



**JAZZ &
BLUES**


SEPTEMBER
2014

F L O R I D A

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES

FEATURED ARTIST

**Debbie
Orta
Quintet**



**TIERNEY SUTTON • LITTLE G WEEVIL • IRA SULLIVAN
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GREG PARNELL SEXTET • BIG RAY & THE MOTOR CITY KINGS
JONN DEL TORO RICHARDSON & SEAN CARNEY
LONGINEU PARSONS & TED SHUMATE WITH 21 BLUE**

Debbie Orta Quintet

by Bill Meredith



THE LAST NAME OF VOCALIST DEBBIE

Orta resonates through the South Florida jazz scene, thanks to the talents of the Miramar-based singer, her husband, electric bassist Nicky Orta, and her keyboardist and brother-in-law Mike Orta. That resonance recently increased via the vocalist's long-awaited debut CD, *Child's Play*, on which she and the Orta brothers form the core band along with saxophonist/flutist Ed Maina and drummer Carlomagno Araya.

Some of South Florida's top-tier jazz talents sit in throughout the 12-song set, which includes stellar performances of original compositions, American Songbook standards, and pop gems by Leon Russell and Joni Mitchell. A playfulness befitting its title runs through the disc, with its bold arrangements of material from ballad to bossa, swing to salsa. However, *Child's Play* was anything but spontaneous. In fact, it represents years of planning, from conception to delivery. Consider that Orta co-wrote the ballad "You Are

My Child," a warm and personal expression of a mother's hopes and dreams for her baby, in 1986.

"Our kids, Justin and Anjelica, are in college and high school," Orta says. "And like them, these songs have grown and evolved. Some were written a long time ago; some were arranged by other people over the years. Your whole life leads up to your first CD."

Child's Play reflects the Ortas' varied musical experiences. American Songbook chestnuts are treated with both reverence and a sense of adventure. "Taking a Chance on Love," for example, features a cameo by steel-drum great Othello Molineaux, while a brisk Latin arrangement of "The Way You Look Tonight" grooves to the heated percussion of master conguero Sammy Figueroa and drummer Araya. Meanwhile, the medley of "I'm Through With Love/Down With Love" shifts unpredictably between disparate feels and tempos. "You Are My Child," written with Joe Goldberger, approaches gospel territory, and pop hits by Russell ("A Song for You") and Mitchell ("Both Sides Now") receive memorable jazz updates.

Prior to Orta's seven-year jazz career, she performed in regional and touring acts including the pop groups Pepper and Catalyst, and traveled internationally as a backup singer for Latin vocalists Chayanne and Jose Luis Rodriguez "El Puma." "I've always loved singing funk, dance music and all forms of jazz," she says. "And getting married to Nicky opened me up to all kinds of jazz artists I wasn't familiar with."

The Orta brothers are renowned in South Florida for the excellence they so effortlessly display on *Child's Play*. An adjunct University of Miami faculty member, Nicky is South Florida's preeminent electric jazz bassist, and he contributes several arrangements to the CD along with a warm, inviting tone that holds the ensemble together. Mike's memorable solos encompass acoustic piano on the ballad standard "I've Grown Accustomed to His Face" and electric piano on the Debbie Orta/Raul Rodriguez original "Jericocoara," which also features a dancing flute melody by Maina.

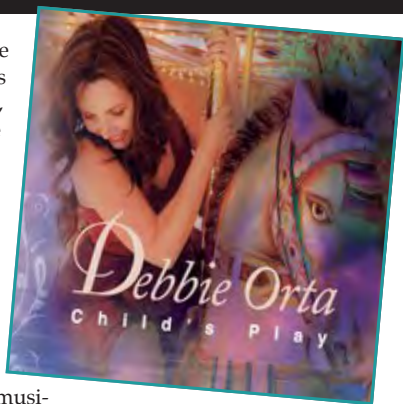
Araya's drumming perfectly complements each tune — check out his supple brushwork

Debbie Orta Quintet

on Jimmy Durante's "Make Someone Happy" — and he engineered much of the recording at his Drumit Studios in Miami. Acoustic bassist Jamie Ousley lends his nimble, woody tone to a couple of songs, and the members of the vocal quartet Mad Romance enliven the buoyant title track, written by Orta and Jai Schneider.

