



**JAZZ &  
BLUES**

**F L O R I D A**

APRIL 2013

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES

**FEATURED ARTIST**

**AARON  
LEBOS**

**NICOLE HART**

**LUCKY PETERSON**

**KAIT DUNTON**

**TAB BENOIT**

**LITTLE MIKE & THE TORNADOES**

**MONTEREY JAZZ FEST ON TOUR**

**SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY**

**HIROMI and GERALD CLAYTON TRIOS**

**EDDY "THE CHIEF" CLEARWATER**

**JOHN SCOFIELD'S HOLLOWBODY BAND**

**MARIA SCHNEIDER & DONNY McCASLIN**

# AARON LEBOS

by Bill Meredith



**IT SHOULD COME AS LITTLE SURPRISE** that 37-year-old guitarist Aaron Lebos — born, raised and still residing in Miami — is furthering South Florida’s tradition of guitar excellence. After all, he was influenced by or taught by (and often both) many of the top regional practitioners of the instrument of the past 30 years.

Lebos studied with Randall Dollahon while earning his 2001 Bachelors in Jazz Performance and Studio Music from the University of Miami. He took private lessons with UM graduate-turned-worldwide touring artist Jonathan Kreisberg; soaked up the influence of West Palm Beach-born fusion star Scott Henderson through his formative years; and worked toward his 2011 Masters in Jazz Performance with Tom Lippincott at Florida International University. Lebos, who has private students of his own now, often teaches at the Young Musicians Camp at UM. The program’s presented each summer by piano teacher Sharon Salz, wife of the late guitar instructor Simon Salz, both of whom were also influential to Lebos.

Combine Dollahon’s theoretical lessons with Kreisberg’s pyrotechnics, Henderson’s growling tone with eight-string ace Lippincott’s unorthodox attack, and you have Lebos’ own

unique synthesis. He also incorporates influences ranging from Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan to Pat Metheny and Allan Holdsworth.

Proof that Lebos took these inspirations to heart can be found throughout the self-titled new CD by the Aaron Lebos Reality. In 6/8-time, “Raging Almonds,” for example, provides an ample display of his compositional and note-bending prowess. “We’re contemporary jazz with elements

of rock, funk and world music,” the guitarist explains. “There are complex meters and harmonies, but the music is still accessible because of the groove. We recorded it at Andrew Yeomanson’s City of Progress Studios in North Miami. He’s DJ Le Spam of the Spam Allstars, whose guitarist I sub for occasionally.”

Lebos’ Reality quartet consists of some of Miami’s top touring musicians and teachers. Keyboardist Jim Gasior is an instructor at the New World School of the Arts, bassist Eric England tours with vocalists Jon Secada and Nicole Henry, and drummer Rodolfo Zuniga teaches at both FIU and Miami Dade College. Henry also employs Lebos in her band. “Nicole and Kreisberg have become role models for me in a way,” he says. “They know how to build things up on their own through hustling and promotion. They make things happen and have been gracious in sharing what they’ve learned with me.”

From 2003 to 2006, Lebos hit the road with Latin pop stars like Christian Castro and Hector Montaner, and he’s had opportunities since to move up the ladder in that market. “Being in the Miami scene, I’ve gotten offers to tour with people from Julio Iglesias to Pitbull,” Lebos says. “But I wanted to pursue my own music.”

# AARON LEBOS

Lebos started his solo recording career with two 2010 releases, a self-titled, straightahead disc of originals and jazz standards, plus the all-original *Jazzilla*. Both featured members of his current band, most of whom have worked together since Lebos stopped playing Latin pop. "Rodolfo was on both of those records," Lebos says. "Josh Allen played upright bass on the self-titled CD, and Eric was on *Jazzilla*, but playing upright instead of electric bass. It was still pretty rocking, but I think *Aaron Lebos Reality* goes beyond it toward a fresh new sound."

The band held a CD release party for its latest effort in March at the Van Dyke in Miami Beach, where they'll return on May 29. They'll throw another one on May 24 at the Arts Garage in Delray Beach.

"I'll come off touring Malaysia with Nicole to play the Arts Garage," Lebos says, "so I'm really looking forward to what I'm calling our 'North of Dade' CD release party."



