

# AmJazzIn™

The American Jazz Institute Newsletter

Fall 2005 • Volume 14

## AJI's latest album releases win rave reviews and join the top 10 on the nation's jazz station playlists



The response to our latest albums is truly gratifying.

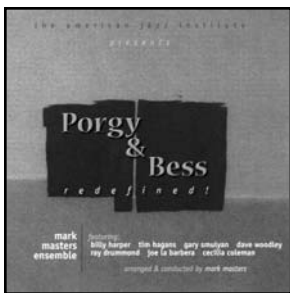
“... (Grachan Moncur has) made a welcome return to recording with the absolutely stunning CD, *Exploration*,” says allaboutjazz.com.

“This CD should be considered one of the landmark interpretations of *Porgy & Bess* ...,” says allmusic.com.

The CMJ New Music Report, in their weekly rankings of the top 200 jazz albums on college, commercial and non-commercial radio stations, listed *Exploration* in the top 40 for 4 solid months earlier this year, peaking at an attention-getting #5 on the charts. *Porgy & Bess* did well too, ranking in the top 40 for 8 weeks.

“Our relationship with Capri Records is ideal,” says AJI President Mark Masters. “The American Jazz Institute, being a non-profit arts organization, relies on good friends like Capri to help us pursue our mission. They are the perfect label partner in everything they do to support our efforts to bring new music to the public.”

In this issue, we feature a sampling of the many glowing reviews coming our way. Which will persuade you to visit The AJI Record Store on page 5. Which will invite you to take advantage of the attractive prices on all of our current CDs.



### THE GOALS OF AJI

- To advance and promote jazz music throughout the world.
- To maintain a repertory jazz orchestra to perform new and archival jazz music.
- To educate and expose the public to jazz by live performances and panel discussions.
- To physically house, archive and preserve jazz music: compositions, scores, arrangements, recordings, artwork, photographs, films and other jazz works.
- To seek and attract donations of jazz works with an emphasis on original compositions, scores, arrangements and recordings.
- To make jazz works available for research, study and education.
- To support charitable endeavors that promote and advance jazz music.

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## Spring '06 concert series at CMC

Mark your calendar now for 3 important concert events at Claremont McKenna College. Complete details coming in our Spring issue.

### The Music of Lee Morgan, featuring Clay Jenkins & Tim Hagans

Monday, January 30, Pickford Auditorium, 8:00 pm

### Dizzy Gillespie Concert & Oral History Project, featuring Gillespie alumni

Friday, February 17, Pickford Auditorium, 8:00 pm

### The Music of Ornette Coleman, featuring Michael Marcus

Thursday, March 23, Pickford Auditorium, 8:00 pm

## AJI has a new home

We've been busy over the Summer moving our offices from Pasadena to Claremont, to the Claremont McKenna College campus. The growing success of our CMC partnership -- with its campus concerts, classroom studies and oral histories -- make this a logical move. It also represents our continuing strong commitment to advancing the goals of AJI, and to supporting the whole of the jazz community. Please note our contact information in the adjacent box.

# Keeping Abreast of the Rapidly Growing AJI Collections



The Singers Unlimited, L to R bottom: Don Shelton and Bonnie Herman; top: Len Dresslar and Gene Puerling

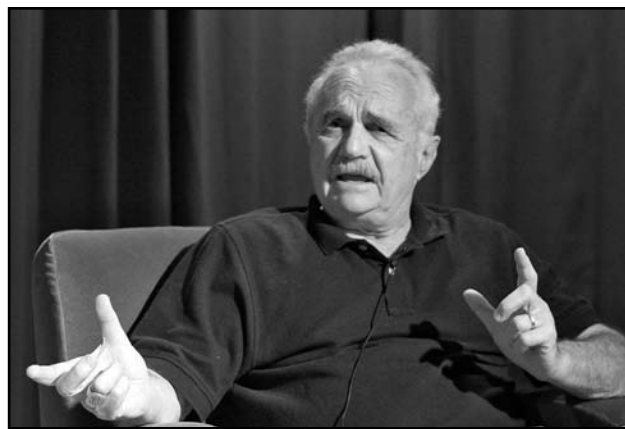
Singers Unlimited special guest interviewer Gene Lees with Gene Puerling and Don Shelton



Grachan Moncur III



Dewey Redman



Lee Tanner



Andrew Cyrille



CMC student Justin Hance interviews Peter Erskine

During the Spring '05 academic semester at Claremont McKenna College, we added six interview sessions with nine important jazz personalities to our oral history collection:

