

Welcome back Jazz Fans!

In this issue of *The Jazz Journal*, we review six discs of various styles that I hope you'll like. As promised, I managed to squeeze in a short review of the new "Five Peace Band" by John McLaughlin and Chick Corea. Fantastic, Classic, Electronic Jazz Fusion sums up this disc in a just a few words.

Next we showcase the *Selection of the Month*. It's "Metamorphosen" by The Branford Marsalis Quartet. This disc takes top spot for the month because of its' successful achievement of rendering a high quality recording supporting fantastic musicianship and composition. The music is absolutely fabulous.

Following that review, we check out the John Patitucci Trio's "Remembrance" cd. Patitucci pays homage to many of his favorite musicians here with fantastic compositions and performances of the material. It's also a very good recording scoring 4 out of 5 for audio quality.

Two XRCD titles are reviewed as well; Bill Evans' "Sunday at the Village Vanguard", and Count Basie, "88 Basie Street". These are two re-mastered works by JVC's XRCD producer Akira Taguchi. The Bill Evans disc was originally recorded almost 50 years ago and the re-mastering is very well done. It was recorded live therefore, as with many live sessions, a few limitations on control of the room acoustics, crowd noise, and recording equipment and set up were evident in the original tapes. This prevented the audio quality from being rated as highly as the studio produced discs.

The second XRCD of Basie's "88 Basie Street" is absolutely the best recording reviewed in this issue and one of the best all around re-masterings I've heard of this material. The recording quality is wonderfully smooth and detailed and presents a deep and wide soundstage. The music of course is clearly classic and timeless, and is one of Basie's best.

The last disc reviewed is the 2010 release called "A Quiet Time", from Ahmad Jamal. This is a very nice disc in classic Ahmad Jamal style; very smooth, but with a bit of flare mixed in. It features the percussion work of Manolo Badrena of the famous Fusion Jazz group, Weather Report. Badrena's percussion work is distinct and adds a nice Latin, Calypso, tropical sort of feel to the music.

Each of the above are independently good Jazz recordings. Take a listen to the samples then pick up a few you like for your music collection.

Until Next Time!!



Don  
[dls21@comcast.net](mailto:dls21@comcast.net)



**John McLaughlin and Chick Corea: *Five Peace Band***

Chick Corea and John McLaughlin, Producers.  
Concord Records. Released August 2009.

**Audio Quality/Music: 3.5/4.0**

Genre: Electronic Jazz Fusion

If you want to hear classic, electronic, Jazz Fusion, you will find it here on Disc 1. Keyboardist Chick Corea teams up with Guitarist John McLaughlin and three other amazing artists (Kenny Garret, Sax; Christian McBride, Bass; and Vinnie Colaiuta, Drums) including a special guest appearance by Herbie Hancock.

The work is captured live from the band's 2008 European tour. The live nature offers both a good news, bad news story. The good news first; some of the best improvisation and free-styling occurs during live performances. Because of the length of most of the tracks, it provides ample opportunity for the artists really stretch out in many places. This is a real treat. Kenny Garrett on Sax really pushes the freestyle edge for instance on "Hymn to Andromeda" on disc one. All the musicians tend to take advantage of their space and take some liberty to improvise and push the limits of the tunes out to the edge.

You'll hear Jaco Pastorius-like Bass playing by McBride also. Jaco was probably the most respected Fusion Bass player of all time and McBride clearly shows he can stand among the best as well on these tunes. McLaughlin and Corea continue to be the ever-so-great artists they are and certainly get opportunities to stretch out and push the Fusion barriers.

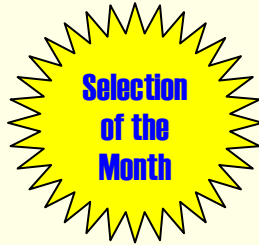
The second disc of the set begins with a Corea piano solo that runs for almost three minutes before the rest of the band weaves their way into the track. Corea is playing with an acoustic piano sound on this track which gives the Quintet a less-Fusion, and more mainstream swing sound. McLaughlin is still on electric guitar, but the vibe is definitely less fusion, and more traditional than disc one.

