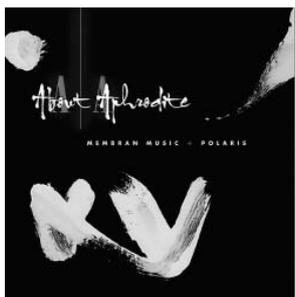


Record Reviews

JJ STAR RATINGS

- ★ Family members only
- ★★ Good playing with moments of inspiration, derivative concept
- ★★★ Professionally executed, perhaps with originality in playing or concept
- ★★★★ Exceptional in concept and execution, a once in a decade recording
- ★★★★★ Epoch-making recording demonstrating hitherto unheard concept

A bracketed star indicates a half-star



ABOUT APHRODITE

MEMBRAN MUSIC/POLARIS

Nash; Artemis; Polaris; Syria; Tadjwar (63.20)

Gilda Razani (theremin, ss, live elec); Hans Wanning (p, syn, live elec). Bonn, Germany, 2017.

Floating World 043

★★★(★)

JJ CONTENT

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The theremin – invented in 1920 as a bi-product of a Soviet government research project – is often more talked about than played. Most famously, it did not appear in the Beach Boys' *Good Vibrations* – that was a variant electro-theremin – nor was it used in the *Star Trek* or *Forbidden Planet* soundtracks. But Brian Jones used a theremin on two Rolling Stones' albums, as did Jimmy Page on Led Zepellin's *Whole Lotta Love*. And Shostakovich and the music for *Midsomer Murders* also made use of it. All of which makes this duo set quite remarkable.

Best described as a crossover of improvised jazz, classical and electronic music, the resulting music immediately creates an atmosphere that is almost cinematic in its scope, both elegiac and angry, that develops throughout all five tracks. The contrast between the ethereal theremin and the grounded piano provides the sonic contrast, the synthesizer and live electronics often reduced to a pulsating rhythmic role while Razani's soprano sax soars overhead. Recorded live and without any overdubs, it is evident that while the duo is working along pre-planned compositional routes, they are also often freely improvising. It makes for an alluring and innovative set that manages to avoid many of the clichéd pitfalls that limit most theremin music.

Simon Adams

CANNONBALL ADDERLEY

THEM DIRTY BLUES

(1) *Work Song*; (2) *Dat Dere*; (1) *Easy Living*; (2) *Del Sasser*; (1) *Jeannine*; (2) *Soon*; (1) *Them Dirty Blues*; [Cannonball Takes Charge] (3) *If This Isn't Love*; *I Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry*; *Serenata*; (4) *I've Told Every Little Star*; (5) *Barefoot Sunday Blues*; *Poor Butterfly*; *I Remember You* (78.22)

Adderley (as) with:

(1) Nat Adderley (c); Barry Harris (p); Sam Jones (b); Louis Hayes (d). Chicago, 29 March 1960.

(2) as (1), omit Harris, add Bobby Timmons (p). New York, 1 February 1960.

(3) Wynton Kelly (p); Paul Chambers (b); Jimmy Cobb (d). New York, 27 April 1959.

(4) as (3). New York, 23 April 1959.

(5) Kelly (p); Percy Heath (b); Albert "Tootie" Heath (d). New York, 12 May 1959.

Jazz Images 24738

★★★

Them Dirty Blues was originally released on Riverside in 1960 and features Cannonball Adderley's brother Nat on cornet. It begins with a classic jazz tune, Nat's *Work Song*, which builds around Sam Jones and Louis Hayes's tough rhythmic pulse and gives Cannonball, Nat and pianist Barry Harris ample time to deliver three inventive solos. Harris makes way for Bobby Timmons on *Dat Dere*, a Timmons composition that swaps the opening number's drive for a slinkier beat. The two pianists

take turns for the next five tracks, which include Cannonball's own title tune and Jones's *Del Sasser*.