The Singers Unlimited  
Grachan Moncur III  
Dewey Redman

Peter Erskine  
Andrew Cyrille  
Lee Tanner

In addition to contributing a thorough interview about his "other" life as a distinguished jazz photographer, Lee Tanner has generously given AJI a very large collection of photo prints. Most of the 157 prints (ranging in size from 11" x 14" to 48" x 72") are from his own photographic creations. However, there are over 90 prints, given to Lee for his public exhibitions and book publications, by fellow photographers William Gottlieb, W. Patrick Hinely, Tad Hirshorn, Herb Snitzer, Carole Rieff, Milt Hinton, Chuck Stewart and Jan Persson (Denmark). The Persson collection, shot between 1964 and 1987, is a particularly beautiful, excellently-crafted set of jazz prints. Thank you, Lee Tanner!

We are slowly getting our arms around the Kevin Genther recorded music and WWII book collection. It is now virtually all inventoried and shelved. There are more than 4,800 jazz albums (nearly 5,500 disks) in the LP portion of the collection. It is particularly strong in early, hard-to-find jazz recordings. The classical LP portion of the collection contains over 850 disks and there are 300 audio cassettes of jazz music, many of rare availability. AJI is pursuing discussions with KSPC, the Claremont on-campus FM radio station, about various possibilities for getting the Genther Collection music library into their jazz programming. Additionally, the Genther Collection has nearly 500 books dealing aspects of WWII history, a significant portion in German, Japanese or translated version of original accounts. In perusing this book collection, we found numerous connections between jazz and both military and civilian life during the World War II era.

# Memorable moments of the Spring '05 concert season at CMC

## February: Grachan Moncur III Evolution Big Band

On Saturday, February 26, the preeminent trombonist of the “free jazz” movement, Grachan Moncur III, made a rare West Coast appearance with his Evolution Big Band. The ensemble, featuring renowned saxophonist Bennie Maupin, trumpeter Tim Hagans and drummer Peter Erskine, performed Moncur compositions culled mostly from his two Blue Note recordings as well as from the French BYG release, *New Africa*, and the JCOA release, *Echoes of Prayer*.

Erskine and bassist Dave Carpenter anchored the piano-less ensemble while providing Moncur with the perfect support for his sparse, probing improvisations. During the past two years, Moncur has enjoyed a re-birth of sorts with the Capri Records release of his octet recording, *Exploration*, as well as the formation of the Evolution Big Band.

Other members of the ensemble included Mike McGuffey, Les Lovitt, Dave Woodley, Les Benedict, Stephanie O’Keefe, Don Shelton and Greg Smith. Modern trumpet master Tim Hagans was the perfect musical match for Moncur as they both have a similar approach to the art of improvising ... just a generation apart.

Highlights of the evening included the *New Africa Suite* and a totally “free” group improvisation by Moncur, Maupin, Hagans, Erskine and Carpenter.

Grachan Moncur III, Tim Hagans  
and Bennie Maupin



## March: An Evening with Dewey Redman

Tenor saxophone giant Dewey Redman was the featured soloist for a Thursday night concert, March 3.

Best known for his musical associations with Pat Metheny, Ornette Coleman and Keith Jarrett, Redman moves in and out of all styles without effort and with the utmost grace and fluidity.

The evening was crafted to allow Redman and his septet to embrace the audience with a standard from the Great American Songbook such as *I Should Care* or *The Very Thought of You*, then move into a Redman composition that contained totally unstructured improvising. Redman’s compositions, much like those of Ornette Coleman, start with a unison head and move into “free” sections sometimes joined by an orchestral backing.

Redman’s rhythm section was made up of Cecilia Coleman (piano), Darek Oles (bass) and Joe LaBarbera (drums). Trombonist Dave Woodley, alto saxophonist Danny House and modern trumpet master Tim Hagans rounded out the septet.

Redman’s compositions included *Tu-Inns*, *Le Clit*, *I-Pimp*, *Joie De Vivre* and *Day Star Night Light*. AJI Director Mark Masters provided orchestral settings for the septet pieces.

*Downbeat* magazine referred to Redman as “our greatest living saxophonist.” Once labeled as only a proponent of the “new thing” (the music industry’s tag for what was avant garde in the 1960s), Redman has throughout his career rejected labels. He is a consummate improviser with a rich, individually beautiful sound.