The Aaron Lebos Reality will perform on Saturday, April 6 at Tobacco Road in Miami (Tobacco-road.com, 305-374-1198), and on Saturday, April 20 at Avenue D in Miami (Avenuedjazz.com, 305-371-4823).



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  - April 21 Skipper's Smokehouse, Tampa
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BRADFORDVILLE BLUES, TALLAHASSEE/APRIL 12**

Three distinct voices come together in this allstar roots-blues ensemble, which salutes the mellow joys of life below the Mason-Dixon Line. Florida-based guitarist-vocalists JP Soars and Damon Fowler and Memphis-based pianist-vocalist Victor Wainwright have just released the outstanding *Easy Livin'*, their first recording as Southern Hospitality for the Blind Pig label. Soars' gravel-throated growl contrasts with Fowler's sweet-toned country croon and Wainwright's Beale Street-seasoned singing on a set of tunes that read



like postcards from the frontporch. Equally intoxicating is the blend of Soars' heated licks on cigar-box and Dobro guitars with Fowler's keening lap steel and Wainwright's honky-tonk piano and humid Hammond B3. They convincingly sing about life on the road and longing for home, of which they're no doubt more than well-acquainted. **BW**

**LUCKY PETERSON  
TAMPA BAY BLUES FEST, VINOY WATERFRONT  
PARK, ST. PETERSBURG/APRIL 12  
KEVRO'S, DELRAY/APRIL 13**

As the son of bluesman James Peterson, Lucky Peterson has been blowing away audiences for most of his life. At age five, the Hammond B3 prodigy cut a record under the guidance of blues giant Willie Dixon. As a teenager, he toured with Little Milton and Bobby "Blue" Bland, before striking out on his own. A triple threat on organ, guitar and vocals, Peterson was among the fieriest blues acts of the '90s, before drug addiction threatened to derail his career. Having married singer Tamara Peterson more than a decade ago, the Dallas-based



Peterson appears to be on the right track. The recently released three-DVD/two-CD set *Live at the 55 Arts Club Berlin* finds him in excellent form as a stone-cold Hammond master, searing guitarist and combustible singer fronting an excellent band. "I'm back again," he declares in the song of the same name. No doubt. **BW**



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- April 12 Southern Hospitality
- April 13 Brett Wellman and  
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TAMPA BAY BLUES FEST, VINOY WATERFRONT  
PARK, ST. PETERSBURG/APRIL 14  
BLUES BREWS & BBQ, SEMINOLE CASINO,  
COCONUT CREEK/APRIL 20

It's easy to take for granted an unassuming master craftsman like Tab Benoit. Year after year, the guitarist and vocalist has delivered excellent blues steeped in the bayou waters of his native Louisiana. So last year's *Legacy: The Best of Tab Benoit* seems almost revelatory. Culling selections from 13 years of albums for the Telarc label, the disc serves as a reminder of Benoit's power as an instrumentalist, vocalist and writer. Whether he's blazing away on a slow-grinder like "Nice and Warm,"



churning an anxious boogie on "Muddy Bottom Blues" or injecting down-home mojo into an R&B classic like "I Put a Spell on You," Benoit expresses affection for home in every lick. He also voices concern for the disappearing wetlands and the region's post-Katrina residents on tracks such as "Shelter Me" and a redo of Stephen Stills' "For What It's Worth." **BW**

## EDDY "THE CHIEF" CLEARWATER

TAMPA BAY BLUES FEST, VINOY WATERFRONT  
PARK, ST. PETERSBURG/APRIL 13

For six decades, Eddy "The Chief" Clearwater has sharpened his ax on the gritty streets of the Windy City. The southpaw guitarslinger began to make a name for himself on the South and West sides of Chicago in the early '50s (although that name was "Guitar Eddy" and then "Clear Waters"), blending the cutting tones of Magic Sam and Otis Rush with the rock 'n' roll exuberance of Chuck Berry. A dynamic showman, Clearwater later adopted the moniker and the feathered headdress of "The Chief," a nod to his Cherokee heritage. The beloved bluesman has released superb recordings in recent years, such as *West Side Strut* and *Rock 'N' Roll City*.



