

# JAZZ & BLUES

F L O R I D A

FEBRUARY 2013



FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES



## FEATURED ARTIST **3 COHENS SEXTET**

KEVIN MAHOGANY • JW-JONES BAND • CARLA COOK

MICHAEL KAESHAMMER • TED ROSENTHAL • BOOGIE WOOGIE STOMP

RIVERWALK BLUES & MUSIC FESTIVAL • CAROLINA CHOCOLATE DROPS

MONK & COLTRANE TRIBUTE • NATE NAJAR TRIO

# 3 COHENS

by Bob Weinberg



**FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, ISRAELI** musicians have made a significant impact on the international jazz scene. Among their number, count Anat Cohen and her brothers, Avishai and Yuval. Each sibling enjoys a sterling reputation—Anat, 37, who dominated this year's *DownBeat* Readers Poll, for her hot 'n' sweet virtuosity on the clarinet; Avishai, 35, who was voted a Rising Star in the 2012 *DownBeat* Critics Poll, for his mastery of trad-to-modern trumpet vocabularies; and Yuval, for his soulful, yearning soprano saxophone sound and commitment to excellence in musical education.

With Anat and Avishai living in New York City and touring with their own individual projects, and Yuval returning to their native Tel Aviv, the siblings come together on occasion to record and tour as the 3 Cohens. A current tour brings them and their sextet to Fort Lauderdale this month.

Released in late 2011, the 3 Cohens' third CD, *Family*, showcases each sibling's particular gifts, as well as their remarkable interplay, on a set encompassing classic jazz tunes and finely crafted originals. While the album includes material by Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, the Cohens reinterpret them with modern flourishes. "We tried to make different

arrangements of the songs, to go away a bit from the completely traditional," Anat told me in an interview shortly before the album was released. "That's why 'Do You Know What it Means to Miss New Orleans?' has a different vibe. The same thing with 'Tiger Rag.' I tried to give it some different colors. The reason those songs ended up on the record is because of our love of Louis Armstrong, because of our love for the music of New Orleans."

Armstrong was a favorite of the Cohen kids, who had poached a Satchmo-Ella Fitzgerald tape from their parents' collection. "[Louis and Ella] blew our minds," Yuval related to me in an interview in late 2011. "It needed no explanation. It was just incredible in an instant. The funny thing is, when the years go by and you listen to all kinds of music, and some is more advanced or varied, every time I go back to this primal jazz ... I respect it more and more. No need to go to augmented meters or creative reharmonizations."

Certainly, each Cohen's music is sophisticated and of its time. Anat's 2012 recording *Claruscuro*—even with its covers of the Piaf staple "La Vie en Rose" and Artie Shaw's "Nightmare"—sounds quite modern, as she converses eloquently with her quartet, switching among clarinet, bass clarinet, soprano and tenor saxes. Yuval's 2010 recording, *Song Without Words*, a duet with Israeli pianist Shai Maestro, likewise employs modern constructions that borrow from the classical realm. And Avishai is unquestionably modernist on recordings with his Triveni trio and the Third World Love quartet. On his 2012 CD *Triveni II*, his second with the trio of bassist and fellow Israeli Omer Avital and drummer Nasheet Waits, the trumpeter bows to avant-garde touchstones Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry and Charles Mingus.

Growing up in the coastal town of Tel Aviv in the 1980s, the Cohen kids each received world-class musical training at the Rimon School, the

# 3 COHENS

Jaffa Conservatory and Thelma Yellin High. "My parents didn't push us," Avishai said during a brief tour break in 2011. "We had natural talent, which made it easier to want to do it." They played classical music, swing and Dixieland, and gleaned what jazz knowledge they could from local players and visiting jazz stars at the annual Red Sea Jazz Fest. Each would earn a scholarship to the Berklee College of Music in Boston, then head for the bright lights of New York City.

Yuval's progress was cut short when he had a tumor removed from his spinal cord in 1997. The operation limited the motion of his hands, and he returned to Israel for rehab. He regained his ability to play (as the gorgeous *Song Without Words* attests), while also enjoying a stellar career as an educator. Still, he relishes the opportunities to play and tour with his brother and sister. "Getting together three, four, five times a year—you wait for it," he says. "And it's great when it happens."



The 3 Cohens Sextet performs 8PM Feb. 9 at the Miniaci Performing Arts Center, Fort Lauderdale. Call 954-462-0222 or visit [Southfloridajazz.org](http://Southfloridajazz.org).