Yet it's the vocalist's versatility that most stands out among the disc's traditional jazz, Latin and pop feels. It takes a brave singer to cover the title standard from an album by the late Sarah Vaughan (*You're Mine, You* from 1962), but Orta and company swing the Johnny Green/Edward Heyman composition with aplomb.

"I couldn't have asked for better people to work with," Orta says. "It's a dream come true to record with musicians like these, who are A-list in every aspect."



The Debbie Orta Quintet will perform on Sept. 13 at Soyka Restaurant; on Sept. 21 at the Dolphin Mall Ramblas Stage; and on Sept. 27 at the WDNA Studio, all in Miami. Visit Debbieorta.com for more information.

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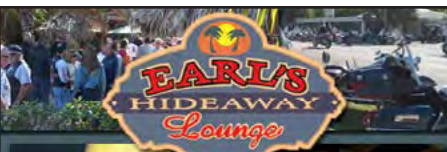


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S P O T L I G H T

LITTLE G WEEVIL

BRADFORDVILLE BLUES, TALLAHASSEE/SEPT. 5
With his fevered vocals and expert picking on acoustic guitar and Dobro, Little G Weevil conjures the intensity of country-blues masters Bukka White and Son House. That's a remarkable feat for any artist under the age of 40, let alone one who grew up in Budapest, Hungary. Based in Atlanta for the past five years, Little G has been thrilling traditional-blues lovers with his impassioned take on the idiom. His masterful playing and soul-shaking vocals are beautifully showcased on his 2013 release *Moving*, which was nominated for a Blues Blast Music Award in the Acoustic Album of the Year category. He also was nominated for a Blues Music Award for Acoustic Artist of the Year. And judging



by the material on *Moving*, those recognitions are more than well-deserved. Little G's original songs have a ring of authenticity, as if he were channeling Charley Patton or Blind Willie Johnson on cuts such as "Advice" or "Deep Bow," which sound like vintage 78s. Also catch him next month at the Daytona Blues Fest with harp man Billy Gibson. **BW**

TIERNEY SUTTON

JAZZIZ NIGHTLIFE, BOCA RATON/SEPT. 9-10

With varying degrees of success, jazz musicians have strived to interpret the complex artistry of Joni Mitchell. On her latest release, *After Blue*, jazz vocalist Tierney Sutton displays just the right lilt and soaring range to do justice to Mitchell classics like "Woodstock," "Court and Spark" and "Both Sides Now." The performances resulted in Sutton's fifth consecutive Grammy nomination (for Best Jazz Vocal Album). Featuring allstar jazz contributors such as Al Jarreau, Hubert Laws and Peter Erskine, the album also marks the singer's first outing without her longtime quintet. Sutton, considered a "musician's singer," also earned a Grammy nod for arranging. And she's instructed rising vocal-jazz stars —



Gretchen Parlato and Sara Gazarek among them — as a teacher at USC's Thornton School of Music and currently as Vocal Department Head at the Los Angeles Music Academy. Her South Florida set will include gems from *After Blue* performed with guitarist Serge Merlaud and Turtle Island String Quartet cellist Mark Summer. **BM**

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THE BREW SPOT, GAINESVILLE/SEPT. 19**

Veteran trumpeter Longineu Parsons and guitarist Ted Shumate illustrate the natural link between jazz and blues with their group 21 Blue. Parsons is a protégé of hard-bop cornet player Nat Adderley, and the influence shows. Shumate has the ability to switch between finger-picked, nylon-stringed acoustic classical and hollow-bodied, plectrum-style electric instruments. Together, they showcase their deep jazz knowledge — Parsons is an associate professor at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee; Shumate has taught at various Florida colleges and at the Guitar Institute of Technology in Hollywood, Calif. Parsons' résumé includes work with Cab Calloway, Cecil Taylor, Nancy Wilson and Joe Williams; Shumate's



with Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Al Di Meola and Sonny Fortune. But their link is Adderley, Shumate's bandleader for 10 years. Audiences enjoy colors across the jazz spectrum, considering Parsons' powerful, bluesy tone and additional talents on recorder, flute, percussion and vocals, and Shumate's ability to cross from flamenco to traditional jazz and blues. **BM**

