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Q Home » Articles » Best of / Year End



Mark Sullivan's Best Releases Of 2015

By MARK SULLIVAN, Published: December 11, 2015 | 2,325 views

This is my first year end list as an AAJ contributor, hopefully the first of many! I reviewed a lot of great music, major label and independent productions alike. Here's the ten that rose to the top of my list of favorites, in no particular order.



Eberhard Weber Hommage à Eberhard Weber (ECM Records)

Terrific tribute to bassist Eberhard Weber, anchored by Pat Metheny's title composition for big band, soloists, and prerecorded Eberhard

exceptional contributions by Metheny, vibraphonist Gary Burton, bassist Scott Colley, and drummer Danny Gottlieb. Accompanied by additional Weber arrangements for big band by Michael Gibbs and others, with soloists Burton and reedman Paul McCandless.



Stefano Battaglia In The Morning (ECM Records)

Absolutely gorgeous interpretations of music by American composer Alec Wilder from Italian pianist Battaglia and his trio. Just a perfect

match between composer and interpreter. Wilder's music is rich and eclectic, and not played nearly enough by jazz players.



Ran Blake Ghost Tones: Portraits of George Russell (A-side Records)

Pianist/composer Ran Blake presents a loving tribute to his late colleague George Russell in a diverse program anchored by his sensitive

piano playing. Fascinating kaleidoscope of Russell compositions and relevant standards, with varied, creative arrangements.



The Sirkis/Bialas International Quartet Come To Me (Stonedbird Productions)

The The Sirkis/Bialas International Quartet demonstrates how well a vocalist can work as the featured soloist in a quartet. Even better, they

make you forget the instrumentation in the beauty and joy of the music they make. The group truly deserves the "International" part of their name. Drummer Asaf Sirkis is an Israeli living in England; vocalist Sylwia Bialas is a Pole living in Germany; keyboardist Frank Harrison is English; and bassist Patrick Bettison is from the United States. A wonderful record, one of the year's most pleasant surprises.



Unhinged Sextet Clarity (OA2 Records)

Smoking hot hard bop debut from a collective drawn from all over the U.S. While there's nothing groundbreaking here, it's a first-class

collection of modern jazz, with strong playing and exciting, varied original compositions. One of three releases this year involving talented keyboardist Michael Kocour.

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