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**GUANABANA'S, JUPITER/FEB. 8**  
**BRADFORDVILLE BLUES, TALLAHASSEE/FEB. 9**

As a teen growing up in Ottawa, JW-Jones picked up a powder-blue Strat, as well as a tonal vocabulary steeped in '50s-style blues, jump and rock 'n' roll. Since then, he's recorded with harmonica king Kim Wilson, guitarists Charlie Baty and Junior Watson and saxman Fathead Newman. But the highlight of Jones' career may have been recording with Charlie Musselwhite and Hubert Sumlin, which he did on 2010's *Midnight Memphis Sun*. Certainly, the atmosphere of the famed Sun Studios



inspired the authentic feel of the sessions. Released in 2012, *Seventh Hour*, finds the guitarist delving into reverb-laden soul and blues. Bassist James Rooke and drummer Jeff Asselin will join Jones on his Florida jaunt. The band was recently nominated for another Maple Blues Award for Electric Act of the Year. **BW**

**MICHAEL KAESHAMMER**  
**GOING TO MARDI GRAS, BROWARD CENTER,**  
**FORT LAUDERDALE/FEB. 8**  
**PALLADIUM THEATRE, ST. PETERSBURG**  
**COLLEGE/FEB. 9**

Michael Kaeshammer (pronounced "Case Hammer") was bit by the boogie-woogie bug at an early age. Growing up in Germany, the teenage piano prodigy wowed audiences with his mastery of the styles of Pete Johnson and Pinetop Smith. A move to Canada, where he currently resides, increased the young pianist's profile. He's released a handful of recordings over the past decade that showcase his accomplished playing and vocals, both of which make him sound like a New



Orleans native. On 2011's *Kaeshammer*, and 2012's *Kaeshammer Live!* CD/DVD, the Toronto-based artist continues to mine the rich flavors of Crescent City R&B, as well as expand into jazzy-pop terrain. Expect plenty of Bourbon Street-style action when he and his horn-fueled band celebrate Mardi Gras in the Sunshine State. **BW**

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# S P O T L I G H T

**CAROLINA CHOCOLATE DROPS**  
**STRAZ CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS,**  
**TAMPA/FEB. 15**  
**RUBY DIAMOND AUDITORIUM, FSU,**  
**TALLAHASSEE/FEB. 16**  
**PONTE VEDRA CONCERT HALL/FEB. 17**

You can't get more old-school than trad-blues string band Carolina Chocolate Drops. On their excellent 2012 release *Leaving Eden*, the group expertly interpret music that dates back to the very roots of the blues, from old-timey jigs of the late 19th century to Depression-era blues and bluegrass numbers. Along the way, they nod to influential figures such as Cousin Emmy, the Georgia Sea Island Singers, Etta Baker and Hazel Dickens. Grammy voters noticed and nominated



*Leaving Eden* for Best Traditional Folk Album, an honor they won for their 2010 debut album *Genuine Negro Jig*. Touring as a trio, the 'Drops comprise vocalists and multi-instrumentalists Rhiannon Giddens, Dom Flemons and Hubby Jenkins, who among them play banjo, mandolin, fiddle, guitar, jug, drums, quills and bones. **BW**

**RIVERWALK BLUES FEST**  
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 In its 23rd year, the Riverwalk Blues Fest still has the capacity to surprise. Sure, the roster includes area faves such as Joey Gilmore, Albert Castiglia and Joel DaSilva. But this year, the fest will also introduce many South Floridians to **Nikki Hill** and *Trampled Under Foot*. The St. Louis-based Hill sings with the intensity of blues and soul greats Big Mama Thornton, LaVern Baker and Etta James. And, no doubt, her guitar-playing husband, Matt Hill, has influenced her musical choices, which encompass rockabilly and, ahem, "Hill Country" blues. Also hailing from the midwest, *Trampled Under Foot* comprises Schnebelen siblings Danielle, Kris and Nick, who grew up in Kansas City, Mo. Bassist Danielle



boasts a remarkably soulful vocal, as does brother Nick, whose acetylene-torch guitar licks earned him the Albert King Award at the 2008 IBC. That same year, TUF took first place in the band competition, and their latest release, *Wrong Side of the Blues*, shows why they continue to rack up accolades. Visit [Riverwalkbluesfestival.com](http://Riverwalkbluesfestival.com) for more. **BW**

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February 17  
Carolina Chocolate Drops ▼