Track 2 of disc two features a McLaughlin guitar solo for several minutes before the band appears. About 4:20 into the song, you get to hear Jaco Pastorius reborn, via Christian McBride's fantastic playing. The rest of disc 2 offers more of this incredible artistry, featuring each of the musicians, including Herbie Hancock in wonderful solos and interplay.

Now for the "bad" news; it's a live recording, and doesn't offer the refinement and clarity as in recording in the studio. But the quality is 'not bad' however. Buy it for the music and you'll enjoy it!

**Audio Samples available at Amazon.com:**

[http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001VNT1U0/ref=s9\\_simh\\_gw\\_p15\\_i1?pf\\_rd\\_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf\\_rd\\_s=center-2&pf\\_rd\\_r=1R8MOMNG95NDFT9QP75D&pf\\_rd\\_t=101&pf\\_rd\\_p=470938631&pf\\_rd\\_i=507846](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001VNT1U0/ref=s9_simh_gw_p15_i1?pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_s=center-2&pf_rd_r=1R8MOMNG95NDFT9QP75D&pf_rd_t=101&pf_rd_p=470938631&pf_rd_i=507846)



**Branford Marsalis Quartet: *Metamorphosen***

Branford Marsalis: Producer  
 Marsalis Music. Released: March 17, 2009  
**Audio Quality/Music: 4.5/4.5**  
 Genre: Mainstream Jazz

I don't feel the title of this disc is appropriate. "Metamorphosen" is German for "Metamorphosis". The Branford Marsalis Quartet doesn't morph into something unknown or earth-shattering on this disc, it is just really, really, really great music however.

From the first track of the disc, entitled "The Return of the Jitney Man", you know something good is about to happen. You here Eric Revis on Bass and Jeff "Tain" Watts on drums and immediately feel drawn in to the music. Filling in the rest of the band around Branford himself on Tenor sax, is Revis, Watts, and Joey Calderazzo on piano. This tune really gets cooking quickly. Branford's sax is crisp, and the rest of the band is almost equally dialed in from both a performance standpoint, and from a recording quality perspective. Calderazzo's piano playing and "Tain's" drumming is really fierce on this piece, and the recording holds together quite well with all the complicated arrangements.

"The Blossom of Parting" is a lovely ballad that shows a much gentler, but no less-engaging Quartet. You could easily hear this track in a scene from an Al Pacino movie; the mobster sobs although he killed the other mob boss, but his lovely bride dies in the crossfire that happened in the neighborhood Italian restaurant...very sad, but an emotionally stirring moment regardless. The performance here is wonderful.

"Jabberwocky" is a happy-go-lucky tune that launches immediately into Branford soloing over a nice swing. Revis' bass line cruises, and Watts' on drums keeps things strutting along. Marsalis plays here with restraint, but seems able to inject excitement into the part effortlessly. Calderazzo follows suit similarly on piano. Watts gets in a nice, controlled drum solo around 4:15. Again, Revis never quits his bassline strut throughout. This is great!

Who remembers the character Sal Tessio in *The Godfather*? It was played by Abe Vigoda. That is also the name of the next track; "Abe Vigoda". I'm not sure if there is a direct connection to that movie, but it certainly doesn't tie in to the other work Vigoda is well known for; the Police Detective sitcom "Barney Miller". This piece offers some freestyle improvisation this time mostly by Watts on drums while Marsalis plays a simple repetitive melody. It's a bit of juxtaposition as you would have anticipated things to the other way around with Watts driving the beat and Marsalis free-styling and improvising. Great work.

My personal favorite on the disc is next though; "Rhythm-a-ning". This track does feature Marsalis free-styling, over a constantly changing rhythm and time-shifts. There is just a slight hint of funk in here as well. The entire quartet pushes the groove along here wonderfully, but never interfering with the other. You'll also hear Branford hit a couple of light-hearted teases of a pop tune, right in the middle of his run! More soloing by each member of the quartet is featured as well.

