THE SOUND & SOUL OF KAMASI WASHINGTON BY DAVID FRICKE

JazzTimes

AMERICA'S JAZZ MAGAZINE

Bonus! 2016 JAZZ FESTIVAL GUIDE

BILL EVANS

With Eddie Gomez & Jack DeJohnette
Forgotten Studio Classic Unearthed!

KEN PEPLOWSKI
THE LOST ART OF ENTERTAINMENT

DOLPHY, HENDRIX & DEEP LISTENING BY BEN RATLIFF

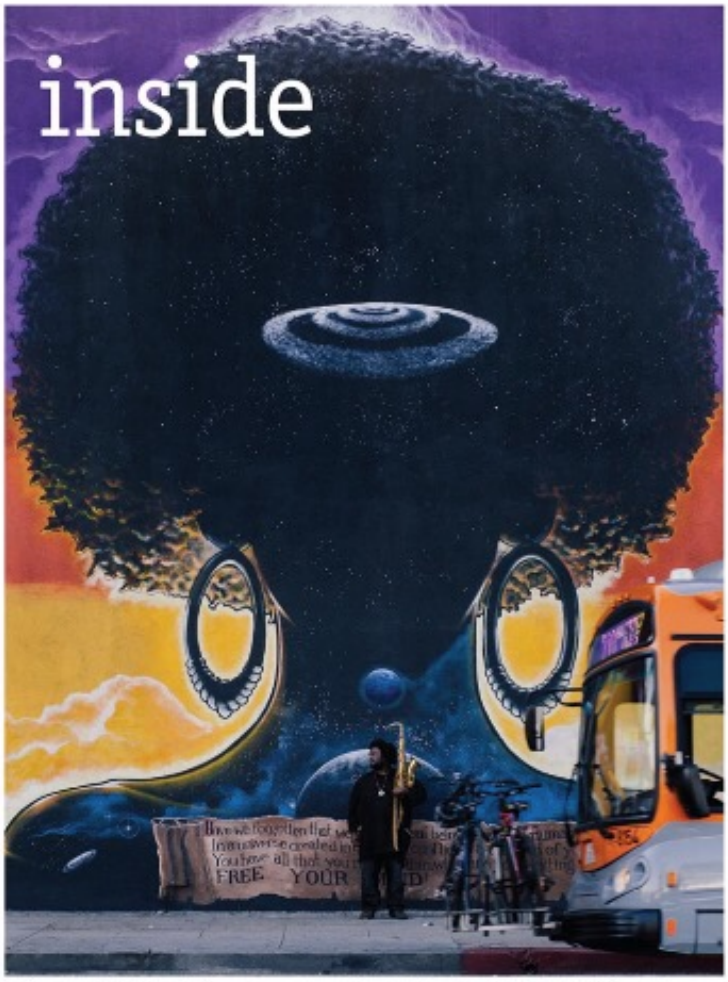
How Much Practice Makes Perfect?
Chris Potter Weighs In

REVIEWS!
Wynton's Sacred-Jazz Tour de Force
Sarah Vaughan's Vault Revelation

BIOPIC SHOOTOUT
MILES DAVIS vs. *CHET BAKER*

+ Vanguard Jazz Orchestra@50
George Lewis Jason Lindner on Bowie
Joe Locke Logan Richardson

inside



"Kamasi Washington's crossover is exciting in its velocity," David Fricke writes, "and striking in its routing through pop life." For more on Washington's ascent, see p. 44.

MAY 2016
VOLUME 46 NUMBER 4

18 **JT Notes** Editor Evan Haga on the comforts of a finely wrought CD package
20 **The Gig** Nate Chinen on Dan Weiss' inspired drum-history epic

22 OPENING CHORUS

22 **Hearsay** Vanguard Jazz Orchestra @50, an excerpt from Ben Ratliff's *Every Song Ever*, reviews of *Miles Ahead* and *Born to Be Blue*, Logan Richardson, news and farewells
32 **Before & After** Joe Locke
36 **Overdue Ovation** George Lewis