February 21  
Tommy Emmanuel

February 24  
◀ Leo Kottke

February 27  
Jesse Cook



March 1  
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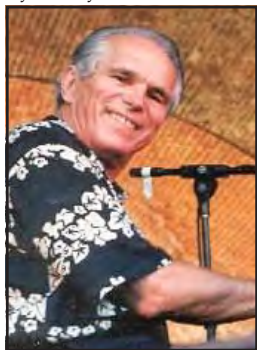


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## BOOGIE WOOGIE STOMP

PALLADIUM, ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE/FEB. 23

Celebrating the driving piano styles of Albert Ammons, Meade Lux Lewis and Pete Johnson, the Boogie Woogie Stomp returns to the Palladium Theatre for its fourth installment. St. Pete's own piano treasure Liz Pennock, organizer of the event, will reprise her performance along with husband and guitarist Dr. Blues. Also returning is the extraordinary **Bob Seeley**. At 84, he's truly one of the masters of the form, his thundering left hand keeping triphammer time while his right dances with juke-shaking intensity. Another veteran piano whomper, Carl "Sonny" Leyland will also join the party. An expert in boogie-woogie and barrelhouse styles, Leyland lived in New Orleans for years and



later joined up with Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys. Chicago native Daryl Davis rounds out the roster, bringing his exciting take on the genre as heir to giants such as Pinetop Perkins and Johnnie Johnson. Dual-piano performances have highlighted past Stomps, and if the participants are game, they should bring down the house once more. **BW**

## NATE NAJAR TRIO

ENGLEWOOD ARTS CENTER, ENGLEWOOD/FEB. 1  
THE INDEPENDENT, TAMPA/FEB. 2

An American who played Brazilian music on acoustic guitar, Charlie Byrd (1925-1999) was somewhat overshadowed during an era that encompassed jazz guitarists from Django Reinhardt to Jim Hall. But he's revered by St. Petersburg-raised guitarist Nate Najar, who studied with classical-guitar instructor Sophocles Papas—of whom Byrd had also once been a disciple. The young guitarist pays it forward and then some on his latest release, *Blues for Night People: The Nate Najar Trio Remembers Charlie Byrd*, even finger-picking on the same 1974 Ramirez nylon-string guitar that Byrd once owned. Accompanied by the Washington, D.C.-based



rhythm section of bassist Tommy Cecil and drummer Chuck Redd, the guitarist effortlessly dances through Byrd's own title track and others from his repertoire (e.g., Jobim's "Desafinado," Ellington's "Single Petal of a Rose"). For these shows, Najar will be accompanied by bassist John Lamb and drummer Stephen Bucholz. **BM**



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# S P O T L I G H T

## KEVIN MAHOGANY UNIVERSITY OF N. FLORIDA FINE ARTS CENTER LAZZARA HALL, JACKSONVILLE/FEB. 14

Kevin Mahogany's sonorous baritone vocal is a perfect match for his surname. Yet baritones aren't usually known for the effortless scat-singing abilities he possesses. Like saxophonist Charlie Parker, Mahogany's roots are planted in the Midwestern blues hub of Kansas City. And like Bird, he can cover anything. His ease with ballads, bebop, blues, swing and gospel was more than evident on his 1993 debut CD *Double Rainbow*. Since then, he's recorded with big bands and small combos, and covered the music of Johnny Hartman, Charles Mingus and Motown. On his latest CD, *Next Time You See Me*, Mahogany fronts the smokin' Dave Stryker



Organ Trio. In recent years, Mahogany's been sharing his gifts as an educator with noted institutions like the Berklee College of Music and the University of Miami. Following this sure-to-be-romantic Valentine's Day show, the singer will perform with an all-star tribute to Monk and Coltrane at the Arsht Center in Miami. **BM**

## CARLA COOK NAPLES PHILHARMONIC CENTER/FEB. 14

Detroit has produced more than its share of jazz talent, including Grammy-nominated vocalist Carla Cook. The singer, who attended Cass Tech High (alumni include Gerald Wilson, Kenny Burrell and Regina Carter), matriculated to Northeastern University in Boston and added a degree in speech communication to previous studies of voice, piano and upright bass. Cook showcased her soaring delivery on three CDs for the MaxJazz label, with sterling support from pianists Cyrus Chestnut and Bruce Barth, bassist James Genus and drummer Billy Kilson. *It's All About Love*, *Dem Bones* and *Simply Natural* all display swing, pop, country, folk and Motown sensibilities through Cook's



creative arrangements of material by Herbie Hancock, Simon and Garfunkel, Neil Young and Marvin Gaye. In addition to touring with her quintet, Cook last year performed with Don Byron's New Gospel Quintet and Steve Wilson's Super Band. For this Valentine's Day show, she'll join the Naples Philharmonic Jazz Orchestra. **BM**

