

## Don Braden Workin'

High Note HCD 7155 | ★★★★★

Don Braden (ts), Kyle Koehler (org) and Cecil Brooks III (d). Rec. 18 June 2006

Braden is fast becoming a favourite hard bop tenor man, good at squally shout-ups and seamless on ballads. His light, Getzian sound works wonders on a pretty piece such as 'She's On Her Way' before he bears down more raunchily on an original such as 'Where There's Smoke', building valuably over Koehler's chunky chords and Brooks' clattery drums. This set by Braden's Organic Trio was recorded at Cecil's, the club that Brooks runs at West Orange in New Jersey. The smallish crowd responds enthusiastically to a programme that balances Braden's ideas-driven, hard bop affiliations with his dreamier, more lyrical side (evident on the unaccompanied 'Movin' In'). Koehler mostly keeps the Hammond on a tight leash, adding to swing before he briefly lashes out, ahead of Brooks doing the odd Elvin Jones crash and bash. Braden's 'Brighter Days' is a swinger, with a compelling harmonic structure, and the trio clearly enjoy themselves on a couple of Roberta Flack tunes, especially the soulful 'The Closer I Get To You.' Peter Vacher

## Brass Jaw Bum

Keywork Records KWRCDD007 | ★★★★★

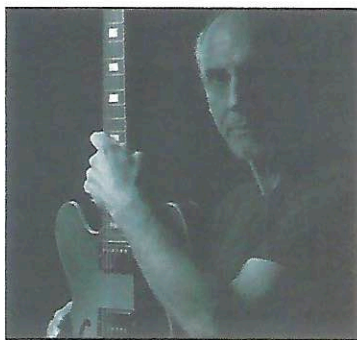
Paul Townsend, Martin Kershaw (as), Brian Molloy (ts), Allon Beauvoisin (bar s). Rec. 9-10 February 2006

Baritone saxophonist Allon Beauvoisin was also a member of the Glasgow-based Hung Drawn Quartet, and this band is in some respects a continuation of the approach taken by that group, notably in terms of clever melodic hooks and attractive arrangements that exploit the tonal and timbral possibilities of the instruments in clever fashion, while allowing the distinctive musical personalities of the players to emerge. Saxophone quartets are still thin on the ground in jazz (the inspiration here is more 29th Street than, say, Rova), and present considerable challenges to the players in maintaining full melodic, harmonic and rhythmic interest on four essentially similar single-line instruments. The quartet cope with those challenges in fine style, and their sharp-edged interplay brings the music vividly alive. The material is mostly self-composed, with the exception of Gershwin's 'Our Love Is Here To Stay' and Townsend's arrangement of Sting's 'Walking On The Moon'. Kenny Mathieson

## Larry Carlton Fire Wire

Bluebird 82876 70363-2 | ★★★★★

Larry Carlton (g), Jeff Babko (kys), Michael Rhodes (b), Matt Chamberlain (d), the Sapphire Blue Horn Section featuring Mike Haynes (t), Barry Green (tb), Mark South and Ron Moffat (s). Rec. date not given



## Thomas Chapin Ride

Playscape PSR 071595 | ★★★★★

Chapin (as, ss, f), Mario Pavone (b) and Michael Sarin (d). Rec. 1985

or indeed remember him best for his languid lines with Steely Dan. It has to be said that this album is something of a disappointment after the raw blues and direct emotions of *Sapphire Blue*. Although Carlton employs the same horn section on *Fire Wire*, they're conspicuously underused, spiking up the opening 'Inkblot' and blasting away merrily on the stand out tune, 'The Prince'. But that's about it, and a sad waste it is too. Carlton is also not best served by the leaden support he gets from the studio session men who motor away solidly in the background but rarely go into overdrive. Presumably, producer Czaba Petocz takes responsibility for this – it's no surprise to discover Petocz has produced the likes of Metallica, Lynyrd Skynyrd and, ahem, Ted Nugent. The irony is that Carlton could doubtless make a classic metal album (and there are moments of incandescence here, as you might expect) but this is all too self-consciously bolted together as a "Carlton goes rock" promo. Andy Robson