54 SOUND ADVICE

54 **AudioFiles** Brent Butterworth reviews Roon, TuneUp and other music-library software
56 **Chops** Chris Potter and Tootie Heath on what and how much to practice
58 **Gearhead** The latest in musical instruments, accessories and educational resources

59 REVIEWS

59 CDs
70 VOX

87 Jazz Directory
88 **Artist's Choice** Jason Lindner on the Musicality of David Bowie

38 BILL EVANS

In June 1968, Bill Evans, Eddie Gomez and Jack DeJohnette entered a studio in Germany's Black Forest and tracked one gorgeous standard after another. Now, after nearly half a century of languishing in the vault, that music can be heard in a new Resonance label release, *Some Other Time*. **By Aidan Levy**

44 KAMASI WASHINGTON

Acclaimed rock writer **David Fricke** thinks out loud about how the L.A.-raised saxophonist became a phenomenon in and out of the jazz scene, and about where he fits into the rich history of jazz/rock crossover.

46 KEN PEPLOWSKI

Conversing with *JT* publisher **Lee Mergner**, the master clarinetist and saxophonist discusses his boyhood family band, his early years in New York, the importance of onstage personality and why younger fans and musicians need to lighten up.

2016-17 INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL GUIDE P. 73

outside

AT JAZZTIMES.COM

MP3s

promotions - jazz MP3s

- ***JazzTimes Spins & Riffs***, a free podcast hosted by *JT* publisher Lee Mergner, with guest co-hosts including writer Bob Blumenthal, pianist Orrin Evans and harp virtuoso Brandee Younger
- Free tracks by Scott Colley, Leslie Pintchik and more

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

articles - columns

Coverage of the 2016 NEA Jazz Masters Tribute Concert with Gary Burton, Pharoah Sanders and Archie Shepp; live photos: Arturo Sandoval, Muhal Richard Abrams, Nolatet featuring Brian Haas, Mike Dillon, James Singleton and Johnny Vidacovich; live review: Mack Avenue SuperBand; plus online news and much more

Cover image of Bill Evans, Eddie Gomez and Jack DeJohnette taken by Giuseppe Pino in 1968. Courtesy of Resonance Records.
Cover inset and Table of Contents photos of Kamasi Washington by Mike Park.

Listen to the Bill Evans Trio's "These Foolish Things," from *Some Other Time*

Bill Evans at the MPS Records facility in Germany's Black Forest, 1968

GERMAN HASENPFLUG/COURTESY OF ANDREAS BRUNNER-SCHWER

LOST in TIME

AFTER NEARLY 50 YEARS, A BRILLIANT BUT FORGOTTEN STUDIO ALBUM BY **THE BILL EVANS TRIO,** RECORDED IN OBSCURITY IN GERMANY'S BLACK FOREST, IS UNEARTHED

By Aidan Levy

Unreleased recordings, especially the major discoveries, were usually tracked at concerts, often as bootlegs, and rarely if ever in a studio. *Some Other Time: The Lost Session From the Black Forest*, a newly discovered Bill Evans Trio album, is just such a rarity. As on John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme: The Complete Masters*, released last fall by Impulse!/Verve, unreleased studio tracks generally comprise outtakes from an iconic session. Yet this two-disc set, a sequel of sorts to Resonance Records' 2012 Bill Evans release, *Live at Art D'Lugoff's Top of the Gate*, is a strange case. It is the only studio album recorded by the Evans trio with Eddie Gomez on bass and Jack DeJohnette on drums, the personnel on Evans' 1968 Grammy-winning *Bill Evans at the Montreux Jazz Festival*, and almost no one knew of its existence until now, not even Evans' biographers. The story behind its clandestine production in Germany's pastoral Black Forest, and how it came to be locked in the vault for the past half-century, is a bit of a mystery.