The album title and front cover don't reveal the secret, but this is actually a two-for-one deal. The last seven of the 14 tracks were originally released on Riverside in 1959 as *Cannonball Takes Charge*, an album which features an equally stellar line-up of sidemen (including the rhythm section that had just recorded *Kind Of Blue*) and what is possibly a better-known set of tunes. Nat's absence is obvious, but the quartet setting gives Cannonball more space to open out. The Kelly, Chambers and Cobb band flies through *If This Isn't Love*, possibly still charged up by the Blue sessions, then calms down for a lyrical take on *I Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry*. Percy and Albert Heath replace Chambers and Cobb on the closing trio of tunes.

On its release *Downbeat's* Barbara Gardner gave five stars to *Them Dirty Blues*, telling readers that it would give hours of "unsophisticated listening pleasure". Okay, maybe Cannonball wasn't as exploratory as Coltrane or Davis, but there's nothing unsophisticated about the stylish performances on both of these albums.

Bruce Lindsay

CYRILLE AIMÉE

LIVE

It's A Good Day; *Nuit Blanche*; *Si Tu Vois Ma Mère*; *Live Alone And Like It*; *Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'*; *Off The Wall*; *Day By Day*; *It's Over Now (Well, You Needn't)*; *Three Little Words*; *Each Day* (57.19)

Aimée (v); Adrien Moignard (g); Michael Valeanu (elg); Dylan Shamur (b); Dani Danor (d). NYC. 16 August 2017.

Mack Avenue 1139
★★★(★)

Raised in Samoos, France, home to the Django Reinhardt festival, Aimée learned her trade as a child singing around gypsy encampments. Since then, she has attained a richly deserved international reputation. Her previous albums (*It's A Good Day* and *Let's Get Lost*, both on Mack Avenue) were studio recordings and this set, recorded at New York's Le Poisson Rouge, is her first live album. The occasion came at the end of five years touring internationally and the band's togetherness is evident throughout. Although Valeanu, Shamur and Danor are primarily in supportive roles, there are many highly effective solo moments from Moignard. He is excellent throughout, notably on *It's A Good Day*, *Live Alone And Like It*, a breakneck *Three Little Words*, and on Sidney Bechet's *Si Tu Vois Ma Mére*.

As well as Bechet the repertoire includes one by Thelonious Monk, the Peggy Lee-Dave Barbour hit, a couple of standards, a pop song by Michael Jackson and two originals, *Nuit Blanche* (Aimée) and *Each Day* (Aimée and Valeanu). The eclectic song selection widens the set's appeal but all the songs are reshaped into exceptional jazz performances. Aimée's vocal sound is light but strong, her diction clear, her phrasing impeccable and she swings mightily at whatever tempo. On the Jackson song she accompanies herself using a loop. Regular readers might recall that I included Aimée's *Let's Get Lost* (Mack Avenue 1097) in my choice for 2016's year-end top 10. This set is of equal quality and, obviously enough, is very warmly recommended.

Bruce Crowther

JOEY ALEXANDER
ECLIPSE

Bali; Faithful; Draw Me Nearer; Moment's Notice; Blackbird; Eclipse; Fourteen; The Very Thought Of You; Space; Time Remembered; Peace (60.13)

Alexander (p); Reuben Rogers (b); Eric Harland (d); Joshua Redman (ts). New York, 2017.

Motéma Music 0271
★★★

Three-time Grammy nominee Joey Alexander has made a serious impact in the jazz world since his debut album *My*

CRITICS' CHOICE

The 10 CDs JJ critics most wanted to hear from this month's review pile

About Aphrodite	Membran Music/Polaris	Floating World 043
Cannonball Adderley	Them Dirty Blues	Jazz Images 24738
John Coltrane	Both Directions At Once: The Lost Album	Impulse 02567 49299
Don Ellis	Shock Treatment/Autumn	Beat Goes On 1333
Irving Fazola	My Inspiration - His 26 Finest	Retrospective 4337
Erroll Garner	Nightconcert	Mack Avenue 1142
Stan Getz	And The Oscar Peterson Trio	State Of Art 81237
Tord Gustavsen	The Other Side	ECM 675 1618
Louis Moholo-Moholo/Five Blokes	Uplift The People	Ogun 047
Dudley Moore	Authentic Dud - Vol. 2	Harkit 8019