The last half of the disc is just as good as the first half. Track 6, "Sphere" is a hip, but simple tune. "The Last Goodbye" (track 7), is another quiet melody that reflects the softer nature of the quartet. This track conjures up another melancholy mood; sad and happy at the same time.

"And Then, He Was Gone" features a beautiful Bass solo by Revis. Turn this tune on, sit back and let your system do its thing. The bass tones are wonderful, big, and full, and you will find out if your system can reproduce REAL bass or not...it's absolutely awesome with Revis slapping the strings plucking hard and fierce! There is no break in the recording as the solo moves directly into the last track, "SAMO".

"SAMO" is so well-recorded, you'll think the band is in your room. Marsalis solos throughout, Calderazzo really plays a wonderful feature, and Watts on drums just kind of keeps pace and out of the way...but not unnoticed for sure. The piece progresses from light and easy into a really great groove and back again. You'll absolutely find yourself bobbing your head and shaking it in total awe of the level of playing here...sit back and enjoy!!!

Oh yeah, I forgot to mention...Jazziz selected "Metamorphosen" as #9 in its top 50 best releases for 2009. WELL DESERVED!! THIS IS AN AWESOME QUARTET!

The recording is very well done, and the mix is able to keep the complicated interactions of the musicians discernable and doesn't fall apart and turn to muck. Rob "Wacko" Hunter recorded and handled the mix.

**Audio Samples available at Amazon.com:**

[http://www.amazon.com/Metamorphosen-Branford-Marsalis-Quartet/dp/B001QWHQDK/ref=pd\\_sim\\_m\\_2](http://www.amazon.com/Metamorphosen-Branford-Marsalis-Quartet/dp/B001QWHQDK/ref=pd_sim_m_2)



**John Patitucci Trio: *Remembrance***

Producer: John Patitucci

Concord Jazz. Released August 2009.

**Audio Quality/Music: 4.0/4.0**

Genre: Mainstream Jazz

John Patitucci (JP) is one of the most requested and recorded Bassists in Jazz currently. On this disc however, he's not simply riding in the back seat, carrying the grove for someone else's band. "Remembrance" is a disc under his name this time. Patitucci delivers a very special mix of tunes that pay tribute to many fine Jazz musicians that have died over the years. Patitucci mentions in his liner notes how he honors so many musicians, he can't possibly recognize them all in the space of this disc or the liner notes. He does however especially mention Michael Brecker, John Coltrane, Alice Coltrane, Elvin Jones, Max Roach, Ray Brown, Dewey Redman, Joe Henderson, Stanley Turrentine, Percy Heath, Freddie Hubbard, and Roby Duke. Patitucci is particularly honoring of the Jazz Trio, which he states is "daunting and very humbling when one considers the history of the trio recordings made by my heroes."

This disc took a Top 50 spot on Jazziz "Best of 2009" list, and rightly so. Joining Patitucci on the disc are Joe Lovano, Tenor Sax; and Brian Blade, Drums. Featured on three tracks is Rogerio Boccato on percussion. Sachi Patitucci, John's wife and manager is also featured in a Cello quartet on the track "Scenes From an Opera".

Track #1, "Monk/Trane" starts things off with a Joe Lovano solo in the spirit of John Coltrane, with a Theloneus Monk-like arrangement. This is a delicate tune with a nice little swing-bop backdrop. Lovano's sax is nicely centered, along with JP's Acoustic bass, while Blade keeps pace on drums. The pace of the piece shifts constantly between time and tempos for a great sense of depth and complexity woven into the simplistic beat. Great tune.

"Messaien's Gumbo" dials up next with a hip and funky groove with JP picking up his 6-string Electric Bass this time. Blades' drumming is particularly well mixed and you'll here a few 'ahhh's!' and 'woo's' in the mix as the musicians cut loose. Lovano pushes the Tenor into almost avant-guard-ism, but not too far. Awesome groove tune, in Trio setting!