The cult of Chapin is a strong, fervent one. A cynic might argue that the fact of his premature death has played a part in the devotion but the music says otherwise. Chapin, a significant presence on the New York Knitting Factory scene of the last decade, was an excellent player with a quite awesome sound. His flute, largely beholden to the rhythmic and textural trickery of Rahsaan Roland Kirk among others, was very good but his alto playing was really something special. In his hands the instrument became a very weighty, robust sound source with a tenor saxophone-like resonance that was often given the kind of raucous rasp that Ayler would have been proud of. The trio format affords us perhaps the best opportunity to appreciate Chapin's gifts as the open, uncluttered space is gladly accepted by the leader and two excellent accompanists who are really on the boil at this North Sea Jazz Festival session. While the music has a clear avant-garde sensibility, the Afro-Arabic and rock undercurrents of the writing and arranging are well to the fore with the set concluding joyously, and quite logically, with a rip-roaring take on The Beatles' 'Ticket To Ride'. Kevin Le Gendre

## Moreira Chonguica The Moreira Project Vol. 1 – The Journey

More Star Entertainment | ★★★★★

Moreira Chonguica (as, ss), Najee (as, ts, ss), Mark Fransman (p, kys), Lucas Khumalo (b), Kevin Gibson (d) and John Hassan (perc) plus others. Rec. 2005

No relation to Airto, Mozambique-born saxophonist Moreira Chonguica is already a name in South Africa, where his Moreira Project specialises in "contemporary African fusion jazz". The reality though is that the 29-year-old's music is smooth jazz in disguise, complete with very sweet R&B vocal hooks and radio-friendly saxophone jaunts. Yet, as an example of the genre, Moreira's debut is clearly sophisticated and superior.

In keeping with the jazz of southern

Africa, the saxophonist favours songs that sing to the listener – invariably catchy and chorus driven. Not a million miles from the hooks of Marcus Miller or Courtney Pine's more commercial work, the leader's juicy saxophone tone is a definite plus – noodling warmly and elegantly over pretty grooves – 'Tacho da Velha (Mama's Cooking)' and 'Africa and the Blues'. Purists should certainly avoid, but *The Journey's* southern African roots make for an up-beat occasion. Tom Barlow

## Kelvin Christiane Piper At The Pearly Gates

Ka Music KC016 | ★★★★★

Kelvin Christiane (ts, ss, f), Mark Nightingale (tb), Alex Hutton (p), Rob Rickenberg (b) and Matt Home (d). Rec. 21 March 2006

This is the third of the saxophonist's albums to have come my way in the course of *Jazzwise* reviewing duties, and while I can't report any major advances on its predecessor, it is another solid session. The piper alluded to in the title is Johnny Piper, a drummer and friend of the saxophonist who died in 1999, and the disc is dedicated to his memory. All of the compositions are Christiane's own, and for the most part have a distinct early-1960s Blue Note feel to them. The writing is tidy and nicely constructed without being especially memorable, a judgment that could equally be applied to the saxophonist's soloing, which is accomplished on both saxophones, but rarely genuinely arresting. Mark Nightingale does his usual fine job as the second horn within the conventional post-bop set-up of the quintet, and Alex Hutton comps intelligently and solos cogently throughout. Kenny Mathieson

## Chick Corea Chick Corea and the Trondheim Jazz Orchestra

MNJ CD 001 | ★★★★★

Chick Corea (p), the Trondheim Jazz Orchestra and Erlend Skomsvoll (cond). Rec. 2000

This album documents Corea's first encounter with the Trondheim Jazz Orchestra, recorded at the Molde Jazz Festival in 2000. In January this year, he again hooked up with the band and the

## Regina Carter I'll Be Seeing You: A Sentimental Journey

Verve 09623 | ★★★★★

Carter (vln), Xavier Davis (p), Matthew Parris (b), Alvester Garnett (d), Dee Dee Bridgewater (v), Carla Cook (v), Paquito D'Rivera (clt) and Gil Goldstein (acc). Rec. March 2006

Talented, charming and smart, Regina Carter has the jazz-violin field pretty much to herself these days, certainly on the US circuit, so she can permit herself a little levity. This is unashamedly her novelty album, blending violin with clarinet and accordion in numbers that range anywhere from country and western ('Little Brown Jug') to Jewish vaudeville to 1930s dancehall swing. Dedicated to the memory of her mother, who died last year, the set list includes many old favourites. The opening track, 'Anitra's Dance' (originally issued by long-hair Norwegian hit-maker Edvard Grieg) was transcribed from a 1939 recording by the John Kirby Orchestra. Thankfully, the calibre of the participants prevents the album sinking into a swamp of nostalgia. Bridgewater breezes through 'You Took Advantage Of Me' like a latter-day Ella, D'Rivera and Goldstein apply contemporary ideas to their

Regina Carter