**BERNARD ALLISON
FUNKY BISCUIT, BOCA RATON/SEPT. 10
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AMELIA ISLAND BLUES FEST, FERNANDINA/
SEPT. 13**

The late Luther Allison was an exhilarating blues performer, and he left the family business in capable hands. At age 48, son Bernard Allison continues to light up audiences with his fluid and fiery command of his daddy's ax. Naturally, his roots run deep. Besides his father, he shared stages with Koko Taylor and Willie Dixon and counted Johnny Winter and Stevie Ray Vaughan as mentors. Although his vocal similarity to his dad is unmistakable, Allison is no Luther clone,



as he proved on his 2013 teamup album with Cedric Burnside. Touring with his band, Allison exudes charisma, whether he's burning through "Rocket 88," injecting soul-funk into "Voodoo Chile" or revisiting the Koko staple "I Wouldn't Treat a Dog (the Way You Treated Me)." Saxman Jose James further enlivens the proceedings. **BW**

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 THE ABBEY, ORLANDO/SEPT. 21

Joe McCarthy is the percussive engine powering the polyrhythmic Latin-jazz machine known as Afro Bop Alliance. Based in Annapolis, Maryland, the septet earned a Latin Grammy for their 2008 release *Caribbean Jazz Project*, with steel-pan master Dave Samuels. On *Angel Eyes*, their debut on the Zoho label, McCarthy and company once again unspool the sophisticated rhythms of Afro-Caribbean jazz, traversing clavé and cha-cha-cha, soca and joropo. They inject those flavors into tunes by Horace Silver and Wayne Shorter, and even a spry rendition of the title track. With strong contributions from saxophonists Luis Hernandez and Vince Norman, trumpeter Tim Stanley, pianist Harry Appelman and bassist Tom Baldwin, McCarthy displays a fiery command on drum set, cowbell and timbales, the



mix further bolstered by Victor Provost's steel pans, Roberto Quintero's percussion and Paquito D'Rivera's clarinet. **BM**

JOHN DEL TORO RICHARDSON & SEAN CARNEY
 BRADFORDVILLE BLUES, TALLAHASSEE/SEPT. 20
 PARADISE BAR & GRILL, PENSACOLA BEACH/
 SEPT. 21, 23

John Del Toro Richardson and Sean Carney have earned their bona fides, displaying chops and taste deeply rooted in the genre's best practitioners. Both guitarists paid their dues as sidemen, Richardson with Hubert Sumlin, Diunna Greenleaf and Rich Del Grosso; and Carney with Big Joe Duskin, Duke Robillard and Charlie Baty. Carney's band took first place at the IBC in Memphis in 2007, and both men have earned the IBC's Albert King Best Guitarist Award. They paired their compatible styles on multiple volumes of Carney's *Blues for a Cure* albums, which bring together various IBC winners



and competitors to raise money for breast-cancer research and medical care for musicians. Last year, Richardson and Carney teamed up on the CD *Drivin' Me Wild*. A set of traditional-leaning electric blues played with energy and intensity, the album spotlights their individual instrumental and vocal styles. **BW**

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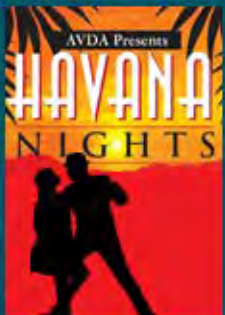
Friday 09/12/2014
8:00 PM

Polly Gibbons with
The Shelley Berg Trio
| Jazz



Saturday 09/13/2014
8:00 PM

Christian Howes
| Jazz



Thursday 09/18/2014 8:00 PM

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Larry Coryell
| Jazz



Friday 09/26/2014
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Jowee Omicil
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Cyrus Chestnut
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Friday 10/03/2014
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GREG PARNELL SEXTET