Dave Woodley, Dewey Redman, Tim Hagans and  
Danny House

# What the reviewers have to say about AJI's newest release:



## "Porgy & Bess ... Redefined!"

The Mark Masters Ensemble featuring Billy Harper, Tim Hagans, Gary Smulyan, Dave Woodley, Ray Drummond, Joe La Barbera and Cecilia Coleman

George Gershwin is one composer whose output, particularly *Porgy & Bess*, lends itself to frequent reinvention. Mark Masters' approach combines an enhancement of the Gil Evans/Miles Davis creation with a recoloring of Gershwin's concept. Since Gershwin's changes are definitive, Masters seldom has to reharmonize. Besides, soloists such as trombonist Dave Woodley, trumpeter Tim Hagans, tenorist Billy Harper and baritonist Gary Smulyan fashion such in-and-out statements that their solos often lend a feeling of bitonality.

The album begins with an overture, "Introduction," with hints of themes to come. It ends with a Ray Drummond bass solo that walks smack into a wailing "Summertime" in the same key, which is sparked by clusters, double time, free passages and brilliant solos by Harper, Woodley and Hagans. "It Ain't Necessarily So" also waits but at a slower pace, boasting a fine trombone plunger solo by Woodley. "Clara, Clara" and "Here Comes de Honey Man," the latter in 7/4, are atmospheric gems. Smulyan's allegiance to melody makes "I Loves You, Porgy" unforgettable. Masters' chart on "There's a Boat Dat's Leavin'," propelled by drummer Joe LaBarbera and the comping of Cecilia Coleman, climaxes with a pyramid that ends on an exclamation point.

-- Harvey Siders, *Jazz Times*

Mark Masters is conductor and president of the American Jazz Institute in Pasadena, California. His projects honor the history of jazz while putting his personal stamp on each arrangement. *Porgy & Bess Redefined!* emerges fresh and alive, as Masters has seen fit to arrange the time-tested music for jazz orchestra with its themes cemented between soloists. Emotions rage and heartfelt empathy sidles up to center stage as the story unfolds.

How do you improve a piece of art such as *Porgy & Bess*? It's always stood as an emotional source of pride for the jazz world.

Masters honors the composer and those who have worked wonders with the opera throughout the Twentieth Century by setting the stage for his soloists and turning them loose. Tim Hagans and Billy Harper in particular step up to the bar and release their personal feelings on the music without

distraction. The orchestra supports them confidently and adds cohesive interplay. The music has been arranged to suit George Gershwin's original plans.

History parades before your eyes and ears as Masters' powerful ensemble recalls timeless themes such as "It Ain't Necessarily So," "A Woman is a Sometime Thing," and "Summertime" with originality and allegiance.

Don Shelton's warm alto flute and Gary Smulyan's mellow baritone saxophone croon casually on "I Loves You, Porgy" with hearts laid bare. A big band sound dominates "It Ain't Necessarily So" with shrieking power. Hagans and Harper give "Clara, Clara" a moody echo, while "A Red Headed Woman" swings nonchalantly as if Henry Mancini had dreamed her up for a contemporary detective story. The project ends with a stirring arrangement of "There's a Boat Dat's Leavin' Soon for New York," and everyone hops aboard for a powerful send-off.

Highly recommended, Mark Masters' latest project honors this timeless jazz opera and its composer through musical excellence and a strikingly creative spirit.

-- Jim Santella [allaboutjazz.com](http://allaboutjazz.com)

So many songs from George Gershwin's folk opera *Porgy & Bess* have become standards that jazz fans likely take them for granted. But Mark Masters' large ensemble arrangements of selections from this work are anything but typical. "Summertime" showcases virtuoso solos connected by often wild interludes in a post-bop setting frequently marked by changes in tempo. "A Woman Is a Sometime Thing" suggests a throwback to the era of Duke Ellington and Count Basie, but with a modern flavor. Tenor saxophonist Billy Harper and Tim Hagans (muted trumpet) shine in "Gone, Gone, Gone," in a chart which alternates between a mournful air with lush back-grounds and an avant-garde fury. "It Ain't Necessarily So" has a swaggering flavor with almost vocal-like solos. Also groundbreaking is the leader's inventive scoring of "I Loves You, Porgy," featuring baritone saxophonist Gary Smulyan, Don Shelton on alto flute, along with Hagans and Harper. This CD should be considered one of the landmark interpretations of *Porgy & Bess* to come along since Gil Evans' famous recording with Miles Davis decades earlier.

