

*...for those who enjoy great recordings of great music.*

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**W**elcome back Jazz Fans!

After a little break, I've FINALLY gotten around to putting out another issue of the Audiophile Jazz Journal. "Life" sometimes reminds you of your limits, even when you feel invincible! A few too many projects on the table, and guess what got put aside? T.A.J.J.!

This issue will feature several works that I'm sure you'll like. I've been digging around all my favorite music haunts and have picked up a few titles that were surprises as well as a few that were just as expected. All the music is fresh and extremely enjoyable. The overall theme for these works would have to be simply that, "enjoyable". Kurt Elling's "The Gate" is classic Elling, but with a new take on old material. The sleeper and most unique find this time out is Disney Records "Everybody Wants to Be A Cat" on their Disney Pearl private label. Yes, you read correctly, "D I S N E Y"!! Yes, it IS JAZZ...good JAZZ featuring unbelievable artists you'll know immediately! Another cool discovery is The Turtle Island Quartet's "Have You Ever Been...?" This 2010 release will expose you to the music of Jimi Hendrix...Jimi does Jazz!!! Kevin Eubanks' "Zen Food" is another well-done disc worth exploring. Eubank's reminds us on "Zen" why Jay Leno picked him for his Tonight Show band. This is not the Tonight Show band, but a truly All Star cast of musicians well worth the price of admission.

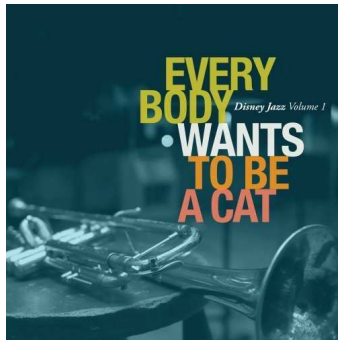
Two Acoustic Recordings are featured here that are truly fun: in addition to the Turtle Island Quartet disc is Catherine Russell's "Inside This Heart of Mine". Both artists keep the music pure with minimal electronic instruments, which make for great audio delights as well. Turtle Island's disc is a paradox in itself; an acoustic treatment of Electric Rock phenom Jimi Hendrix! Russell's disc is music traditionally performed acoustically and this disc freshens up the arrangements and is also well engineered. Both are worth checking out. If your system likes acoustic recordings, these two will serve you well.


Last but not least, the "Recording of the Issue" is Kenny Dorham's "Quiet Kenny", on JVC XRCD. Not much needs to be said here...Great Classic Jazz Music, GREAT recording! Buy it and Listen...enough said!

I hope to expose you to some additional "high rez" titles in upcoming issues. During the recent AXPONA show we supported, there were some great distributors there with fantastic music available in audiophile formats. I would though encourage you to continue to peruse the local shops as well. All the titles here were found at local vendors, online at Elusive Disc, or at one of the traveling record shows.

As time goes on, we will attempt to include various formats for review including CD, Digital downloads, DVD-Audio, and Vinyl. Please continue to send me your nominations, suggestions, and feedback to: [DLS21@comcast.net](mailto:DLS21@comcast.net), or just tell me when you see me!

ENJOY THE MUSIC!  
Don



ARTIST:	VARIOUS
Title:	“Everybody Wants to Be A Cat: Disney Jazz Vol. I”
Label:	Disney Pearl Series (2011)
Format Reviewed:	CD 
Music:	4.0
Audio Quality:	4.0

See Details and listen to audio samples:

[http://www.amazon.com/Everybody-Wants-Be-Cat-Disney/dp/B0045CBKN0/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1306802677&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Everybody-Wants-Be-Cat-Disney/dp/B0045CBKN0/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1306802677&sr=1-1)


**O**K , YES! I DID SAY “DISNEY” JAZZ!!! Let me tell you, chuckle if you’d like this is NOT a kid’s Disney movie soundtrack disc...well it sort of isn’t. It *IS* a kid’s disc, just for us “BIG” kids. Disney has produced some of the world’s most beloved movies and shows since the late 1920’s, about the same time Jazz put it’s footprint on the American culture. Therefore, as is described in the discs’ liner notes, it’s only appropriate that Disney produce an American Jazz disc. Both Disney and Jazz made their entrance to the American fabric of society about the same time, with some of the same influences. With that in mind, Disney doing Jazz would seem just natural; right?

