



25 YEARS

ARTIST: Edward Simon

Venezuelan-born, San Francisco Bay Area-based pianist, composer and bandleader Edward Simon marks half a century of life and a quarter century of music making with a two-disc retrospective that clinches his status as one of the world's best Latin American jazz musicians. Drawing tracks from 13 albums, Simon offers listeners a personally curated tour through some of his highlights as a recording artist. The discs feature a first-rate lineup of collaborators, among them saxophonists Mark Turner and David Binney, bassist John Pattucci, and drummer Brian Blade. It's music that could only flow from players bonded at the deepest level. "It's an extended family that has played such an essential role in this music," Simon says. 25 Years is a broad sampling of Simon's career, showcasing his luminous, sensitive pianism, mastery of diverse jazz and Pan-American stylings, and expansive musical sensibilities.



LIVE AT RONNIE SCOTT'S

ARTIST: BILL EVANS

Resonance Records — the multi-Grammy Award-winning label that creates beautifully designed, informative packaging to accompany previously unreleased recordings by the jazz icons — has released another jazz masterpiece. "Live at Ronnie Scott's" features Evans' short-lived but dazzling trio with two other jazz heavies, bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Jack DeJohnette. The 20 tracks, drawn from DeJohnette's personal archives, document a band playing at the highest level, continually riveting, astoundingly tight, remarkably simpatico. Evans' imaginative interpretations, lyrical style and unique harmonic approach are evident throughout. Gracing the cover of both the LP and CD is artwork drawn from a never-before-published, one-of-a-kind lithograph by the late, legendary artist/illustrator David Stone Martin. Historical context is provided by critic Brian Priestley's overview essay, as well as interviews with Gomez, DeJohnette, Chick Corea and Evans' good friend, comedian Chevy Chase. From gorgeously rendered standards like "Autumn Leaves" and "Embraceable You," to "Nardis," the Miles Davis composition that became one of Evans' signature tunes, the collection is a welcome addition to the Evans canon.



CHEAP THRILLS

ARTIST: SOUTH FLORIDA JAZZ ORCHESTRA

The lifelong friendship between bassist and bandleader Chuck Bergeron and saxophone great Rick Margitza spurred this exceptional new big band release featuring eight Margitza originals and one standard. Bergeron's South Florida Jazz Orchestra brings respect and pizzazz to Margitza's effervescent, always engaging compositions, including a crisp performance of his sophisticated, dramatic "Premonition." The arrangement of "Embraceable You" is lovely, with Martin Bejerano's featured piano inviting listeners to relax into the tune's silky elegance. The South Florida Jazz Orchestra, a world-class group comprised of some of the Miami area's best players, hasn't received the buzz of some other big bands, mainly because they're not located in NYC. Let's hope this worthy album helps to change that. Bergeron and his South Florida Jazz Orchestra deliver the goods on a record full of skillfully composed music exhilaratingly executed with chops, unity, excitement, and swing.



KITES AND STRINGS

ARTIST: BEN ROSENBLUM NEBULA PROJECT

With the buoyant, breathtaking debut recording of his sextet, rising star Ben Rosenblum demonstrates a multitude of talents as composer, arranger, bandleader, pianist and accordionist. While the recording incorporates a wide variety of influences, from rock to klezmer to Latin American to Bulgarian, Rosenblum's music is firmly rooted in jazz. Whether it's Rosenblum's tribute to Cedar Walton, his beautiful arrangement of Leonard Bernstein's "Somewhere," his transformation of Neil Young's "Philadelphia" into a jazz ballad, or his blues based "Laughing on the Inside," every track is sonically engaging, musically ingenious and artistically satisfying. Born and bred in New York City, Rosenblum has engaged a stellar band featuring some of the scene's brightest players. Their collective talents create a sound that is, like their name, out of this world. "Kites and Strings" is full of eminently listenable, consistently gratifying and expertly performed music. With it, Rosenblum establishes himself as a significant composer and arranging talent, and one of a handful of musicians with the heart and skill to deliver the highest level of expression on both piano and accordion.