THIS DISCOVERY ONLY DEEPENS the Evans myth, which can seem as impenetrable as his music is accessible. With his impressionistic style, legato phrasing and rootless voicings, Evans is undoubtedly one of the most influential pianists in jazz history, but his public persona was a cipher. There was Evans the painter, responsible for the chiaroscuro shading on *Kind of Blue*, the diffident aesthete in horn-rimmed glasses who wrote that album's poetic liner notes. Then there was Evans the tortured artist, *sprezzatura* in the fingers but not on the face—a reflection of his struggle with addictions to heroin and later cocaine, a battle he eventually lost at 51 in 1980. Always understated, Evans exemplified Hemingway's iceberg principle applied to the piano, conveying the sense that beneath the placid surface he went as deep as the Mariana Trench.

"Bill always seemed to be Bill. He just played beautifully in whatever situation," Gomez says, speaking recently in a phone interview. "Once he started playing, if there was an audience, he just got into the music, and it was almost like at the end of it, he would come out of a spell and would almost be surprised that there was an audience there listening."

The audience for *Some Other Time* was small, and the situation atypical, but this does not account for the odd circumstances surrounding its non-release. The album's quality could conceivably offer a potential explanation for its eventual fate, but this is not the case either. *Some Other Time*, released as a posh two-CD set on April 22, boasts a wealth of material, including much of the repertoire previously recorded by Evans—yet not with this trio featuring DeJohnette during his six-month stint. Lithe renderings of "You Go to My Head" and Evans' own "Very Early" are complemented by Gomez's percussive upper-register tonalities and DeJohnette's coloristic cymbal work, in addition to an intimate duo exchange between Evans and Gomez on "Baubles, Bangles & Beads." A masterful solo piano version of "Lover Man" has little in common with the gut-wrenching Charlie Parker rendition that may have kept such an album from the market, nor is *Some Other Time* plagued by the shoddy production value of a live bootleg or the crackle and pop of a poorly preserved acetate. Rather than serving to demythologize the man, this is a pristine record of Evans in

On June 20, 1968, Evans, Eddie Gomez and Jack DeJohnette (from left) record inspired tracks that will languish in Germany for nearly half a century. "I'm not sure [Evans] felt totally comfortable in these sessions, but I think he sounds marvelous," Gomez recalls.

his prime, charting a transitional mode from what critic Marc Myers, who wrote the liner notes, calls his "swinging romantic" period to his "percussive poet" phase, making it all the more significant to Evans completists.

So why was it never released?

WHEN THE ALBUM WAS RECORDED ON JUNE 20, 1968, in Villingen, no one intended for the tapes to languish inside the estate of the late Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer, the founder of the then-fledgling German MPS label. They were still in the family safe in 2013 when Resonance Records' Executive Vice President Zev Feldman made the discovery. "People are starting to call me the 'Jazz Detective,'" Feldman says.

Feldman, a rabid collector with 10,000 albums in his personal collection, 4,000 of them LPs, first heard of the Black Forest session at the 2013 jazzahead! conference in Bremen, Germany. "I had this question that I ask a lot of people when I meet them," Feldman says, sitting down recently at the Hungarian Pastry Shop on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. "I said to [the Brunner-Schwer family], 'Do you have any tapes of unreleased recordings?' And the son confided to me, 'Yes, but I have to tell you a secret. We have a studio album that Bill Evans did in 1968.'"

In 1968, Evans had an exclusive contract with MGM/Verve, and Brunner-Schwer owned the Black Forest tapes, so the prospect of distributing the album left MPS in a legal double bind. Decades later, it still took Feldman several years to finalize the deal with the various interested parties.

Born in 1927, Brunner-Schwer, known as HGBS, was the heir to an electronics fortune from the German SABA corporation, and had spent his adolescence listening to jazz broadcasts on the illicit American Forces Network during World War II. Starting in 1963 he began hosting house parties in Villingen, hiring the likes of Duke Ellington, George Duke and Oscar Peterson to perform. Peterson began making annual trips to the Black Forest, where Brunner-Schwer had a Steinway grand in his living room and honed his skills as an audio engineer. In 1968, Brunner-Schwer left SABA and founded Musik Produktion Schwarzwald (meaning "Black Forest"), which went on to release 700 recordings by an array of artists, from Jean-Luc Ponty to Joachim Kühn, until MPS was acquired by Polygram in 1983. An amateur pianist himself, Brunner-Schwer once had a Bösendorfer Imperial Concert Grand brought to the MPS studio exclusively for Friedrich Gulda. He also harbored an ambition to record Bill Evans.