Check out the featured artists on this disc: Roy Hargrove, Esperanza Spalding, Dave Brubeck, Regina Carter, Joshua Redman, Dianne Reeves, Kurt Rosenwinkel, The Bad Plus, Roberta Gambarini, Nikki Yanofsky, and others. Each track features an individual artist, not all the artists together. This approach allows each track to develop a specific sense of that artist’s musical style instead of the oft-used ‘put-them-all-together-on-the-tracks-and-let-them-play’ approach. This keeps every track unique and fresh. Every song is a recognizable Disney tune, but these are serious arrangements of the music. Don’t expect to hear the little children’s voices in the background or jingle-like instrumentation. You’ll hear well-known and highly accomplished musician’s putting their spin on the work. This was a very enjoyable disc. “It’s A Small World” with Nikki Yanofsky is the one track that seems a bit “Disney-like” ...perhaps it’s the vision of all those little singing figures in the “Small World” exhibit at Disney that you just can’t shake once you’ve been on the ride!

Although there are no bad tracks, my particular favorites are Esperanza Spalding’s take of “Chim Chim Cher-ee”; “Find Yourself” featuring Regina Carter on Violin; “He’s A Tramp” featuring Dianne Reeves’ sultry and silky vocals; and “The Bare Necessities” featuring Alfredo Rodriguez’s solo Piano and Percussion.

This is one of only a few discs produced by Disney’s Disney Pearl label and hopefully there’ll be more!



ARTIST: *Turtle Island Quartet*  
Title: "Have You Ever Been...?"  
The Music of Jimi Hendrix and  
"Tree of Life"  
The Music of David Balakrishnan  
Label: Telarc Records (2010)  
Format Reviewed: CD   
**Music:** 4.0  
**Audio Quality:** 4.0

See Details and listen to audio samples:

[http://www.amazon.com/Have-Been-Turtle-Island-Quartet/dp/B003JFCGO6/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1306802755&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Have-Been-Turtle-Island-Quartet/dp/B003JFCGO6/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1306802755&sr=1-1)

Jimi Hendrix is a far cry from Jazz you say? Check out Turtle Island Quartets' treatment of the iconic guitarist's music and it's about as close as you will ever get to hearing Hendrix as Jazz. Turtle Island has a sound that is a mix-mash of familiar artists like Modeski, Martin and Wood; Bela Fleck and the Flecktones; and perhaps Jean Luc Ponty; and Yo Yo Ma! It's all acoustic and sounds absolutely fantastic!

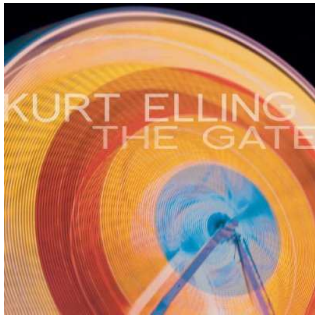
This collection of tunes may seem quite a bit ambitious, and it is. The first four tracks is a suite of tunes from Hendrix's "Electric Ladyland" LP. There is sometimes a bit of whimsy in a few of the Hendrix arrangements that seems to reflect the artists sort of giving you the finger for questioning their approach to the material. After each of those little whimsical moments though, it seems further that the artists show just how they good they are, again, just to sort of say...'take that'!


Track Five is a John McLaughlin track "To Bop or Not to Be". Tracks 6 – 9 are group leader David Balakrishnan originals. On these four tracks you really get to hear the musical caliber of the musician's composition and performance ability. This is more "serious" music perhaps and is a departure from the "Hendrix Experience". These four tracks are entitled "Tree of Life" and were commissioned by the Lied Center at the University of Kansas, with some of the funding coming from the famed Doris Duke Foundation.

Tracks 10 - 12 are three additional Hendrix tunes. Track 10 features beautiful soloing by Stefon Harris on vibes. Track 11 is "Hey Joe" written by Billy Roberts, but most well-known as a Hendrix tune. ***This is one of the most beautiful tunes on the disc!*** Track 12 is a cello solo piece, "Little Bird", by Mark Summer that is OUTSTANDING! All the instruments (strings and percussion predominantly) are isolated and articulately recorded. The liner notes lists Mark Summer on Cello, and Jeremy Kittle on Viola, and no one is listed on the upright Bass, but their playing sure sounds like a bassist is there. All the musicians are terrific and David Balakrishnan is absolutely outstanding. Balakrishnan expresses that he has tremendous respect and has been influenced clearly by Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, but "...his musical world encompasses much more."

For the recording aficionados, the liner notes should be pretty interesting as well. The notes list the recording as "Direct to Stereo". The last page of the CD booklet lists most of the details of the recording process and equipment used, including microphones, interconnects, digital recording equipment, etc. Of note, the monitoring equipment lists B&W Nautilus 802's, which we'd most likely consider true audiophile home audio.

