

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

The Portland Observer



Warner Jams Vol. 1: Brad Mehldau (Piano); Joshua Redman (Tenor, Saxophone); Clarence Seay (bass) Wallace Roney (Trumpet); Brian Blade Kenny Garrett (Alto, Saxophone); and not pictured, Larry Golden (Organ).

Warner Jams Vol. 1

Warner Jams Volume 1 is the first in a series of albums that brings together different creative sensibilities and celebrates the bedrock of jazz-exceptional musicianship with artistry, innovation, improvisation and jamming.

It was Matt Pierson, Warner Bros. Records Senior VP/Jazz, who decided to assemble the line-up of formidable talent appearing on this disc. In so doing, he throws the spotlight on Warner's jazz roster, placing artists in creative situations where they can stretch. The series will combine various members of the Warner jazz family, demonstrating how Warner Jams.

On Warner Jams Volume 1, three talented hornmen-Wallace Roney, Kenny Garrett and Joshua Redman-combine with two new roster signings-Larry Goldings and Brad Mehldau (both with debut albums slated for release in September). The Warner fivesome is backed by some distinguished guests: Peter Bernstein, guitar; Clarence Seay, bass; and Brian Blade, drums.

The album features Cole Porter's "Get Out Of Town," Miles Davis's "Sid's Ahead," a cover of Roberta Flack's monster hit "Killing Me Softly With His Song," as well as originals by each of the album's distinguished leaders.

According to Jeff Levenson, Warner Bros. Records VP/Jazz, "The industry-wide divisions between contemporary jazz and traditional jazz will not mean a whole lot to this series. The Warner artists are consummate musicians; we believe we can inspire their creativity by throwing them together in different groupings."

Each project will showcase the work of legendary jazz photographers. On Warner Jams Volume 1, it is Herman Leonard, whose photographs of Dexter Gordon, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, et al., have done much to create jazz's classic iconography.

Any Washington politician decrying the "loveless sex" in pop culture today hasn't checked out the smooth-as-satin music of Kenneth Mangram. This sensational R&B singer/songwriter is an all-out romantic, a lover of candlelight, moonlight and slow dancing on a hot summer night. On his new Qwest records debut album, Intertwine Da Fold, Kenneth Mangram proves convincingly he's got the chops as he pulls out all the stops.

Produced by Curtis Williams, Donnell Jones (Usher) and Oji Pierce (Montell Jordan), Intertwine Da Fold braids jazz, R&B and slammin' hip-hop grooves into a luminous new style uniquely Mangram's. "I wanted to bring back a live feel to music," says Kenneth. "That's why I incorporated live players on the album. You can have the biggest light show in the world, but if you don't bring people into your music, you won't be as entertaining as a three-piece band with a single light bulb." Accordingly, several sterling musicians contributed their talents to the making of the album, including noted jazz guitar-



KENNETH



MANGRAM

ist Doc Powell and Curtis Williams himself on sax.

In addition to his vocals, Ken-

neth programmed and played keyboards.

All twelve tracks on Intertwine Da Fold portray a different facet of love, each brought to life through Kenneth's passion-filled vocals and harmonies. Songs like the provocative "I Wonder," the sensual "If You're Looking for Love" and the jazz-flavored "Loving' You E-Z" certify Mangram as a first-class balladeer. The up-tempo "831 code" is a sly look at romance over a cell phone, while the debut single, "I'll Send You Roses," co-written by Babyface, is yet another testament to undying and faithful love.

Other songs like "Slo Ride," "So Devine," the seductive "Emagine" and the elegant "Love Takes Time" are about longing and fulfillment, while the funky up-tempo "Give Me" has a touch more sass, especially in its mid-track rap. The album ends with the big band feel of "Through It All," a powerful statement about commitment, emotion and true love. Like every song on the album, it's sung from the heart by a singer with plenty of heart himself.