-- Ken Dryden, [allmusic.com](http://allmusic.com)

Well, they said it couldn't be done, but he did it. Arranger Mark Masters has breathed new and refreshing life into Gershwin's *Porgy & Bess*. Just when you thought Miles may have had the last word back in '61, Masters adds a touch of Mingus, a sprig of Kenton, and songs that you've heard a thousand times sound new and enticing.

As with any stage production, it sure helps to have the right cast, and Masters has a dandy. Supported by trombones and French horn, Billy Harper tears his tenor through "Summertime." Trombonist Dave Woodley evokes images of Jimmie Knepper with Mingus during the torrential rhythmic shifts. Gary Smulyan coaxes visceral emotions out of his baritone as he pleads through "I Loves You, Porgy," always backed up by flute and muted trumpets. Tim Hagans soars over delicate chordings on "A Woman Is a Sometime Thing." But the real tour-de-force is an unforgettable "It Ain't Necessarily So," with Hagans swaggering over the propulsive rhythm provided by Joe La Barbera. All throughout the session, Masters keeps the Evans-like voicings from being predictable by continuously shifting rhythms.

... Big band fans and Gershwin fans alike should definitely dig around for this one.

-- George Harris, [allaboutjazz.com](http://allaboutjazz.com)

... How often one can go to the well before it comes up dry? In the case of Mark Masters' new take, the answer is: at least once more.

... rather than revisiting existing arrangements, Masters returned to the source: the original vocal scores. The result is a fresh look at an almost iconic work.

In addition to a fine ensemble that includes a broader orchestral palette, Masters has assembled an A-list of soloists ... And, no surprise, everyone gets ample solo space and acquits themselves with the kind of élan and sensitivity to Masters' score that one would expect from players of this calibre.

But Masters' score is the real star here. From the opening fanfare, "Introduction," he introduces the two contrasting elements that, to a large part, define his approach to the whole suite -- vibrant swing and some surprisingly free passages. The other predominant characteristic is Masters' unrestricted sense of time; "Summertime" alternates between a more expected relaxed lope and insistent double-time passages that bring a new complexion to an often-covered standard. And "It Ain't Necessarily So" starts off with a big band swagger but ultimately breaks down into smaller ensemble sections for fine soloing by Harper, Hagans, Woodley, Coleman and Drummond ...

-- John Kelman, [allaboutjazz.com](http://allaboutjazz.com)

# The AJI Record Store

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Your choice of 1 or 2 of our newest releases when you join AJI as a Patron or Artistry Circle member! (See reverse side)



**Exploration: Grachan Moncur III Octet**

NEW RELEASE! The preeminent post-bop/free-bop jazz trombonist of the early '60s returns in a brilliant performance of his own compositions arranged by Mark Masters for a stellar octet of Tim Hagans, Gary Bartz, Billy Harper, Andrew Cyrille, Ray Drummond, Dave Woodley, Gary Smulyan and John Clark. One early reviewer says: "All in all, this is a fine record. Bristling with intelligence, good humor and swing, Moncur's music stands the test of time ... nice to see him back."



**Porgy & Bess...Redefined!: The Mark Masters Ensemble**

NEW RELEASE! The most famous of all folk operas receives a newly definitive presentation in these adventurous arrangements by Mark Masters, performed by an ensemble of superb musicians featuring Billy Harper, Tim Hagans, Gary Smulyan, Dave Woodley, Ray Drummond, Joe LaBarbera and Cecilia Coleman. In his liner notes, Ed Berger says that "while giving the soloists great latitude and often 'pushing the envelope' in his writing, Masters makes sure that Gershwin's original melodies are never obscured by the setting ... many of these melodies take on new life, highlighted in performances that often assume the character of miniature suites."

**One Day with Lee: Lee Konitz with The Mark Masters Ensemble**

The elder statesman of the alto in a stellar performance of his own compositions arranged by Mark Masters. Featuring Bill Perkins in a final recording, Gary Foster, Jack Montrose, Dave Woodley, Bob Enevoldsen, Steve Huffsteter, Ron Stout, Cecilia Coleman, Putter Smith and Kendall Kay.