In 2009, the Macon, Miss.-born Clearwater was honored with a marker on the Mississippi Blues Trail, which recognized his contribution to "Black Prairie Blues." Fittingly, he'll headline this summer's Chicago Blues Fest, the theme of which is "Rollin' Up the River." Before then, say "how" to The Chief in Tampa. **BW**

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**LITTLE MIKE & THE TORNADES**  
**MCCALL'S, THE VILLAGES/APRIL 19**  
**GREAT OUTDOORS, HIGH SPRINGS/APRIL 20**  
**DOS MAMAS EATERY, GAINESVILLE/APRIL 26**

As an aspiring blues harmonica player from Queens, Mike Markowitz had the chance to observe masters such as John Lee Hooker and Muddy Waters in action. Harp king Paul Butterfield became an important mentor to Markowitz, who formed Little Mike & the Tornadoes in 1978. The band became first-call backing group for touring blues giants such as Walter Horton, Lightnin' Hopkins, Big Mama Thornton and Jimmy Rogers. Inspiration from these legends remains with Markowitz, who now lives near Gainesville, as evidenced on the Tornadoes' latest disc, *Forgive Me*. The leader's cutting harp tone and dynamic phrasing drive 11 original tracks, which feature expert support from guitarist Troy Nahumko, bassist Chris Brzezicki and drummer Cam Robb, as well as pianist Jim McKaba and lap-steel wizard Sonny Rhodes. Little Mike's vocals are especially soulful on the ballads. **BW**



**NICOLE HART**  
**THE GROVE, VERO BEACH/APRIL 6**  
**THE BIG EASY, HOLLYWOOD/APRIL 19**  
**BOSTON'S, DELRAY/APRIL 30**

Nicole Hart's vocals brim with the intensity of a singer raised in the church and fully accredited by the School of Hard Knocks. After losing her husband and musical partner to cancer in 2009, Hart relocated from New York to Florida, where audiences and musicians had been more than receptive. South Florida bluesman Albert Castiglia has been a strong supporter, and he duets with Hart on her 2009 release *Treasure*. The album showcases the singer's emotive vocals on tracks like a revved-up read of Bessie Smith's "Gin House Blues," a feisty romp through



Wanda Jackson's "Heart Trouble" and the heart-rending Hart-penned "I Just Want to Cry." For her latest project, *Split Second*, Hart teams up with Aussie bassist and vocalist Anni Piper. Their voices contrast and blend beautifully, as the pair dig in on a set that includes tunes by Memphis Slim, Roy Orbison and Janis Joplin. **BW**

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## Saturday April 6

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- April 13 DAVID SHELLEY & BLUESTONE
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- April 20 RANDI & BLUE FIRE
- April 26 BLUES DRAGON
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- April 20 The Beach Shack, Coca Beach
- April 27 The Alley, Sanford

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# S P O T L I G H T

**MARIA SCHNEIDER and DONNY McCASLIN**  
**ROBINSON THEATER, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH**  
**FLORIDA, JACKSONVILLE/APRIL 4**

Although she wields a baton rather than an instrument, Maria Schneider becomes her eponymous orchestra's 18th musician, utilizing finely honed composing, arranging and conducting skills. Drawing inspiration from Gil Evans, Bob Brookmeyer and George Russell, the 52-year-old New York City resident is celebrated for her ability to blur lines between musical genres. Her 2004 CD *Concert in the Garden* earned a Grammy for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album. And the music from releases *Sky Blue* and *Carlos Drummond de Andrade Stories* (with soprano Dawn Upshaw, her collaborator on the brand-new *Winter Morning Walks*) has been



critically acclaimed, on disc and on the bandstand, with help from orch members like pianist Frank Kimbrough, bassist Jay Anderson and tenor saxophonist Donny McCaslin, who'll be joining Schneider at UNF in Jacksonville. McCaslin's latest CD, *Casting for Gravity*, has also drawn raves. The pair will perform with the heralded band from the University of North Florida. **BM**