*Sunday Afternoon Jazz*

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# S P O T L I G H T

## MONK AND COLTRANE

featuring T.S. MONK, NNENNA FREELON, KEVIN MAHOGANY, ERNIE WATTS QUARTET  
ARSHT CENTER, MIAMI/FEB. 15

Any critic's Top 10 list of historic jazz figures will include Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane, arguably the genre's most identifiable pianist and tenor saxophonist. This Jazz-Roots series tribute includes top jazz-world talents, including a quartet led by saxophonist Ernie Watts. Like Trane, Watts plays both tenor and soprano saxes. Monk's son, drummer T.S. Monk, was given his first set by Max Roach. He anchored his dad's trio until the late Monk's 1975 retirement, decades after his unorthodox chords and sense of humor had made him an iconic composer. Fronting the band are versatile



baritone Kevin Mahogany and inimitable singer Nnenna Freelon. Freelon's open-minded stylistic approach has resulted in stirring covers of the pianist's "Round Midnight" and the saxophonist's "Giant Steps." Expect inspired renditions of other Monk staples like "Blue Monk" and Coltrane standards like "Crescent" and "Acknowledgment." BM

## TED ROSENTHAL

ARTS GARAGE, DELRAY BEACH/FEB. 22

Winning the 1988 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Competition propelled Ted Rosenthal toward an ascending 25-year recording and touring career that intriguingly blends jazz and classical sensibilities. On the 2002 CD *The 3 B's*, Rosenthal rearranges classics by jazz giants Bud Powell and Bill Evans and improvises on Beethoven themes. On his 2010 release *Impromptu*, he explores composers like Brahms, Chopin and Tchaikovsky in a trio setting. And certainly, classical flourishes abound among the jazz standards on his 2011 trio recording, *Out of This World*. The expressive pianist studied with Tony Aless, a sideman with both Charlie Parker and Stan Getz. But when he found limited



opportunities to study jazz at the conservatory level in the late '70s, he pursued classical piano at the Manhattan School of Music. The combination of skills served him well with Gerry Mulligan's quartet in the early '90s, as it will in this setting with the South Florida rhythm section of bassist Chuck Bergeron and drummer John Yarling. BM

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# S P O T L I G H T

## IKE STUBBLEFIELD FUNKY BISCUIT, BOCA/FEB. 1

Ike Stubblefield's résumé reads like a dream jukebox. The Ohio native was just a teenager when he played keyboards behind The Four Tops, The Temptations, Martha Reeves, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and Rare Earth. His blazing, soulful Hammond B-3 chops were later utilized by everyone from George Benson and B.B. King to Curtis Mayfield and Al Green to Eric Clapton and Jerry Garcia. Stubblefield's extraordinary career as sideman, headliner and producer have extended in various directions, and he's impacted every music scene on which he's landed, from San Francisco to London to Vancouver to his current home in Atlanta. No oldies act, Stubblefield, 60, has lent his skills to today's top



artists, including Cee Lo Green, Derek Trucks and the high-energy New Orleans outfit Papa Mali. Whether he's working with his trio or in other band configurations, Stubblefield is a stone-cold B-3 master. Cue up his rendition of the Booker T. & the MGs staple "Green Onions," from his January gigs in Toronto, on YouTube for proof. **BW**

## BIRDLAND JAZZ BAND UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, GAINESVILLE/FEB. 16 SOUTH MIAMI-DADE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER, CUTLER BAY/FEB. 17

Leading a 15-piece big band in today's challenging economic climate has become a rarity, but drummer Tommy Igoe is a rare talent. For more than 20 years, he's been an educator, bandleader (he also oversees a self-titled big band) and sideman, with credits that include Dave Grusin, Stanley Jordan and Patti Austin. The Birdland Big Band brings down the house every Friday at—where else?—the Birdland Jazz Club in Manhattan, and will likely do the same while playing jazz and pop standards on its Florida stops. The BBB's most recent recording, *Eleven*, has



been nominated for four Grammys, including Best Large Ensemble. The energetic Igoe leads Glenn Drewes, Nick Marcione, Augie Haas, Brandon Lee and Mat Jodrell (trumpet); Rob Middleton, Alejandro Avilés, Nathan Childers and Dan Willis (sax); James Borowski, Dave Bargeron and Mark Miller (trombone); Whitney Ashe (piano) and Phil Palombi (bass). **BM**

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