

Finding the Pulse at the FIJM Inside and Outside Highlights at the Jazz Fest

By Lawrence Joseph

Dust off your microscopes, its time to play find-the-jazz-at-the-jazz-fest again. While the talent pond at the 33rd annual Festival International de Jazz de Montréal teems with musical microbes, the majority are fossilized relics or distant cousins of jazz adapted to the mass marketplace. Nevertheless, scattered amongst the plethora of ancient fusion Spyrogyra and pedestrian pop protozoa lie some of the fittest survivors and hip harmonic extensions of the evolutionary chain. Let's slip the schedule on a slide and seek the swingiest specimens.

The FIJM spans June 28 to July 7, but to soak up a slew of shows in a short time, June 29th features four top concerts. Step up the tempo, prepare for rapid runs and hope for quick turnarounds if you want to catch them all. First up is a duo of outside freebies featuring young Canadian bands, both deserving of support for their TD Grand Jazz Award entries.

Toronto's Peripheral Vision is a quartet jointly led by guitarist Don Scott and bassist Michael Herring. Both are composers immersed in pop as well as jazz, with Scott leading Radiohead cover band Idioteque and Herring playing New Orleans stylings with The Uplifters. Joined by saxophonist Trevor Hogg and drummer Nick Fraser they project a 60s Blue Note sound updated by more recent influences, having sat in with Ken Vandermark, Ben Monder, and Dave Douglas. *At the Scène TD, Fri., June 29, 6 p.m., free.*

Brahja Waldman, a Mirror Noisemaker as one-to-watch in 2012, lives up to his promise in making his FIJM debut. Waldman blows sax in his eponymous jazz quintet here, but also drums for Daniel Gélinas' You, Yourself & I pop band,

and sings in contemporary classical ensemble Serial Numbers. Gélinas returns the favour by drumming in Waldman's quintet, and the group is rounded out by Adam Kinner on sax, Kalmunity member Martin Heslop on bass, and Sadrach Hankoff on piano. Their music descends from early Ornette Coleman, with Waldman's catchy melodies and intricate arrangements a nourishing treat for mind and soul. *At the Scène CBC/Radio Canada, Fri., June 29, 8 p.m., free.*

Wayne Shorter is renowned for helping forge that 60s Blue Note sound on classic albums like *Juju* and *Speak no Evil*. He also held the sax chair in some of Miles Davis' best post-Coltrane bands, and founded Weather Report who appeared in the second edition of the FIJM in 1981. This year's quartet includes drummer Brian Blade, bassist John Patitucci and pianist Danilo Pérez, who continue to exploit Shorter's penchant for complex harmonies, long volatile lines and collective improvisation within composed structures. *At Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts, Fri., June 29, 9:30 p.m., \$66.03 - \$81.98.*

Round out your evening with the jaw-dropping solo saxophone work of Colin Stetson. Those who know him only from his pop collaborations with Tom Waits or Arcade Fire will be astonished by his human multi-track act. Stetson places numerous microphones on his horn and body, capturing each honk, key pop, vocalization and nuanced movement to create simultaneous streams of interlocking sounds that are as musical as they are physically demanding. *At the Gesù, Fri., June 29, 10:30 p.m., \$35.52.*

If June 29th leans towards modernity, July 5th presents a series of indoor and more inside concerts. Saxophonist Rémi Bolduc recently released a CD in homage to Charlie Parker, and you can expect that and similar syncopated material as Bolduc is given carte blanche for his

50th birthday. A crack band featuring Francois Bourassa on piano and other special invitees will keep the celebration bopping. *At L'Astral, Thurs., July 5, 6 p.m., \$27.37.*

Another festival means another Oliver Jones performance, but this one is of note not only since pianist Jones will focus on his own compositions, but because Canadian vibe master Peter Appleyard will accompany (see CD review page). *At Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts, Thurs., July 5, at 9:30 p.m., 53.92 - \$60.81.*

It has been six years since six stringer Pat Martino's last visit, and guitar fans will revel in the fleet fingers and rich lines on display. Appearing with Pat Bianchi on organ and drummer Carmen Intorre, the organ trio format recalls that of Wes Montgomery circa 1959. *At the Gesù, Thurs., July 5, 10:30 p.m., \$50.77.*

Same time, same place the next evening is another trio, led by Cedar Walton. The pianist has accompanied everyone from J. J. Johnson to Art Blakey, whose bandstand he shared with Wayne Shorter. Originally a composition major, he is responsible for standards such as "Bolivia" and "Cedar's Blues." His trio harkens back to the golden era of hard bop. *At the Gesù, Fri., July 6, 10:30 p.m., \$48.32.*

An outdoor concert with an avant bent will be presented by sax maestro Frank Lozano's Montreal Quartet. While the Blue Note label's influence must again be mentioned, this ensemble modernizes the sound in batting accelerating cyclic motifs around the players with dizzying dexterity. Includes pianist Bourassa, the subtle colorings of percussionist Thom Gossage and Adrian Vedady on bass. *At the Scène CBC/Radio Canada, Fri., July 6, 10 p.m., free.*

Closing out the festival is the fifth annual Battle of the Bands extravaganza. Two of the most

famous orchestras of all time, that of Duke Ellington and Count Basie, will compete for the hearts and soles of the audience in an atmosphere reminiscent of 1930s New York City dance ballrooms. Even if the format is hokey and the leaders are no longer with us, the music remains among the most elevating big band jazz ever produced. *At Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts, Sun., July 8, 2 p.m., \$84.96-\$103.36*

The above is just a small sampling of the over 1000 events at the FIJM. I have avoided mention of Vic Vogel's record 32nd appearance or yet more tributes to Miles and Lady Day; they have all earned their accolades, but it would only be news if they were absent from the festival. It also goes without saying that if you are into bluesy-Cuban-fusion-ECM-light-jazz-party-bands, just randomly show up anywhere over the next 10 days and you will not be disappointed.

PETER APPELYARD AND THE JAZZ GIANTS
The Lost 1974 Sessions
(Linus)

Vibist Appleyard was playing Carnegie Hall with Bennie Goodman when he arranged a Toronto side trip with the band sans Goodman. The sessions surface 38 years later, featuring swing titans Hank Jones (piano), Zoot Sims (sax), Slam Stewart (bass), Bobby Hackett (cornet), Urbie Green (trombone) and Mel Lewis (drums). Each finger-snapping track spotlights one soloist, crisp playing through chestnuts from Ellington, Goodman and others. Lengthy bonus outtakes expose lighter moments of studio patter and showboating flashes.

8.5/10 Trial Track: "A Smooth One"
(Lawrence Joseph)
With Oliver Jones at Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts, Thurs., July 5, 9:30 p.m., \$53.92 - \$60.81.