piano trio recordings, but the equally compelling performances of the Iyer originals also have much to offer. The title tune and “Trident: 2000” find the trio at their interactive apex and contain Iyer’s best improvisations on the disc. “Helix” is a lesson in the use of dynamics to create drama as the intensity gradually increases over the course of four minutes. “Segment For Sentiment #2” reveals the trio’s introspective side as they close out the disc. For listeners new to Vijay Iyer,

*Historicity* is an ideal introduction. It lacks the density and sometimes static feel of the music of *Fieldwork* that make it inaccessible to some listeners. Similarly, absent the powerful voice of his frequent collaborator Rudresh Mahanthappa that tends to drastically increase the intensity of the music, the trio sounds more relaxed. The result is an opportunity to focus solely on Iyer’s impressive piano playing. Whether new to Iyer or a long time fan, *Historicity* is thoroughly stimulating from the first listen.

## CD REVIEW

### Gerald Wilson

**DETROIT** - Mack  
Avenue Records  
MAC 1049



[www.mackavenue.com](http://www.mackavenue.com). *Blues on Belle Isle; Cass Avenue; Detroit; Miss Gretchen; Before Motown; The Detroit River; Everywhere; Aram.*

**Personnel:** Gerald Wilson, conductor; Los Angeles Band: Ron Barrows, contractor, trumpet; Brian O’Rourke, piano; Mel Lee, drums; Trey Henry, bass; Carl Randall, tenor sax; Jackie Kelso, alto & soprano sax; Kamasi Washington, tenor sax; Louis Van Taylor, baritone & tenor sax; Randall Willis, alto sax & flute; Terry Landry, baritone sax; Bobby

Rodriguez, trumpet; Jeff Kaye, trumpet; Rick Baptist, trumpet; Winston Byrd, trumpet; Eric Jorgensen, trombone; Les Benedict, trombone; Mike Wimberly, trombone; Shaunte Palmer, trombone; Yvette Devereaux, violin; Guests: Sean Jones, trumpet & flugelhorn; Anthony Wilson, guitar. New York Band: Jon Faddis, contractor, trumpet, flugelhorn; Lewis Nash, drums; Renee Rosnes, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Anthony Wilson, guitar; Todd Coolman, bass; Steve Wilson, alto & soprano sax, flute; Antonio Hart, alto & soprano sax, flute; Ron Blake, tenor sax; Kamasi Washington, tenor sax; Ronnie Cuber, baritone sax; Frank Greene, trumpet & flugelhorn; Sean Jones, trumpet & flugelhorn; Jimmy Owens, trumpet & flugelhorn; Terrell Stafford, trumpet & flugelhorn; Dennis Wilson, trombone; Luis Bonilla, trombone; Jay Ashby, trombone; Douglas Purviance, bass trombone; Guest: Hubert Laws, flute.

By Eric Harabadian

Composer/arranger Gerald Wilson has been involved in the jazz world working with some of the greatest names in music like Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Nancy Wilson, Ray Charles and Ben Webster, to name a few. He played with Jimmy Lunceford's band in the '40s and is still going strong at the age of 90. Wilson was commissioned to compose a piece to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Detroit International Jazz Festival this past September 6, 2009 and he complied with this beautiful six-part suite simply called Detroit.

In recent interviews Wilson has claimed to be a romantic and one of the objectives of his music is to bring people together. This dedication to the Motor City certainly qualifies as a love affair to its people and environs of the highest order. The senior composer/conductor nonchalantly states "Hey, we're gettin' ready to record." And with a count off to the orchestra he leads this stellar group of musicians from both coasts on a musical journey through some of the highlights of the metro Detroit area.

First up is the composition "Blues on Belle Isle," which is a brisk and uptempo number. Pianist Brian O'Rourke intros with a dense rubato passage, making way for a bouncy and grooving bebop track. Solos are strong all around, with Yvette Devereaux's violin adding a particularly unique element to things. "Cass Tech" is an ode to the famed Motor City high school where Wilson attended during the mid-'30s. It is also where he began to hone his musical studies and is a significant stop along this musical travelogue. It is variation on a theme by Benny Golson called "Along Came Betty" and possesses a light, almost cocktail piano lounge feel, with a tight horn chart that colors the melody well. On this track

Anthony Wilson seems to summon a Charlie Christian meets Grant Green guitar sensibility, Kasami Washington burns with a lyrical passion on tenor sax and Sean Jones' trumpet is sweet and warm.

The title track "Detroit" maintains a pensive stance, with a presence that is both romantic and austere. Another simple yet inventive chart supports the melody well, with subtle thematic modulations that uphold reverence for and reflection on the subject matter. In keeping with the Detroit theme Wilson personalizes the suite even further by dedicating "Miss Gretchen" to the owner of his Motor City-based label Mack Avenue Records, Gretchen Valade. The piece is unique as it alternates from mid-tempo swing to slower moodier fare and back again.

"Before Motown" is kind of a rumba meets bossa nova groove, with a Mediterranean modal theme happening on top. This features nice high trumpet solos from Bobby Rodriguez, strong duets from Washington and Louis Van Taylor on tenor sax and the overlapping and textured lines of trombonist Les Benedict and trumpeter Sean Jones. "The Detroit River" is the final part of the six-piece suite that addresses this major international thoroughfare with an up-tempo and swinging jazz/blues that serves as a powerful solo vehicle for all. There is a flow to the interplay of the musicians, not unlike the river itself, with highlights from Eric Jorgensen on trombone, Devereaux's Stephane Grappelli-like grace on strings and Anthony Wilson's punchy and fleet-fingered guitar leads. Two additional pieces that were taken from previous recordings in 2007 include a funky and gracefully smooth number called "Everywhere" and the mid-tempo lilting waltz "Aram."

With his latest release Wilson proves to be an innovator for the ages and continues to be an inspiration to creative artists everywhere!

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