TRIBUTE TO THE JAZZ MESSENGERS

NEW SMYRNA BEACH JAZZ FEST, THE LOOP/SEPT. 27

Drummer Greg Parnell is the musical director for the Orlando Jazz Orchestra, which performs material by iconic bandleaders like Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey. Having played with versions of the Dorsey Orchestra — as well as with the bands of Les Brown and Glenn Miller, among others — Parnell knows his way around the styles of legendary big-band drummers such as Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich. Although the versatile drummer's performance at the New Smyrna Beach Jazz Fest will be with his sextet, the percussive challenges are no less daunting. Their "Tribute to the Jazz Messengers" will salute the bands led by Art Blakey, the powerhouse



drummer who developed so many jazz stars — Wayne Shorter, Freddie Hubbard, Clifford Brown, Wynton Marsalis — that he practically qualifies as a university. Parnell will be joined by saxophonist Emmanuel Zapata, trumpeter Scott Dickinson, trombonist Corey Paul, pianist Keegan Matthews, bassist Doug Matthews and vocalist Heather Friedman. **BM**

BIG RAY & THE MOTOR CITY KINGS

JACK'S RIVER BAR, NAPLES BAY BLUES BASH/SEPT. 20

Big Ray Haywood is a big man with a big voice. Hailing from the Detroit area, he and his Motor City Kings play gritty old-school blues and jump with plenty of soul and a commitment to party your troubles away. And they certainly get results, at least judging by the live performances captured in audio and video on their Web site. While they tackle blues and soul classics such as "Unchain My Heart" and "How Blue Can You Get" with gusto, they also bring plenty of emotion and sizzle to original numbers. Those songs contain autobiographical references to their "Downriver" hometown, as well as to the travails of heartbreak and to the difficulty of a big man trying to find shoes that fit. Haywood also blows a brawny tenor sax reminiscent of Eddie Shaw or Noble "Thin Man" Watts, and gets superb assistance from guitarist Davey Fender, drummer Louis Eurns and keyboardist Mike Rupprecht. The band will bring a



taste of rust-belt blues to Florida's west coast when they headline the fourth annual Naples Bay Blues Bash at Jack's River Bar. **BW**

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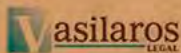
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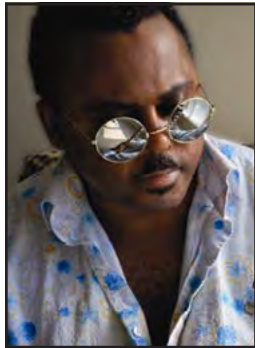
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TANGERINE BLUES FEST, GULFPORT/SEPT. 27
MATLACHA BLUES FEST, OLDE FISH HOUSE MARINA/SEPT. 28

David Gerald grew up in Detroit, absorbing the city's signature sounds while also exploring the music of his Mississippi roots. Naturally, his blues is a rich mixture of heritage and hometown, as he takes vocal and instrumental inspiration from Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan, as well as B.B. King and Albert King. Those influences are apparent on Gerald's 2009 debut CD, *Hell and Back*, on which he offers live renditions



of each of those touchstones' songs. Gerald's own accomplished songcraft evokes the modern-blues mastery of Robert Cray and incorporates R&B and soul for a contemporary sound. But those live tracks are most revelatory, showcasing Gerald's powerhouse vocals and guitar onstage. According to his Web site, a followup CD is in the works. **BW**

IRA SULLIVAN

FISH HOUSE FALL MUSIC FEST, MIAMI/SEPT. 27-28
 At age 83, Ira Sullivan continues to display depth and creativity on instruments ranging from trumpet, flugelhorn and flute to tenor, alto and soprano saxes. You'd expect no less from a cat who played with Charlie Parker, Red Rodney and Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Revered by musicians in his adopted hometown of Miami — as well as in his native Chicago — Sullivan regularly performs with South Florida allstars such as pianist Brian Murphy, bassist Jamie Ousley and drummer John Yarling. The multi-instrumentalist ventured to South Florida in the early '60s and found work playing and teaching — his students included Jaco Pastorius and Pat Metheny. And he still nurtures



students, this summer teaching at UM's Frost School of Music's Young Musician's Camp. During his shows, Sullivan may play standards from his vast repertoire or selections from recordings spanning *Blue Stroll*, his 1959 teamup with tenorist Johnny Griffin, to 2011's *A Family Affair*, a pairing with vibist Stu Katz. **BM**

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