Favorite Things was released in 2015. Not only was he personally invited by Wynton Marsalis to perform alongside him in New York, he has since played to audiences worldwide, including to Barack Obama at the White House. And at age 15, he is a frighteningly accomplished pianist. Alexander displays the musical skill of someone who has studied jazz for decades, and as the title of his debut album suggests, his influences are primarily bebop era musicians such as Thelonious Monk and McCoy Tyner, but he also draws from the likes of Herbie Hancock and Bill Evans.

Eclipse follows the same pattern as his previous releases, largely made up of his own compositions, interspersed with a few well-chosen covers. Alexander's pieces contain a mixture of light and thoughtful playing, such as in *Draw Me Nearer*, and also the more experimental. *Faithful* in particular captures the late-era, free-jazz Coltrane style very well, with help from Joshua Redman on the tenor saxophone. An interesting addition to the album is a cover of The Beatles' *Blackbird*. A jazz interpretation of such a well-known classic always runs the risk of being disappointing, but Alexander creates a wonderful atmosphere through rhythmic variations and harmonic tangents. His ensemble is excellent throughout, particularly Reuben Rogers on bass, and

all the players complement each other well. *Eclipse* demonstrates Alexander's skill as a pianist and composer brilliantly, and if his past successes are anything to go by, the future is only looking brighter.

Elliot Marlow-Stevens

CHET BAKER

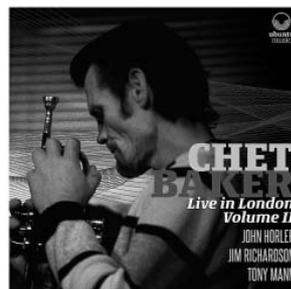
LIVE IN LONDON: VOLUME II

CD1: Strollin'; Broken Wing; My Ideal; Stella By Starlight; Down (57.40)?CD2: Dolphin Dance; Polka Dots And Moonbeams; When I Fall In Love; Dear Old Stockholm; Just Friends (54.45)

Baker (t, v); John Horler (p); Jim Richardson (b); Tony Mann (d). The Canteen, London, 28 March - 2 April 1983.

Ubuntu Music 14
★★★

I first heard these recordings around the mid-1990s, transferred from the original cassettes to DAT tapes, in the relatively early days of digital sound restoration, and it was clear that a great deal of work would be needed if these recordings were ever to be released. Aside from the numerous noises, distortion, and tape-stretching issues from the original recording, the recording device (a basic Sony TCS audiocassette recorder) was placed on top of the bass amplifier cabinet for the duration of the recording, so it's quite possible that the tape was starting to



degrade in quality during the actual recording, because it was likely to be within the magnetic field of the bass speaker.

It's easy to put on rose-coloured specs when this type of release appears, and for good reason in this case, because it's of historical jazz interest, and the performances are really good. However, bearing in mind all of the aforementioned in terms of audio quality, if you buy it, don't expect the sound quality to be great, because no matter what wonders have been performed in terms of sound restoration and mastering, the actual recorded sound from the cassettes wouldn't have been good at source. The piano sounds somewhat like a digital piano of the time, because most of the sound captured is the attack of the notes played. The drum kit also suffers from a lack of clarity, particularly in the cymbals, but the bass sound seems to fare a little better, and the trumpet (actually placed on the microphone), although a little nasal in quality, comes through quite nicely.

In terms of playing, the combination of Chet and the trio really sounds like a band, with Chet's quite spare melodic lines contrasting nicely with Horler's fluent and sometimes florid delivery. There are numerous split notes on trumpet, some of which unfortunately appear in the melody of the opening track of CD1, and later in Miles's *Down*, and the fragile vocals can't really be described as great singing, because they're quite like a jazz equivalent of Bob Dylan's singing in folk/rock - full of character, memorable, but flawed in a conventional sense, and that's part of the charm of Chet's performance on these recordings.

Dave Jones