"Sonny Side", begins with Lovano playing what sounds a bit like Sonny Stitt...hence the title I presume. This track is another beautifully delicate masterpiece featuring all three musicians in various places of the song.

"Meditations" has JP back on the Electric Bass and Boccato on percussion.

"Mail", track 5 follows and offers another upbeat tune, with lots of groovy Electric bass lines, phenomenal drumming and exquisite percussion. This track is a nice percussive delight for your system, and a little groove for your soul! Don't forget Lovano either, his tenor sax is on cruise control here.

"Scenes From an Opera" is a departure tune, featuring Sachi Patitucci on Cello, and Lovano on Alto Clarinet. It's beautifully recorded and offers an almost haunting feel, but still lovely. "Blues for Freddie" must be a reference to Freddie Hubbard. It's a simple little swing featuring JP back on the acoustic upright for some nice solos. Lovano rolls along as well.

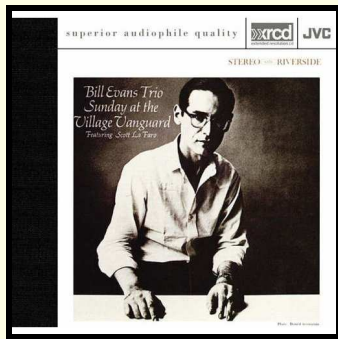
"Safari" opens with a nice acoustic bass line by JP and evolves into a soft and subtle melodic march. Lovano's tenor is featured throughout...over a repeating bass line.

"Joe Hen" is a nice, hard-hitting swing, and "Play Ball" is a lovely ballad, but it is the title track "Remembrance" that wraps up the disc. It features JP in a solo on both his 6-string electric, and 6-string electric piccolo instruments. The song is a tribute to Michael Brecker.

If you want great arrangements, with a 'stripped down' sound, with great musicians, "Remembrance" is worth having. Only one or two tracks get a little sleepy, with everything else...'VERY NICE' indeed.

**Audio Samples available at Amazon.com:**

[http://www.amazon.com/Remembrance-John-Patitucci-Trio/dp/B002DKGWTI/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1272844578&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Remembrance-John-Patitucci-Trio/dp/B002DKGWTI/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1272844578&sr=1-1)



**Bill Evans Trio: *Sunday at the Village Vanguard* (XRCD)**

Producer: Oren Keepnews  
 Original Recording Engineer: Dave Jones  
 Riverside Records: Recorded June, 1961  
 JVC-XRCD Producer: Akira Taguchi  
 Mastering: Alan Yoshida (1997)  
**Audio Quality/Music: 3.5/4.5**  
 Genre: Mainstream Jazz

“Sunday at the Village Vanguard” is a great addition to any Jazz collectors music. Recorded at the legendary Village Vanguard in New York, this trio recording was completed originally almost 50 years ago. It is recorded live with a small audience that is very distinguishable and not eliminated from the mastering. This provides for an element of realism and a “you are there” vibe that is absolutely fantastic. This is a bit of a historic disc from another perspective as well; it was the last recording of Bassist Scott LaFaro, who was killed in an automobile accident just days later.

Accompanying Evans on Piano, and LaFaro, is Paul Motian on drums. LaFaro’s playing is captured beautifully and his playing exhibits clearly why he was considered extraordinary and ground-breaking at the time. LaFaro was only in his twenties and Evans tapped him to accompany him in his trio. You will witness some of the best Acoustic Bass playing ever on this disc. Evans’ and Motian are both brilliant as well.

The disc offers ten tracks that are wonderfully re-mastered. It maintains a real stripped-down earthiness, yet is bright, crisply captured, and the instruments; particularly Motian’s drums and LaFaro’s bass is spot-on in the mix. Only Evans’ piano is a bit veiled in the live mix. Evans’ style and talent though are fully exhibited and captured in his often laid-back, but precision playing style.