Brunner-Schwer got his chance in 1968, when the Evans Trio headlined the second annual Montreux Jazz Festival. After the trio's performance on June 15, 1968, German critic and MPS producer Joachim-Ernst Berendt approached Helen Keane, Evans' longtime manager and producer, to make the overture, which Keane accepted on uncertain terms. "For unknown reasons, only a cursory agreement was drawn up, providing that the recording 'will not be released for commercial purposes without the written permission of Bill Evans and/or Helen Keane. A contract will be negotiated later,'" Friedhelm Schulz, the current manager of the studio in Villingen and a close friend of the Brunner-Schwer family, writes in a liner essay. Optimistically, an MPS catalog number was assigned.

GERMAN HASENPRATZ/COURTESY OF ANDREAS BRUNNER-SCHWER

ALWAYS UNDERSTATED, EVANS EXEMPLIFIED HEMINGWAY'S ICEBERG PRINCIPLE APPLIED TO THE PIANO, CONVEYING THE SENSE THAT BENEATH THE PLACID SURFACE HE WENT AS DEEP AS THE MARIANA TRENCH.

According to Schulz, who was not physically present for the recording, on June 20, Evans, 38, Gomez, 23, and DeJohnette, 25, traveled across the Swiss border to Villingen, presumably by train, made the recording in the state-of-the-art MPS studio over several rushed hours in the early evening, spent the night in a local hotel and left the next day without incident. On June 22, the trio performed for a radio audience in Hilversum, the radio capital of Holland.

Yet as matter-of-fact as it was, the session carried an air of the uncanny. Marlies Brunner-Schwer, HGBS' widow, the only member of the production crew still living, recounted the story to Schulz:

> *"It must have been a peculiar atmosphere that night in June 1968 in Villingen. The pianist sat fully swept up and focused on his music. He hardly spoke; he seemed absent, apathetic. But he played, as if it were the last time in his life. A recording session without repetitions, without talking, only interrupted by occasional cigarette breaks."*

Evans' apparent apathy was an atypical response to the verdant Black Forest vistas. "It was like a German fairy tale," Schulz says, speaking over Skype. "Musicians who came from America were usually there for two, three, five days in the studio. … Peterson liked it very much. George Duke very often said that he liked the southern German food," Schulz recalls, referring to the home-made venison, spaetzle and cakes Marlies Brunner-Schwer would serve in the studio. "In Germany we say 'Heile Welt' ['idyllic world'], where everything is in its right place."

DeJohnette has a slightly different account of the session. "It was kind of gray inside and not so warm," he remembers. "I know that Bill was having problems finding his groove in there, and that's probably why he was playing more percussive. He wasn't quite at ease in that studio."

According to DeJohnette, the session called for the type of abrupt adjustment that is a constant condition of touring. "I just play what the environment of the music is when I'm in it," he says. "I adapted to what Bill and Eddie were doing, and basically it was to color the music, which is what I do in most of the situations that I'm in—give it vitality and interaction. I'm like a painter. I keep time but I also do permutations within it, or I just play around the time, or I'm completely free of it."

Though he was not as rhythmically or harmonically free as DeJohnette, Evans appreciated the liberating influence of his adventurous drummer. "[DeJohnette's] very stimulating," Evans recalled to Marian McPartland. "He's a very creative person and plays piano himself, so he has a melodic approach to a song. As a matter of fact, he's getting me off my musical ass."

Gomez, who in 1968 had been in the Evans trio for less than two years, has yet another interpretation of the Black Forest session. "It was an intense tour, and I had forgotten about this album," Gomez says. "That whole southern part of Germany is beautiful and it's exhilarating and it also has a bit of mystery, too," he says. "Sometimes I block stuff that I don't enjoy that much, but the music sounds like we're all relatively comfortable."