**KAIT DUNTON TRIO**  
**JAZZIZ NIGHTLIFE, MIZNER PARK**  
**BOCA RATON/APRIL 10-11**

Like many modern jazz pianists, Los Angeles-based Kait Dunton is classically trained. Yet her improvisational skills are more cerebral and understated than technical. Dunton's 2008 debut CD, *Real and Imagined*, received critical praise for her composition, improvisation and trio concept. Her 2012 follow-up, *Mountain Suite*, ups the ante with an introspective and star-studded quintet including saxophonist Bob Mintzer, trumpeter John Daversa, bassist Darek "Oles" Oleszkiewicz and drummer Peter Erskine. That series of musical travelogues appropriately takes Dunton to her debut performance at Jazziz Nightlife, South Florida's



brand-new Vegas-style musical supper club. Currently pursuing a doctorate at the Thornton School of Music at USC (where she recently premiered a classical piece for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, cello and bass), and with piano studies under Alan Pasqua and compositional tutoring by Vince Mendoza, Dunton is clearly a jazz artist with a bright future. **BM**

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**The Honest Truth**

APRIL 12  
**Bill Peterson**

APRIL 13  
**Scotty Barnhart**

APRIL 15  
**Local Jazz Hero Party**

APRIL 19  
**Bill Kennedy**

APRIL 26  
**Derrick Koelsch**

APRIL 27  
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Trio**

Gerald Clayton

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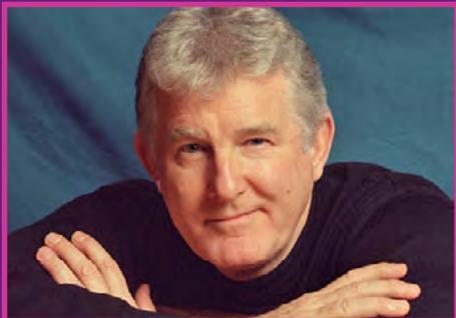
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**STRAZ CENTER, FERGUSON HALL, TAMPA/APRIL 13**  
 The Monterey Jazz Fest touring ensemble played its first show at the 55th edition of its namesake event last September. But musical director **Christian McBride** had already worked with everyone else in it. The 40-year-old bassist was playing with 50-year-old pianist Benny Green while still in high school. He shares more than 60 recording and touring credits with veteran drummer Lewis Nash; played on saxophonist Chris Potter's 1992 debut; dueted with vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater on his 2011 release *Conversations With Christian*; and toured with trumpeter Ambrose



Akinmusire in support of Queen Latifah's 2008 CD *Trao'lin Light*. Expect McBride and Bridgewater to be witty emcees, as the gifted sextet plays together then splits into smaller units to perform standards and material from stellar new CDs by Potter (*The Sirens*), Green (*Magic Beans*) and McBride's Inside Straight band (*People Music*). **BM**

**HIROMI'S TRIO PROJECT/GERALD CLAYTON TRIO**  
**GENERATION NEXT: PIANO**  
**ARSHT CENTER, MIAMI/APRIL 12**

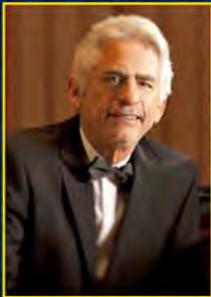
Japanese pianist Hiromi Uehara has been on a first-name basis with fans since they heard her stunning 2003 debut CD *Another Mind*, recorded while she was a student at Berklee College of Music. Her latest two CDs, *Voice* and *Move*, have been with Hiromi's Trio Project, featuring the all-star rhythm section of bassist Anthony Jackson (Chick Corea, Al Di Meola, Steely Dan) and drummer Simon Phillips (Jeff Beck, Jack Bruce, Pete Townshend). The trio's 2012 DVD *Live in Marciac* also exhibited uncommon technique and telepathic interplay. Still only 34, Hiromi is joined under the banner of "Generation Next: Piano" by 28-year-old



New York City resident Gerald Clayton. The son of heralded veteran bassist John Clayton plays duets with his father and works with both John and saxophone-playing uncle Jeff Clayton in the Clayton Brothers. The young pianist's trio, with bassist Joe Sanders and drummer Justin Brown, will play material from their brand-new CD *Life Forum*. **BM**

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with a rhythm section guaranteed to push the envelope. Bassist Ben Street studied with Miroslav Vitous and Dave Holland, and is a member of pianist Danilo Perez's band. Drummer Bill Stewart's melodic and polyrhythmic style has been featured on CDs and stages with Scofield, Pat Metheny and Joe Lovano, and throughout his own solo career. **BM**

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