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ONCE UPON A TIME



**ABDULLAH IBRAHIM**  
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**APPEARING IN NEW YORK**

(80th Birthday Celebration)

**Oct 17 Carnegie Hall (Solo Piano)**

**Oct 20 NYC Schomburg Center (+ Friends)**

photography: Ines Kaiser (Abdullah) / Uwe THEO Kropinski (album cover)



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**The People In Your Neighbourhood**

**Led Bib (Cuneiform)**

**Mother Stump**

**Joel Harrison (Cuneiform)**

**Parts of the Entirety**

**Tatvamasi (Cuneiform)**

by Tom Greenland

Since opening for business in 1984, Cuneiform has opened ears to the latest developments in hybrid experimental musics inspired by rock, jazz, classical and other sources. Averaging 100 albums per decade, the catalogue is both comprehensive and expansive, drawing on a global roster of contributing artists.

Led Bib was founded over ten years ago by drummer Mark Holub, who recruited fellow London University students – bassist Liran Donin, keyboardist Toby McLaren and alto saxophonists Pete Grogan and Chris Williams. Although they've enjoyed considerable media exposure in the UK, they're less well known stateside, though their sixth release, *The People in Your Neighbourhood* (third for Cuneiform), may expand their visibility here. Most striking, aside from the powerful impact of the hard-hitting rhythm team, is the two-alto frontline, which draws deeply from the jazz well, such that even the more rock-inflected tunes retain an exploratory sensibility. The left-channel saxophonist builds his fine solo on "Curly Kate" to a high scorching screech while the right-channel one inspires a dual-horn climax on "At the Ant Farm". The horns' tandem work is remarkable, trading soloist, co-soloist and accompaniment roles to create a seamless and unique sonic canvas. McLaren favors distorted keyboard tones and often plays guitar-like ideas that give the quintet added drive. Donin's closing "Orphan Elephants" is a film noir-esque program piece in 7/4 that encapsulates the group's aesthetic extremes, crescendoing from moody ruminations to a bombastic, throbbing bolero.

Guitarist Joel Harrison pays tribute to his Washington, D.C. roots on *Mother Stump*, an impressionistic journey through the multicultural capital city with a decidedly avant stamp. Much of the album – especially the slow-rolling opener, "John the Revelator", which quickly morphs from Son House to Sun Ra; chitlin' circuit shuffle beat of "Do You Remember Big Mama Thornton?"; and Roy Buchanan-esque minor blues pyrotechnics of "I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know" – comes from Mississippi Delta blues and for all his futuristic leanings, Harrison speaks this music with a convincing accent. On "Wide River to Cross" (Parts 1 & 2) and "Dance with My Father Again" (a Luther Vandross and Richard Marx cover) the music has a more Americana feel, reminiscent in some respects to Bill Frisell. The rest is more eclectic. "Folk Song for Rosie (a slight return)", played on dobro with a slide, sounds similar to the way a sarod player would approach a raga; a cover of George Russell's "Stratusphunk" betrays the influence of Wes Montgomery; and the tasteful bends on "Refuge" recalls mid '70s Jeff Beck. Although Harrison is clearly holding the reins on this project, supported by bassist Michael Bates and drummer Jeremy Clemons, with keyboardist Glenn Patscha sitting in on half the tracks, tunes like "Stratusphunk" and "Dance with My Father Again" display a high degree of empathetic interplay.

From Poland, spearheaded by guitarist Grzegorz Lesiak, Tatvamasi is yet another iconoclastic, genre-hopping outfit. With the versatile talents of tenor saxophonist Tomasz Piątek, bassist Łukasz Downar and drummer Krzysztof Redas, the group ploughs new musical furrows on *Parts of the Entirety*, framing its compositions around Slavic folk rhythms and melodic ornaments delivered with a rock attitude. "Unsettled

Cyclists Peloton", the opener, hurdles along in 7/4 with fuzz- and wah-inflected guitar behind a languid tenor sax. "Collapse of Time", the next track, and "Rhubanabarb", the one after, are built on 12- and 17-beat structures, respectively. Despite the complexity of these through-composed rhythmic forms, which often modulate into half- or double-time, the music remains fluid, danceable, like the odd-meter folksongs to which it alludes. "Shape Suggestion" offers a brief respite from the turmoil with a spacious interlude nestled between tenor solos. "An Eccentric Introvert in a Study Filled with Broken Mirrors" starts out funky, but soon loosens up, with conversational interactions and a climatic hook-up between tenor sax and drums. "Astroepos" and "Buy 2, Take 3" follow a similar template, with catchy tunes over serpentine rhythms, ending in full party mode.

For more information, visit [cuneiformrecords.com](http://cuneiformrecords.com). A Cuneiform 30th Anniversary Celebration is at ShapeShifter Lab Oct. 22nd. See Calendar.



**From Sassy to Divine: The Sarah Vaughan Project**  
**(Live at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola)**  
**Ann Hampton Callaway (Shanachie)**

by Alex Henderson

Although Ann Hampton Callaway has cited the late Sarah Vaughan as one of her influences, they came from different areas of the vocal world, the latter greatly influenced by bebop while the former's inspiration comes not only from vocal jazz but also cabaret, traditional pop and Broadway. Regardless, Callaway is undeniably good at what she does and pays tribute to Vaughan with likable results.

Vaughan had a long career, emerging in the mid '40s and continuing to record until her death in 1990 at the age of 66. Callaway salutes different parts of Vaughan's repertoire, acknowledging her passion for Brazilian music with Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Wave", love of the Duke Ellington songbook with "In a Mellow Tone" and Billy Strayhorn's "Chelsea Bridge" and fondness for Tin Pan Alley standards via the Gershwin's "Someone to Watch Over Me" and Jimmy McHugh-Dorothy Fields' "I Can't Give You Anything But Love".

Vaughan was an early supporter of bebop and Callaway reminds us of that fact on "A Night in Tunisia", which is usually performed as an uptempo burner, but here is a slow ballad reminiscent of the version Vaughan recorded at the start of her career back in 1944. Although Callaway sometimes emulates Vaughan's phrasing, a non-jazz influence also comes through on this release: Barbra Streisand. Callaway, in fact, has written songs for Streisand and one hears echoes of both on selections ranging from Erroll Garner's "Misty" and Stephen Sondheim's "Send in the Clowns" to Fred E. Ahlert's "Mean to Me".

Callaway plays it close to the vest, delivering the songs in a straightforward, accessible fashion, which owes as much to the theatrical field as it does to vocal jazz, and employs an impressive band of Dick Oatts (saxophones and flute), Randy Sandke (trumpet), Ted Rosenthal (piano), Dean Johnson (bass) and Tim Horner (drums) in a heavily arranged environment that doesn't offer a lot of room to stretch out.

For more information, visit [shanachie.com](http://shanachie.com). Callaway is at Metropolitan Room Oct. 22nd and Dizzy's Club Oct. 23rd with this project. See Calendar.