If you want to hear something new; a fresh approach to a timeless rock classic, played by phenomenal musicians, and very well recorded, then you should pick up or download this latest disc from Turtle Island Quartet.



ARTIST: Kurt Elling  
Title: "The Gate"  
Label: CONCORD Jazz Records (2011)  
Format Reviewed: CD   
**Music:** 4.5  
**Audio Quality:** 4.0

**See Details and listen to audio samples:**

[http://www.amazon.com/Gate-Kurt-Elling/dp/B004EVNWVA/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1306802886&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Gate-Kurt-Elling/dp/B004EVNWVA/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1306802886&sr=1-1)

**K**urt Elling's voice is as always unmistakable. From the first note, words like "smooth", "raspy", "unique", "edgy" and "soulful" all come to mind. Elling has extensive range from deep baritone to tenor, almost reaching soprano heights at times. Elling takes on a real unique path on "The Gate" with the selections he's chosen to remold with new takes on music from a wide array of musicians including The Beatles, Herbie Hancock, Stevie Wonder, Joe Jackson, King Crimson, Miles Davis, and Earth, Wind and Fire. This disc embarks on a trip like the Herbie Hancock-of-late discs; covering classic tunes typically not easily associated with the Jazz genre in a way that makes them seem as if they were written for the Jazz idiom from the beginning.

See the Amazon link for a complete track listing, but some of the popular remakes include: "Steppin' Out" by Joe Jackson, "Norwegian Wood" by Lennon and McCartney, "Blue In Green" by Miles Davis, and "Golden Lady" by Stevie Wonder. Despite the very eclectic mix of genre's that are incorporated into the project, stylistically, Elling has brought a sense of consistency and cohesiveness forward that the tunes seem to have been written to work together.

This is one of, if not THE best Elling discs to date. He finds a level of musical consistency that stylistically seems to evade him just a bit on some of his previous discs. (Note: EVERY ONE of Elling's previous releases has been Grammy Nominated!) All the previous works are no less enjoyable, but "Gate" accomplishes a very steady feel all while introducing enough variety of material to keep you fully engaged. You'll find yourself singing with him, AND just grooving to the bands' work as well. You'll get a special treat to things like "Samurai Cowboy" (a personal highlight), a vocal treatment of Marc Johnson's famous track from his "Bass Desires" disc many years ago. Again, you'll find yourself thinking, "I don't remember any lyrics or singing on the original." Not to worry, Alzheimer's is still far off; the original was sans-lyrics and vocals.

Accompanying Elling is an outstanding band including a few heavyweights. You enjoy Bob Mintzer on Tenor Saxophone; John McLean, Guitar; Laurence Hobgood, Piano; John Pattitucci, Bass; Lenny Castro, Percussion; and Terreon Gulley and Robie Watkins, Drums.

The recording was completed by Chris Allen at Sear Sound in New York. The mix is nicely balanced with Elling's voice centered throughout the tracks. The predominantly acoustic nature of the music adds a nice overall warmth to the recording. When the electric guitars enter the picture, they are blended in evenly and don't overpower the tunes in any way.

Try this very nice piece of work by Elling. You won't be disappointed.



ARTIST:	Kevin Eubanks
Title:	"Zen Food"
Label:	Mack Avenue Records (2011)
Format Reviewed:	CD 
<b>Music:</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Audio Quality:</b>	<b>3.75</b>

**See Details and listen to audio samples:**

[http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss?url=search-alias%3Dpopular&field-keywords=kevin+eubanks+zen+food&x=23&y=28](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Dpopular&field-keywords=kevin+eubanks+zen+food&x=23&y=28)

**T**his NOT music from "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno"! In case you didn't know, or just forgot, Kevin Eubanks was one of the early wonder-kens of the GRP Jazz label back in the late 80's and early 90's. That was the label founded by Dave Grusin and Larry Rosen, now a part of Verve Music Group. During those years, as "Smooth Jazz" was launching, musicians like Eubanks had a chance to showcase their talents, but often in a way that mainstream America was devouring at the time. The music, nice enough for sure, was not meant to be deep, but simply enjoyable; as you could hear it on a nationwide network of Smooth Jazz radio stations while you were driving, or having dinner in a nice restaurant. It was sort of the new "muzak" in a sense as well.