Lords Of the Underground With Deniece Williams

"We have reached the point where our popular culture threatens to undermine our character as a nation."

Dole went on to denounce rap performers who "revel in mindless violence and loveless sex."

"With the changes in music and people's attitude toward the music, I feel that 'Faith' could not be more timely. The Lords Of The Underground's treatment of the song brought the message to today's generation. I'm impressed with their creativity and artistic integrity"

Williams and The Lords have re-worked Williams' song "Free" into the anthem "Faith."

Deniece Williams also appears in the video



CHARLES & EDDIE

You can't blame Capitol recording artists Charles & Eddie for experiencing a bit of trepidation before starting to record their second album, Chocolate Milk. After all, the dynamic duo's label debut, Duophonic, sold some 1.2 million copies around the world, spawning a Top 15 U.S. single in "Would I Lie To You," which topped the charts in 16 countries, including France, England, Germany and South Africa. After a whirlwind, year-long promotional tour, the Philadelphia-raised Charles Pettigrew and his Oakland-born partner, Eddie Chacon, took some well-deserved time off before launching into the creation of their eagerly anticipated follow-up, once again with producer Josh Deutsch.

"On the first album, we consciously stressed the sameness between our races and styles. We didn't want you to know when one voice left off and the other came in," explains Charles, a classically trained musician who studied jazz singing at Berklee School of Music in Boston, and counts Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson as his three seminal influences. "This time, we tried to hold up our differences, to say, 'You're not like me, but that's why I like you.' We can get that much more out of each other because we're not alike."



Charles & Eddie: Charles Pettigrew, and Eddie Chacon

Chacon, who recorded a pair of hip-hop albums for Luther Campbell's label, but was always a soul classicist at heart, encouraged Pettigrew to write songs for the album, and the result makes for a deeper, more eclectic source of material this time around. "We decided coming across as individuals is where the potential for future maturity lies," says Eddie. "I always felt, the more Charles contributed to the songwriting, the more true we'd be as a duo."

Chocolate Milk underlines that

growth on such songs as the first single "24-7-365," which combines Eddie's love of stylized, raw testifying (like his idol Al Green) with Charles' rounder, silkier crooning in an evocative, yet totally modern soul neo-classicism, replete with Gamble & Huff-style strings and a hook right out of "Dancing In The Streets." The song sounds, at once, brand-new and yet instantly familiar. "The original was almost like a country song," says Eddie. "But I always heard it as a Charles & Eddie Tune."

AZ The Visualiza Makes Debut With "Sugar Hill"

24 year-old rapper AZ originates from East New York; home of those who are brave (if not free). Signed without a demo, AZ made his first appearance as a guest rapper on Nas' Illmatic, shining a brief but powerful light on how and why "Life's A Bitch." This telling display of ability sparked a major label rush for AZ's service, culminating in his signing to EMI Records. His debut single "Sugar Hill" featuring missjones is only a prelude to the album DOE Or DIE, in-stores on October 10.

Sugar Hill is...

"Outstanding. AZ strides confidently into the spotlight. [He] sounds relaxed and grateful to be alive, and his enthusiasm is infectious."--Pulse.

"[AZ] makes good on his promise on a debut single that kicks laid funk and old-school soul flavors... AZ's optimistic visions of a better life on "sugar hill" are the fuel of this hit-bound multiformat vehicle."--Billboard.

"AZ throws his elastic voice through a swooshing, bass-tightened groove... "Push" is how AZ describes his dope escape, and he's



AZ

right-the track is about as difficult to enjoy as a massage."--Vibe.

Sugar Hill is right here!
#1 At Hits And Gavin; #1 At Bet Rap City - 4 Wks In A Row; #5 W/A

Bullet - Billboard Hot Rap Singles, Greatest Gainer; #18 W/A Bullet - Billboard Hot R&B Singles; #41 W/A Bullet - Billboard Hot 100 Singles, Greatest Gainer Airplay.

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