Evans’ trio performs the works of many artists including Miles Davis and they are done in a wonderfully artistic manner. Most pieces are at least six minutes long, some eight, which allows the musicians opportunities to really stretch out in several places

**Audio Samples and Ordering info at Elusive Disc.com:**

<http://www.elusivedisc.com/prodinfo.asp?number=JVCXR-0051>

**Amazon.com:**

[http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00004STOV/ref=s9\\_simh\\_gw\\_p15\\_i1?pf\\_rd\\_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf\\_rd\\_s=center-2&pf\\_rd\\_r=1H6Z7N2YF32NGYSED16T&pf\\_rd\\_t=101&pf\\_rd\\_p=470938631&pf\\_rd\\_i=507846](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00004STOV/ref=s9_simh_gw_p15_i1?pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_s=center-2&pf_rd_r=1H6Z7N2YF32NGYSED16T&pf_rd_t=101&pf_rd_p=470938631&pf_rd_i=507846)



**Count Basie & His Orchestra: *88 Basie Street* (XRCD)**

Producer: Norman Granz  
 Original Recording Engineer: Allen Sides  
 Pablo Records: Recorded May 1983.  
 JVC –XRCD Producer: Akira Taguchi  
 Mastering: Alan Yoshida  
**Audio Quality/Music: 5.0/5.0**  
 Genre: Mainstream Jazz

The Count Basie Big Band is one of the most recognized Big Bands of the Swing Era. Known for its upbeat, signature swinging sound, the Basie Big Band continued to perform even after Count’s death. Basie lead from his piano and was not known as a composer, but a band leader. His mark was the sound his band created; lively, sharp, snappy, swinging, hip, polished, grooving, on and on. The Basie Big Band was unmistakable.

“88 Basie Street” was one of his last recordings, and seems to really capture the essence of the band fully. The disc only offers 6 tracks, two over seven minutes, and the last; the Bluesy “Sunday at The Savoy” is 12:34. If you want to hear a swing band swing, and soloists do their work without rushing, this disc gives it to you.

The audio is near-perfect. The multitudes of instruments in the band are crisp, clear, and the soundstage is enormous. The soloists are never overpowering anywhere on the disc, and are nicely layered on top of the mix. Basie’s big piano notes are full and robust, and add a great sense of power when he hits a few keys along the way.

As with almost all big bands, you’ll hear lots of horns, both woodwinds and brass. Both are flawlessly captured and presented without any hint of ting, shrill, or glare. The mix keeps the blazing brass section under control as to never create a feeling of playing too loudly.

All of the music is absolutely fabulous. Most of the disc is upbeat swing but “Katy” (Track 5) is a lovely Ballad, and Track 6 “Sunday at the Savoy” is a Bluesy swing.

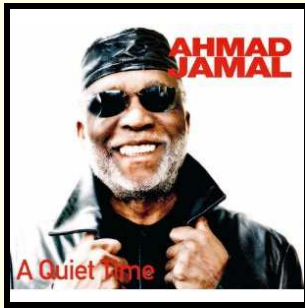
This is a “MUST HAVE” disc for any Jazz collector!

**Audio Samples and Ordering info at Elusive Disc.com:**

<http://www.elusivedisc.com/prodinfo.asp?number=JVCXR-0021>

**Amazon.com:**

[http://www.amazon.com/88-Basie-Street-Count-Orchestra/dp/B000040OHG/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1272934112&sr=1-2](http://www.amazon.com/88-Basie-Street-Count-Orchestra/dp/B000040OHG/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1272934112&sr=1-2)



**Ahmad Jamal: *A Quiet Time***

Producers: Ahmad Jamal and Francis Dreyfus

Dreyfus Jazz: January 2010

**Audio Quality/Music: 4.0/4.0**

Genre: Contemporary / Mainstream Jazz

Ahmad Jamal is known for his lush piano style and his impressive, melodic, musicality. He has a way of letting you hear every individual note, yet maintaining a legato style as well. This dichotomy is part of what keeps Jamal interesting. His arrangements often have a wonderfully simple, elegant and luxurious feel to them, but will also feature lots of vamps and staccato notes as well within the same tune. Throw in an occasional R&B vibe, and you've got the Ahmad Jamal sound, very unique and memorable.