"Zen Food" is NOT Smooth Jazz per se'. It is really more a fusion of funk, smooth jazz and hard bop. Eubanks seems as if he wants to remind everyone that he is more than the happy-go-lucky guitarist, band leader with the big smile, we came to know on Jay Leno. He really is a serious musician, a virtuoso guitarist perhaps, and his compositions here showcase his ability as a true musician. Go to Wikipedia and you'll see that Eubanks' was destined to be a phenomenal musician. His parents were musicians, and his mother was a Classical Pianist. Ray Bryant (as in "The Ray Bryant Trio"...available on XRCD) was his uncle, and his two brothers Robin and Duane are also both musicians. Kevin began studying music at an early age and has studied violin, trumpet, and piano going on to study at Berklee as well. His earliest sideman jobs were with Big-time Jazz musicians like Roy Haynes, Art Blakey, and Slide Hampton.

He's joined by his Tonight Show companion Marvin "Smitty" Smith on drums, Bill Pierce on Sax, Gerry Etkins on Piano, Rhodes, and Organ, and Rene Camacho on bass.

Track 1 "The Dancing Sea" gets things going with a blend of funk and fusion. Track 2 "Spider Monkey Café" begins the showcase of Eubanks' fusion composition talent. The track ebbs and flows from light groove to driving funk. "The Dirty Monk" Track 3, follows with Eubanks' highlighted on the acoustic guitar, laying down some outstanding runs, followed by a Bluesy and Soulful groove that is 'smooth'. "Adoration" (track 4) follows and again showcases Eubanks on acoustic guitar in a lovely melodious tune. Next up is "Los Angeles" featuring Bill Pierce on Sax. THIS is a swinging tune, with a Hard Bop meets Fusion feel. Great track!

The rest of the disc offers more of the same, with track 7, entitled "6/8", really kicking but (it actually has a bit of the "Tonight Show" band sound to it!). Bill Pierce's sax on the tracks really lends an extra degree of "authenticity" to the music. His very controlled and lush Sax is great and when coupled with Eubanks' dynamics on the guitar, it's All Good!

Eubanks' guitar, particularly the acoustic tracks, is clearly the feature. It's recorded crisply and centered as it should be. This is an all around nice disc.



ARTIST:	Michael Brecker Quintet
Title:	"Wide Angles"
Label:	Verve Records (2003)
Format Reviewed:	CD 
<b>Performance:</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Audio Quality:</b>	<b>4.0</b>

**See Details and listen to audio samples:**

[http://www.amazon.com/Wide-Angles-Michael-Brecker/dp/B0000AKQ96/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1306803023&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Wide-Angles-Michael-Brecker/dp/B0000AKQ96/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1306803023&sr=1-1)

**S**axophonist Michael Brecker is truly unmistakable. From the first couple of notes you hear of the big, venerable Tenor Sax, you know it's Michael Brecker. No other Tenor Sax player has quite the same tonality and power of Brecker. Additionally, he was one of the most incredible masters of improvisation ever. This disc, recorded back in 2003, is as relevant in 2011 as it was eight years ago. The disc was influenced by the 2002 UK tour undertaken by Brecker with what was called the "Large Ensemble". This is a full-sized band, larger than an Octet, but smaller than a full-scale "Big Band". This set up yields a BIG sound with additional layers to the performances that can't be accomplished in the smaller Trios, Quartets, Sextets, etc. In addition to the standard Bass, Drum, Sax, you'll hear Trumpet, Percussion, Trombone, French Horn, Flute, Alto Flute, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Oboe, English Horn, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Guitar.

The music is straight Contemporary Jazz, melded with a touch of Fusion and Hard Bop, but with a large scale concert band sound. For an added treat, you have to check out the YouTube videos of Brecker on tour in Japan. THESE ARE ABSOLUTELY UNBELIEVABLE SESSIONS YOU WON'T WANT TO SKIP!!!

Quintet LIVE IN JAPAN Part I: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56HvlsJZBMo&feature=related>

Quintet LIVE IN JAPAN Part II: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLBxyligEfs&feature=related>

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ARTIST: Kenny Dorham  
Title: "Quiet Kenny"  
Label: Fantasy Records (1959)  
Format Reviewed: JVC XRCD (1992)  
**Performance: 5**  
**Audio Quality: 4.5**



See Details and listen to audio samples at [ELUSIVEDISC.Com:](http://www.elusivedisc.com/prodinfo.asp?number=JVCXR-0049)  
<http://www.elusivedisc.com/prodinfo.asp?number=JVCXR-0049>

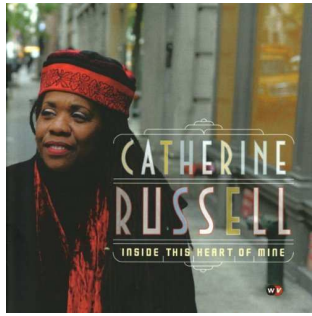
If you've not yet auditioned any of the Alan Yoshida-produced JVC XRCD titles, you're missing out on some great music, remastered to an incredibly high quality from the original source tapes. This Kenny Dorham disc was originally recorded and engineered by Rudy Van Gelder at Englewood Cliffs, NJ in 1959. While Van Gelder is generally regarded as one of the great early recording engineers, Yoshida's work on these old recordings leaves the original takes sounding thin, harsh, and brittle compared to the new "refinished" versions.