**The Clifford Brown Project: The Mark Masters Ensemble featuring Tim Hagans**

A critically-acclaimed tribute to the legendary trumpet player, with Brown's solos played by a stellar trumpet quartet supporting the brilliant improvisations of Tim Hagans. Arranged by Mark Masters and Jack Montrose. Also featuring Jack Montrose, Gary Smulyan, Dave Woodley, Cecilia Coleman, Putter Smith and Joe La Barbera.

**The Jimmy Knepper Songbook: Jimmy Knepper with the Mark Masters Jazz Orchestra**

The classic recording of a singular voice on the trombone, performing his own compositions arranged for the big band by Mark Masters. Featuring Gary Foster, Johnny Coles and Ralph Penland.

**Priestess: Billy Harper with The Mark Masters Jazz Orchestra featuring Jimmy Knepper**

An adventurous big band interpretation of the compositions of John Coltrane, Chick Corea, Billy Strayhorn and Billy Harper, arranged by Mark Masters.

----- PLEASE PRINT -----

<i>Exploration</i>	_____ x \$14.00	_____	Total of all CDs	_____
<i>Porgy &amp; Bess...Redefined!</i>	_____ x \$14.00	_____	Sales Tax: CA addresses add 8.25%	_____
<i>One Day with Lee</i>	_____ x \$14.00	_____	Shipping: Add \$1.50 each CD	_____
<i>The Clifford Brown Project</i>	_____ x \$14.00	_____	TOTAL ORDER	\$ _____
<i>The Jimmy Knepper Songbook</i>	_____ x \$14.00	_____		
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# The American Jazz Institute invites your membership

Supporting jazz is what The American Jazz Institute is all about. We need your support to continue presenting outstanding jazz programs such as *The Kenton Era* festival in 1997, *California Cool* festival in 1998, *Kenton's West Side Story* concert in 1999, *The Ellington Effect* concert in 2000, *Kenton Sound* concerts in 1998, 1999 and 2000, and the unique series of concerts jointly presented with Claremont McKenna College.

Your tax deductible annual membership in any amount comes with the deep appreciation of AJI and the jazz artists that perform for your enjoyment. We hope you'll consider the special benefits of Patron and Artistry Circle membership levels.

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"One Day with Lee"  
Lee Konitz & Mark Masters Ensemble



"The Clifford Brown Project"  
Mark Masters Ensemble

The American Jazz Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated solely to the enrichment and enhancement of the appreciation of jazz music. From its humble beginning in New Orleans at the turn of the century, jazz evolved into one of America's enduring world contributions, a "universal language" understood by all.

Continuing in this spirit, AJI seeks to preserve this national treasure as well as expand upon it by spotlighting America's great jazz composers, arrangers and musicians -- both firmly established and newly discovered, and from traditional to avant garde.



"Porgy & Bess... Redefined"  
Mark Masters Ensemble



"Exploration"  
Grachan Moncur III Octet

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## What the reviewers have to say about ...



### "The Clifford Brown Project"

Mark Masters Ensemble

*This warm and energetic tribute to the late trumpet virtuoso Clifford Brown (who died tragically in 1956 at the age of 26, having single-handedly changed the way jazz trumpet was heard and understood in the United States) is ... a celebration of musical genius and creativity that looks backward while taking the music forward. Bandleader Mark Masters achieves the latter by taking such classic and beloved Brown compositions as "Joy Spring," "Sandu" and "Bones for Jones" and arranging them for a large ensemble that includes no fewer than five trumpets, four of which perform newly harmonized arrangements of Brown's own solos from his early-'50s recordings. The effect is both lushly beautiful and, on tracks like the upbeat "Sweet Clifford" and "Joy Spring," electrifyingly intense. Highly recommended.*

-- Rick Anderson, All Music Guide

*The main event: Masters' arrangements of Brown's solos for a trumpet choir consisting of Marc Lewis, Ron Stout, Kye Palmer and Ron King. Lewis transcribed the solos, and Masters tucks them into burning arrangements for an 11-piece band. In a sense, Clifford Brown is a soloist along with trumpeter Tim Hagans, baritone saxophonist Gary Smulyan and trombonist Dave Woodley. An added attraction: Jack Montrose, whose arrangements of "Joy Spring," "Daahoud" and "Bones for Jones" originally appeared on "The Clifford Brown Ensemble Featuring Zoot Sims" and are "reissued" here. Montrose is also in excellent form on tenor sax on "Sweet Clifford," "LaRue," "Sandu" and "Bones for Jones." ... The band swings furiously in its own right, but what lingers is the inimitable, songlike quality of these classic trumpet solos, breaking out of unison into opulent four-part harmony at just the right moments.*