According to Gomez, Evans had occasional off days, sometimes due to environmental factors, but that was not necessarily the case here. "From day to day and week to week and performance to performance, you can hear that he's either more relaxed than other times and seems to be enjoying himself more and is not in such a hurry," he says. Yet Gomez contends that Evans' percussive approach could very well be a strategy for group interplay rather than a sign of personal agitation. "I might be kind of percussive and maybe he is reacting to me," Gomez says, also noting that "I'm not sure he felt totally comfortable in these sessions, but I think he sounds marvelous."

If Evans felt uncomfortable, it was probably not for lack of audience. In the liner notes to *Alone*, his subsequent studio album, Evans implied that he was more at peace in private. "Perhaps it is a peculiarity of mine that despite the fact that I am a professional performer, it is true that I have always preferred playing without an audience," Evans writes.

Yet the string of live performances following the Black Forest session were by all accounts electrifying. The trio performed a successful month-long residency at Ronnie Scott's in London, and it seems little to none of the material from *Some Other Time* made the set list. "Embraceable You" became a Gomez feature, while "Nardis" was a springboard for DeJohnette to take flight; both were highlights of the Montreux album. "Bill played really great [at Ronnie Scott's], being in one place, with an audience, and being in the same space acoustically, so it was very creative," DeJohnette recalls. Miles Davis and Philly Joe Jones attended, and asked Dave Holland, who was the bassist for opening act Elaine Delmar, if DeJohnette would "tell Dave, 'If he could get a ticket to come over to the States, [Davis would] hire him.'" When Tony Williams formed Lifetime in 1969, DeJohnette left the Evans trio and joined Holland in Davis' group, solidifying what would become known in jazz lore as the Lost Quintet.

"As [Evans] went on, his playing got more conservative and less free, so for me, that's one of the reasons why I left," says DeJohnette. "I needed to explore." Gomez would remain with Evans until 1977.

Marty Morell replaced DeJohnette, staying with the Evans trio for seven years, and ostensibly, *Some Other Time* was forgotten. Friedhelm Schulz never even heard the tapes until Brunner-Schwer died in 2004. "We listened to a lot of music, but it was some kind of secret," Schulz says. "I think it was a personal thing between Helen Keane and Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer," he says. "After the difficulties, maybe it was not the highest priority."

Keane, who served as Evans' producer until his death, was a tough negotiator. "[Bill] was not arrogant. He was the kindest,

Orrin Keepnews, Scott LaFaro, Bill Evans and Paul Motian (from left) make jazz history at the Village Vanguard in 1961

ELEGANCE INCARNATE

Five more invaluable recordings by Bill Evans' various trios

Explorations

(Riverside, 1961)

Explorations established the Bill Evans cult. Evans' greatest interpreter, the critic Gene Lees, once described the experience of hearing his first Evans album: "Until then, I had assumed, albeit unconsciously, that I alone had the feelings therein expressed." Those feelings are implicit in the silences between Evans' chords, and in the quietude of his touch, and even in drummer Paul Motian's ambiguous, fleeting relationships with time. On "Nardis," Evans barely touches the theme and then trusts those feelings to bassist Scott LaFaro. With long, flowing lines derived from inner darkness, LaFaro takes those feelings deeper, and the piano trio is set free forever.

Waltz for Debby

(Riverside, 1962)

Along with *Sunday at the Village Vanguard*, its companion LP culled from the same sets, this is the most beloved piano trio album in jazz. Somehow (unlike *Kind of Blue*) it does not lose its magic through overexposure. Perhaps all the clinking glassware and chattering people in the Vanguard place this music in an eternal present. "My Foolish Heart" casts a spell so intense that the crowd feels its hush and temporarily quiets. LaFaro and Evans are now coequals, commingling ideas, dancing on Motian's shifting currents of air. The motivic development of "Some Other Time" is an objective correlative for otherwise inexpressible emotion. They never played together again. LaFaro died in a car crash 10 days later.