MOVIES A QUIET PLACE PART III

DIRECTOR: John Krasinski

STARRING: Emily Blunt, Noah Jupe, Millicent Simmond, Cillian Murphy, Djimon Hounsou

Director John Krasinski returns to helm this sequel, which he also wrote, starring his real-life wife Emily Blunt, as it follows up with the Abbott family after the events of the first film. Judging from the first trailer, we'll also get some flashbacks to the beginning of the... invasion? Infestation? Whatever you want to call it, it looks like Krasinski has done a bang-up job ratcheting up the tension, and audiences should be in for another great ride.



MONSTER HUNTER

DIRECTOR: Paul W.S. Anderson

STARRING: Milla Jovovich, Meagan Good, Ron Perlman, Tony Jaa

Based on the global video game series phenomenon "Monster Hunter," this fantasy, action thriller, features a world of dangerous and powerful monsters that rule their domain with deadly ferocity. When an unexpected sandstorm transports Captain Artemis (Milla Jovovich) and her unit (T.I., Meagan Good, Diego Boneta) to a new world, the soldiers are shocked to discover that this hostile and unknown environment is home to enormous and terrifying monsters immune to their firepower.

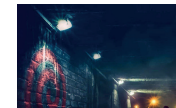


THE MANY SAINTS OF NEWARK

DIRECTOR: Alan Taylor

STARRING: Michael Gandolfini, Vera Farmiga, Jon Bernthal, Billy Magnussen, Ray Liotta, Corey Stoll, Alessandro Nivola

Whether you feel that the end of "The Sopranos" — you know, that controversial fade to black — was fitting and poignant or anti-climactic and unsatisfying, you probably jumped at the news that a "Sopranos" movie was in the works. With the late James Gandolfini no longer around, however, the only way to go was a prequel, and who better to portray a young Tony Soprano than Gandolfini's son himself. Alan Taylor directs this look back at the early years of the iconic TV mobster, with Vera Farmiga, Jon Bernthal and Ray Liotta in supporting roles.



SPIRAL

DIRECTOR: Darren Lynn Bousman

STARRING: Chris Rock, Samuel L. Jackson, Max Minghella, Marisol Nichols

A sadistic mastermind unleashes a twisted form of justice in "Spiral," the terrifying new chapter from the book of "Saw." Working in the shadow of an esteemed police veteran (Samuel L. Jackson), brash Detective Ezekiel "Zeke" Banks (Chris Rock) and his rookie partner (Max Minghella) take charge of a grisly investigation into murders that are eerily reminiscent of the city's gruesome past. Unwittingly entrapped in a deepening mystery, Zeke finds himself at the center of the killer's morbid game.



THE 355

DIRECTOR: Simon Kinberg

STARRING: Penelope Cruz, Lupita Nyong'o and Jessica Chastain

A dream team of formidable female stars come together in a hard-driving original approach to the globe-trotting espionage genre in "The 355." When a top-secret weapon falls into mercenary hands, wild card CIA agent Mason "Mace" Brown (Oscar-nominated actress Jessica Chastain) will need to join forces with rival badass German agent Marie (Diane Kruger, "In the Fade"), former MI6 ally and cutting-edge computer specialist Khadijah (Oscar-winner Lupita Nyong'o), and skilled Colombian psychologist Graciela (Oscar-winner Penélope Cruz) on a lethal, breakneck mission to retrieve it, while also staying one step ahead of a mysterious woman, Lin Mi Sheng (Bingbing Fan, "X-Men: Days of Future Past"), who is tracking their every move.



JAZZ

JUNK MAGIC COMPASS CONFUSION

ARTIST: CRAIG TABORN

Since hitting the scene in 2004 as the title of an album by Craig Taborn, the pianist's sonically compelling, utterly original ensemble has evolved to convey a singular aural experience incorporating electronic sound design, production techniques and improvised music. "Compass Confusion" features composer and producer Taborn on piano, keyboards and synth, heading up a band of first-rate creative artists including saxophonist Chris Speed, bassist Erik Fratzke, violist Mat Maneri and drummer David King. Taborn's textured, probing compositions, inventive use of ambient techniques and artful sound design reveal a true musical visionary at work. The album's sonic meanderings often possess a narrative quality, inviting listeners to follow pathways of diverse sound, jagged grooves and angular melody which alternately murmur and swell in satisfying arcs and swirls, making "Compass Confusion" one of the most imaginative, rewarding records of the year. It's another excellent, cutting-edge release from Pyroclastic Records, founded by pianist-composer Kris Davis in 2016.