-- David Adler, Jazz Times

*... Mark Masters has created a fond tribute to a wonderful musician. He has been aided in no small way by fellow arranger Jack Montrose, who was responsible for three of the arrangements revived here which also appeared on one of Brown's original recordings in 1954. Together with members of the ensemble, they keep the spirit of that music alive. Trumpeter Tim Hagans is the featured artist among a wealth of excellent soloists ...*

-- Paul Donnelly, ejazznews.com



### "One Day with Lee"

Lee Konitz with the Mark Masters Ensemble

*Having heard The Clifford Brown Project and now One Day with Lee, featuring the peerless alto saxophonist (and composer) Lee Konitz, I can hardly wait to hear what the Mark Masters Jazz Ensemble and its sponsor, the American Jazz Institute, plan to do next. If these aren't two of the finest big-band albums of the past year, they surely belong on anyone's Top Ten list.*

*While Konitz plays marvelously in any framework, he seems especially invigorated and at ease when surrounded, as he is here, by a large group of blue-chip musicians who breathe new life into five of his elaborate compositions, another by mentor Lennie Tristano and one of Lee's signature themes, the standard "Lover Man." As always, Konitz builds solos that are deep, analytical and completely his own, sidestepping clichés and exuding a spontaneity that seems contagious, as everyone else follows suit with a series of sharply drawn and highly personal ad libs.*

*The electrifying session, recorded in April 2002 when Konitz was a spry seventy-three, opens with his "Thingin'," ("All the Things You Are"), "Dream Stepper" ("You Stepped Out of a Dream"), "Gundula" and "Cork 'n' Bib." Coincidentally, Tristano's "317 East 32nd Street," which follows, seems also to be based on "You Stepped Out of a Dream." Lee first played Tristano's composition in 1954 on the album Lee Konitz at Storyville, and the saxophone section vividly reprises his memorable solo from that long-ago date. After "Lover Man," Lee and the ensemble wrap things up with another of his mellow tunes, "Palo Alto."*

*The highlights are almost too many to mention but must include the wonderful charts by Masters, exemplary work by the ensemble and rock-solid support from pianist Cecilia Coleman, bassist Putter Smith and drummer Kendall Kay. While Konitz is of course the principal soloist, he is by no means alone in that sector, as almost everyone in the band is given one or more chances to shine, and no one comes up less than sparkling. That shouldn't be a surprise, as this truly is an all-star group from stem to stern. And the brightest star of them all is Konitz whose very presence galvanizes and encourages his colleagues, empowering them to dig deep and deliver the goods on every number.*

-- Jack Bowers, allaboutjazz.com



### "Exploration"

Grachan Moncur III Octet

*Trombonist and composer Grachan Moncur III made a memorable impact forty years ago with his challenging compositions and austere improvising style ... Now he's made a welcome return to recording with the absolutely stunning CD, Exploration.*

*... it's his compositions that make this album so rewarding. Except for the short free improvisation "Excursion," they're all from the 1960s, using strategies such as changing time signatures ("Monk In Wonderland") or multiple themes ("New Africa") that were innovative at the time, coupled with striking, declamatory melodies. These performances, arranged in brilliant, even startling fashion by Mark Masters, don't look back. The voicings, riffs and interludes devised by Masters, along with the absence of a chordal instrument, give Exploration a sound that looks forward, as Moncur always does.*

*The arrangements are played with crackling intensity by this sterling octet, and the improvisations follow suit. Suffice it to say that every solo is impressive ... Hearty congratulations are due all around, to Moncur, to the sidemen, to Masters, to everyone involved with the project. Exploration is a great record.*

-- Marc Meyers, allaboutjazz.com

*Fortunately, arranger Mark Masters of the American Jazz Institute has grabbed Moncur out of the arms of obscurity and created an album that is part homage and part triumphant return. Exploration finds Moncur in the context of an octet that sheds new light on some of his best material, culled from his Blue Note sessions as well as his '69 recording, "New Africa." The largest ensemble ever to record Moncur's ambitious-yet-accessible material with Moncur's involvement, Masters' arrangements bring out a richness that could heretofore only be imagined.*