At the Montreux Jazz Festival

(Verve, 1968)

For 11 years, the Bill Evans Trio had Eddie Gomez on bass and many different drummers. Some were undistinguished, but not the one here. Evans' first Montreux album is unique in its pure, buoyant joyfulness, and Jack DeJohnette is the upthrust. Because of him, "Some Day My Prince Will Come" and "A Sleepin' Bee" take off and fly. Because of him, ballads accelerate, like "I Loves You, Porgy" and "The Touch of Your Lips." "Nardis" even includes a nasty drum solo. As for Gomez, he has been insufficiently recognized as a major badass. By himself for six minutes, he annihilates "Embraceable You." Five days later, the band entered the studio to record what would become *Some Other Time*.

I Will Say Goodbye

(Fantasy; rec. 1977, rel. 1980)

On the two takes of "I Will Say Goodbye," a Michel Legrand melody melts into the night, in a domain apart from time. This album by a stable Evans trio featuring Gomez and drummer Eliot Zigmund has everything the pianist is famous for: the rootless, pensive chord voicings, the revelatory key shifts, the subtle shadings of tone color. But technical descriptions cannot explain an artist's hold on us. For that we need metaphor. Gene Lees once described Evans' music as "love letters written to the world from some prison of the heart."

The Paris Concert: Edition Two

(Blue Note, 1980)

After Evans' death at 51 in 1980, recordings from his final years, authorized and otherwise, continued to appear. Two albums from a Paris concert with his last trio are among his permanent achievements. Evans was in failing health, but the young energy of bassist Marc Johnson and drummer Joe La Barbera inspired him to play with unprecedented daring and freedom. Perhaps Evans knew the end was near. He can barely keep up with the music that pours from him. *Edition Two* ends with a monumental 18-minute "Nardis," a song he played all his life. It is breathtaking when, at 6:36, following Evans' wild freeform prologue, Johnson and La Barbera enter and the trio ascends and walks the sky. THOMAS CONRAD

STEVE SCHAPIRO/COURTESY OF CONCORD MUSIC GROUP

"I SAID TO [THE BRUNNER-SCHWER FAMILY], 'DO YOU HAVE ANY TAPES OF UNRELEASED RECORDINGS?' AND THE SON CONFIDED TO ME, 'YES, BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU A SECRET. WE HAVE A STUDIO ALBUM THAT BILL EVANS DID IN 1968.'"

—ZEV FELDMAN; EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, RESONANCE RECORDS

sweetest man in the world, but people did not mess around with Bill," Keane, who died in 1996, said in an interview. "No one would ever cross a certain invisible line with him." But that line was often Keane herself.

In 1974, less than six years after the Black Forest session, Keane and Brunner-Schwer had a falling out while recording *Symbiosis*, a massive orchestral collaboration with Claus Ogerman, for MPS. In *The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation, and Communities in Dialogue*, Keane recalls that Brunner-Schwer recorded the album when Evans was in between contracts with Columbia and Fantasy. "After Claus Ogerman and I spent 12 hours one night mixing the album, when it was released, Brunner-Schwer had remixed the whole thing himself—added echo and reverb. He ruined it," Keane said. "Claus started a lawsuit. It was taken off the market and then reissued the real way." It was at this point, it seems, that with hundreds of other projects in the works, Brunner-Schwer decided to permanently shelve the tapes that would become *Some Other Time*.

IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT, and to, the Black Forest session. What narrative we are left with is the posthumous album, but it ultimately poses more questions than answers. At its best, a studio album captures lightning in a bottle; we don't see the rain, but sometimes, and almost inevitably, some rumbles find their way into the grooves, little disturbances and distortions that make the document less perfect but more interesting.

Listening to *Some Other Time* is to be transported to that time and place, to feel Evans' love for the music and the specter of his outsized inner demons. It is a record of a fleeting moment of transition, before DeJohnette moved on, before Gomez had finished "developing a voice," he says, and before Evans' untimely death, but somehow we also hear all that was to come. It is the surprise of opening a time capsule, where items that once seemed so important suddenly seem, in hindsight, significant for completely different, possibly tragic reasons.

"[Bill] would say, 'Try to avoid the bad habits. The world can be a dangerous place and there's a lot of bad habits one could fall into,'" Gomez recalls. "He felt that we were all very lucky to be making music, and that was our life's work. He felt that that was a kind of blessing." ***JT***