Add the new life that's been breathed into the original tapes to REALLY good music, and this is musical nirvana! Kenny Dorham's story is an interesting one. His name is not typically mentioned in the same breath as the 'great' trumpeters like Miles, Satchmo, or Dizzy, but Dorham played with them all back in the 1940's and 1950's.

Dorham grew up in of all places, the Jazz Mecca of TEXAS! How many famous Jazz musicians do you know from Texas? After college, Dorham began playing in a few not-so-popular Big Bands of the day, suffering to make a real living. In 1945 Dorham began a series of band changes to Billy Eckstine, then Lionel Hampton, Mercer Ellington, and then on to Charlie Parker's group in 1948. It was here, in the smaller band set up of Parker's where Dorham began to shine and be seen and heard. Before this, although he always had feature opportunities and solos, he was relegated to being just another member of the Big Band. In Parker's smaller band, Dorham had more feature opportunities and his performances were critical to the success of the band. This caused Dorham to really hone his craft and soar more freely and frequently, while under the tutelage of Parker.

"Quiet Kenny" is Dorham's first Album and it remains probably one of his most popular titles, although he has a pretty extensive discography. Joining Kenny Dorham is a simple, yet masterful set of accompanying musicians that is quite impressive: Tommy Flanagan, Piano; Paul Chambers, Bass; and Arthur Taylor, Drums. Imagine that kind of line-up for your very first recording!

This disc is another one of those MUST HAVE's for your Jazz Collection. It is currently available in stock at Elusive Disc.com.



ARTIST:	Catherine Russell
Title:	"Inside This Heart of Mine"
Label:	World Village Music (2010)
Format Reviewed:	CD 
Performance:	4.5
Audio Quality:	5



See Details and listen to audio samples:

[http://www.amazon.com/Inside-This-Heart-Catherine-Russell/dp/B0036V4DLW/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1306803155&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Inside-This-Heart-Catherine-Russell/dp/B0036V4DLW/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1306803155&sr=1-1)

Catherine Russell's "Inside This Heart of Mine" is a fantastic disc you will definitely want to rush out and get right away. This is Catherine's third Disc on the World Village label and it is a great piece of work that draws from a wide variety of classic tunes and musicians going back to the 1920's. Catherine gives these classics a new flavor and her band is absolutely outstanding.

New York native Russell attacks works like "Troubled Waters" scored by Duke Ellington for Mae West; "We The People", an originally unreleased Fats Waller tune. Russell covers other tunes from Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Peggy Lee, Maxine Sullivan, and Howlin' Wolf. The vibe of this disc is clearly rooted in the essence of early Jazz as you can hear Ragtime, Vaudeville, Tin Pan Alley, New Orleans swagger, Jump Blues, and even a little Django-esque swing intertwined throughout the entire disc. There is also a little touch of European Café Jazz influence.

Russell gets her talents "honestly" as she is the daughter of the late Luis Russell. Luis Russell was born in Panama, moved to New Orleans, then New York where he became renowned for his chops as a composer, pianist, and bandleader. His most acclaimed honor is most likely that he served as Louis Armstrong's Musical Director for many, many years. Her mother is also a musician, tackling both the Bass and Vocals. Catherine honed her chops by performing all over the world and she's performed and recorded with a wide range of musicians including Steely Dan, Levon Helm, David Bowie, Cyndi Lauper, Paul Simon, Jackson Browne, Michael Feinstein, Carrie Smith, and Rosanne Cash...what an array of musical styles and genres!

The recording itself is also worth the price of admission. The recording was completed at Legacy Recording Studios in New York and Paul Kahn served as Producer. Katherine Miller engineered and mixed the tape and Alan Silverman gets credit for Mastering. The soundstage is tall and wide and Russell's Bluesy voice is velvety smooth throughout. The completely acoustic set is one of the lushest Non Hi-res recordings I've had the opportunity to enjoy. The strings are beautiful, and Russell's voice is crisp, delicate, and detailed on every tune.

If you like traditional Swing, Rag, or European Café Jazz, you'll REALLY like this disc.