*Even on tracks like the ten-minute "New Africa" suite, which cleverly blends completely free ensemble passages with structured segments that incorporate African rhythms from bassist Ray Drummond and drummer Andrew Cyrille and lush, long tones from the horn section, Moncur, under Masters' direction, demonstrates the blend of musical independence with more defined construction that makes his writing so compelling.*

-- John Kelman, allaboutjazz.com

# Memorable moments of the Spring '05 concert season at CMC

## April: Andrew Cyrille Plays Monk

Referred to by the *New York Times* as a “consummate modern drummer,” it is easy to understand why Andrew Cyrille draws such praise. On Monday, April 4, on the campus of Claremont McKenna College, before a full-house audience, Andrew Cyrille fronted a 7-piece ensemble that interpreted the music of Thelonious Monk. In an all-new set of orchestrations written for the evening, and conceived to feature Cyrille out front of the ensemble, the evening was a tribute to his musicality as he played Monk’s melodies with great deftness, and proved that a drummer is not just a fixture to provide rhythmic propulsion but an integral part of the ensemble.

The evening started with Cyrille playing a chorus of *Monk’s Dream* with the ensemble making a statement en masse at the start of the second chorus. It was clear though, even before the ensemble joined in, that Cyrille was in complete command.

The piano-less group featured bassist Ray Drummond, trombonist Dave Woodley, trumpeter Ron Stout and saxophonists Gary Foster, Billy Harper and Gary Smulyan. Foster’s ballad feature on *Ruby, My Dear* was a showcase for his gorgeous sound. Ron Stout and Cyrille played in duet on *Little Rootie Tootie* and Billy Harper’s dominant tenor was featured on both *Round Midnight* and with Cyrille on *Straight, No Chaser*.



The Andrew Cyrille Septet, L to R:  
Ray Drummond, Cyrille,  
Gary Smulyan, Billy Harper,  
Dave Woodley, Ron Stout  
and Gary Foster



*We are pleased to support the efforts to assist the musician victims of hurricane Katrina. The following is excerpted from a news release issued by Wendy Oxenhorn, Executive Director of the Jazz Foundation of America:*

### New Orleans musicians need our help

We are addressing the longer-term needs of New Orleans jazz and blues artists who have just lost everything in the hurricane. We will be raising funds and distributing money for musicians to get a new apartment or room for rent by giving them a first month’s rent, possibly more, for a place to live, to start over. As well, we will attempt to help musicians by replacing the thing that matters most and the only way they can ever work again: their instruments. To those who lost their instruments, like drummers and bassists who could not carry their heavy equipment, and guitarists with their amps, we will make every effort to work with manufacturers and music stores to replace those instruments for as many as we possibly can.

Remember, New Orleans is only “New Orleans” because of the musicians.

Send donations to Jazz Foundation of America, 322 West 48th Street 6th floor, New York, NY 10036. E-mail contact: [Joyce@jazzfoundation.org](mailto:Joyce@jazzfoundation.org). To make an online donation, go to <http://www.jazzfoundation.org/index2.html> and click the bottom right corner of page where it says “instant pledge.”

Thank you, from our hearts.

Wendy Oxenhorn

Phone 212-245-3999 ext. 21

Our thanks to Ron Teeple and Terry Lewis for the photos in this issue. Designed and edited by Scott Evans.

## Jazz Times interviews Mark Masters

The following article appeared in the July/August 2005 issue of Jazz Times.

We would like to share it with you.

# Unearthing the Masters

## Mark Masters' musical archeology

**Mark Masters has a gift for finding jazz treasures hiding in plain sight.**



Over the past 15 years, the Southern California-based arranger has carved out a unique niche, developing programs for the Mark Masters Ensemble built around the work of neglected improvisers and composers -- or in some cases, doing the jazz-standard thing of smartly reinterpreting familiar material.

Masters won some overdue attention for himself last year with his stellar octet and nonet settings of Grachan Moncur III's compositions on *Exploration* (Capri), the first new recording by the seminal 1960s trombonist in almost three decades. The album features Masters' regular cast of top-flight players, including tenor saxophonist Billy Harper, baritone saxophonist Gary Smulyan and trumpeter Tim Hagans.