Jamal began playing at age three and his discography numbers at least fifty solo titles. "A Quiet Time" is quite apropos as a title for Jamal's latest release. You will not want to get up and dance to this disc, but you will want to sit back and listen, to decompress, and to absorb the flow of music coming at you as you listen.

Jamal, at age 79, plays with a great degree of fluidity and delicacy. He can though, also play with a degree of power and precision, even on fast tempo tunes. Jamal is known for using every one of the piano's 88 keys on most of his arrangements. He often uses a percussive manner of striking the keys which tends to create a very forceful sound.

Joining Jamal is Bassist, James Cammack; Manolo Badrena, Percussion; and Kenny Washington, Drums. The disc features eleven tunes, nine of which are Jamal's compositions and two ("Hi-Fly" and "I Hear a Rhapsody") that are of other's work. The recording mix is rather lush and generally well-balanced. Throughout the disc, various, subtle percussive interjections by Badrena offer a wonderful tropical, Brazilian touch, and creates some unique audio delights to the tracks. Cammack's bass is a bit overbearing in the mix and creates a bit bass-heavy feel at times. This is not a result of his playing which is very laid back and articulate, but purely the audio mix. Other than that one small knock, the work is well-recorded and engineered.

The disc opens with a groovy beat that will have you tapping your foot for sure. "Paris After Dark" gets the disc kicked off with a heavy bass line supporting Jamal's robust playing. There are several tempo and melody shifts that really keep

you fully engaged throughout the tune. Track 2, "The Love is Lost", is lovely melody, and track three "Flight To Russia" is a snappy, up-tempo groove. "Poetry" follows, and is a nice piece where Jamal exhibits his range of keyboard use and style.

A personal favorite, "Hi Fly" is up next and gets started with a military march-like touch added to the Randy Weston standard. This track might just get you up for a little waltz around your listening room. It will at minimum bring a big smile to your face. It shifts back and forth from the familiar melody, to the little march departure and back again. This creates nice tension and release throughout the track that makes for fine, toe-tapping listening. Badrena's percussion is a highlight of the mix as well.

"My Inspiration" follows and takes us quickly back to the flowing style of some of the earlier tracks.

"After JALIC (Jazz at Lincoln Center)" is up next. This tune begins with a neat, up-beat stride, and takes a departure about 1:10 for a big Jamal solo. His piano is recorded and mixed in a very up-front manner, but not overpowering. After the solo, the track settles into a nice swinging little groove that takes you to the end.

"A Quiet Time", the title track is up next. This is a beautiful ballad with a flowing melody in the first half of the tune. About mid-way however, the tune shifts to a bit more aggressive feel that showcases the quartet's dexterity and nimbleness. Jamal shows his power here and his 88 key use as well.

"Tranquility" comes up next and offers a tune that is anything but tranquil. It's a neat be-bop tune with lots of departures along the way. "The Blooming Flower", track 10 is yet another lovely ballad with a nice little groove underneath the ballad lines.

The final track "I Hear A Rhapsody" is the second non-Jamal composition of the disc and features the quartet's lovely playing throughout with Jamal's piano big, up front, and bold in the mix.

"A Quiet Time" is a work that never gets too far left or right but provides enough diversity and complexity to keep you engaged in a very peaceful recording. Pop it in, sit back, and just enjoy!

**Audio Samples available at Amazon.com:**

[http://www.amazon.com/Quiet-Time-Ahmad-Jamal/dp/B002YOJEFK/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1273013680&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Quiet-Time-Ahmad-Jamal/dp/B002YOJEFK/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1273013680&sr=8-1)