The arranger's latest album for Capri, *Porgy & Bess ... Redefined!*, tackles a body of work far better known than Moncur's, but Masters turns George Gershwin's oft-explored folk opera into a thrilling jazz vehicle, striking a delicate balance between freewheeling improvisation and incisive ensemble passages that hone in on Gershwin's seemingly infinite melodic imagination. "I didn't set out to do the album for this reason, but nobody has done an in-and-out treatment of *Porgy and Bess* -- in terms of playing free and using a harmonically adventurous orchestral language," Masters says. He notes that Gershwin's song forms are often unconventional and always interesting. By going back to the original vocal scores, he incorporated elements from the passages that Gershwin wrote to bridge the songs. The key to the album's success, and indeed all of Masters' projects, is that he writes for specific players.

"Mark tries to find the most important emotional ingredient in every tune he arranges," says Hagans, a scarce presence on American bandstands in recent years because he's artistic director of the Norrbotten Big Band in Sweden. Masters first recruited Hagans for a 2001 concert dedicated to Miles Davis and Gil Evans' landmark album *Sketches of Spain*, and the trumpeter has been a key contributor on just about every major Masters project since. "With *Porgy*, it's not a lot of thematic exposition," Hagans says. "Mark doesn't have 10 minutes of music written out for us. He tries to get the emotional vibe of the piece and takes into account the personalities of the

players. He focuses on how we're going to bring out Billy Harper's personality rather than writing shout choruses and showing off. That's what defines his personality."

Over the years Masters has struck gold with projects showcasing several overlooked jazz greats, such as his 1993 collaboration with trombonist Jimmy Knepper, *The Jimmy Knepper Songbook*, and *One Day with Lee*, featuring arrangements built upon lines by alto great Lee Konitz. He's also put together programs exploring music by Dewey Redman, Chico O'Farrill, Steve Kuhn, Charles Mingus, Jelly Roll Morton, Gary McFarland and Jack Montrose, the great 1950s West Coast tenor saxophonist whom Masters cites as one of his primary influences. They first got in touch when veteran reed player Gary Foster, an occasional member of Masters' band, gave Montrose a copy of the Knepper album. Montrose responded by calling Masters to express his admiration for the work.

"He said, 'You and I are soulmates; I didn't know this kind of thing still existed,'" Masters recalls. "He's in Las Vegas, and I try to get over at least a couple times a year to see him. He opened my horizons, in terms of sonic possibilities and ways to think about music." The largely forgotten Montrose, who did such brilliant arrangements on the 1954 Clifford Brown *Jazz Immortal* session for Pacific Jazz with Zoot Sims and Russ Freeman, is featured on Masters' 2003 Capri album, *The Clifford Brown Project*, sounding as big and brawny as Ben Webster.

Masters himself is something of an overlooked jazz treasure who has created a thriving musical outpost 30 miles east of Los Angeles in Claremont, though he's been almost entirely ignored by the region's dominant newspaper, the *Los Angeles Times*. Working through The American Jazz Institute, an organization he created in 1997, Masters has found an unofficial home in the academically prestigious but musically underdeveloped Claremont McKenna College. Producing several major programs a year, he has built strong creative relationships with Southern California players such as pianist Cecilia Coleman, bassist Putter Smith and drummer Joe LaBarbera.

In many ways, Masters is a product of the Southern California jazz scene. He grew up in Redlands, the Riverside County town best known in jazz circles as a headquarters for Stan Kenton. It was Kenton's music that first sparked his passion for jazz, though Masters credits his Riverside City College professor Roger Rickson for setting him on the right path as an arranger. "He was forever laying all the right records on me," Masters says. "He knew what I should be hearing, and really steered me to the writing part of it." As for the future, Masters is maintaining his fruitful relationship with the Capri label and working on projects exploring the music of Marvin "Hannibal" Peterson and Roswell Rudd.

-- Andrew Gilbert

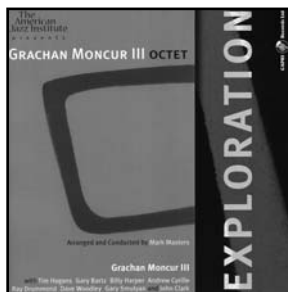
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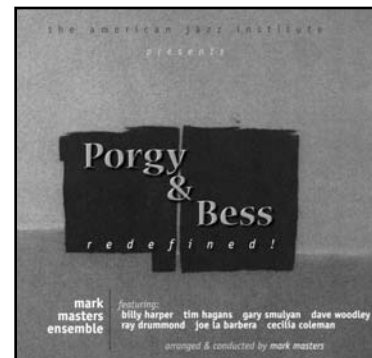
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