

Six Sliders

Playing against type for trombonists, Swiss-born Samuel Blaser sounds more like a cantor than a blues shouter on much of *Pieces Of Old Sky* (Clean Feed 151; 55:56) ★★★½. His solo on the title composition—the long, slow-building piece that introduces the recording—begins and ends like a prayerful incantation over Tyshawn Sorey's well-placed cymbal accents. On "Choral I" and "Choral II" he combines with guitarist Todd Neufeld in quiet, spectral contemplation. By contrast, "Red Hook" features a pinballing rhythm line and aggressive, repetitive phrasing by Blaser.

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

A sly, slippery trombonist with exceptional technique, Luis Bonilla leaves no question about who's in charge on *I Talking Now!* (Planet Arts/Now Jazz Consortium 300977; 57:05) ★★★★★. His effusive personality dominates all eight original compositions, which are filled with rapid tempo and mood shifts. Like Charles Mingus, Bonilla has a preference for episodic writing and compelling textural juxtapositions. "Fifty Eight" begins by setting John Riley's funky drum pattern against a fulsome pairing of Bonilla's 'bone and Ivan Renta's sax, while "Uh, Uh, Uh..." jumps between loping rhythm, suspended time, hard bop and contemporary street beats.

Ordering info: trombonilla.com

As elegantly tailored as a Savile Row bespoke suit, Steve Davis' *Eloquence* (Jazz Legacy Productions 0901003; 69:18) ★★★½ spans generations in its dedication to jazz tradition. On three tracks, 90-year-old Hank Jones fits hand-in-glove with John Lee's understated electric bass, while three sextet pieces—with Roy Hargrove and Steve Nelson sitting in—swing and groove effortlessly. Davis' dark-toned trombone shares Jones' grace and wit, and J.J. Johnson's boppish arrangement of "When The Saints Go Marching In" gives the core quartet—with bassist Nat Reeves and the ever-tasteful Joe Farnsworth on drums—the ideal vehicle to display the timelessness of their venture.

Ordering info: jazzlegacyproductions.com

Relentlessly upbeat (even "April In Paris" cooks), *A Little Somethin'* (PosiTone 8054; 51:29) ★★½ is an effective showcase for the technique and tone of David Gibson, runner-up in the 2003 Thelonious Monk competition. The instrumentation of his quartet—rounded out by alto saxophone, organ and drums—is unusual, and makes for little variation in the overall sonic landscape. Add



Wayne Wallace:
rollicking contrasts

DAVID BELOVE

to that the lack of variety in the party-friendly mood, and the result seems more than a little one-dimensional.

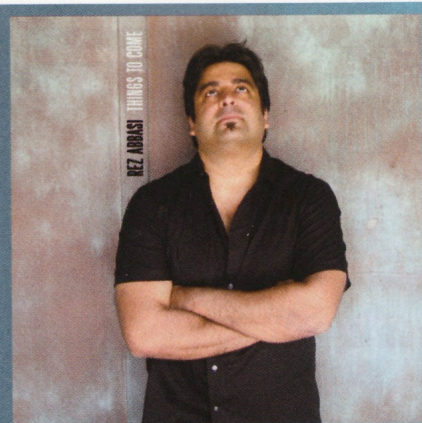
Ordering info: posi-tone.com

Joined by trombonists Julian Priester and Dave Martell on three of nine tracks, Wayne Wallace uses *Bien Bien!* (Patois 009; 55:21) ★★★½ to view the Spanish-speaking diaspora through a jazz lens and vice versa. He remakes "In A Sentimental Mood" as a bolero, turns Sonny Rollins' bop tune "Solid" into an Afro-Cuban blowout and casts John Coltrane's "Africa" as a pan-Latin anthem. The most impressive transformation is Eddie Harris' "Freedom Jazz Dance," which Wallace recreates as a Puerto Rican bomba. Not content with that alchemy, he sets up a terrific contrast of voices, with Kenny Washington singing Eddie Jefferson's lyrics in English, Orlando Torriente handling Spanish verses and a chorus of six backing it all up. This is a rollicking triumph of styles and genres that is fun from one end to the other.

Ordering info: patoisrecords.com

Recorded live on his houseboat in 2006, Wolter Wierbos' *Deining* (DolFiin 02; 60:48) ★★★ was likely a visual delight. Divorced from the visuals, the recording leaves much to imagination. Like many of the performances by Wierbos and his Dutch colleagues, much depends on nuance and sly interaction, not always the best thing to put across on disk. What works best here are the more aggressive pieces, like two lovely duets between Wierbos—one of the most expressive trombonists in improvised music—and guitarist Franky Douglas. **DB**

Ordering info: toonist.nl



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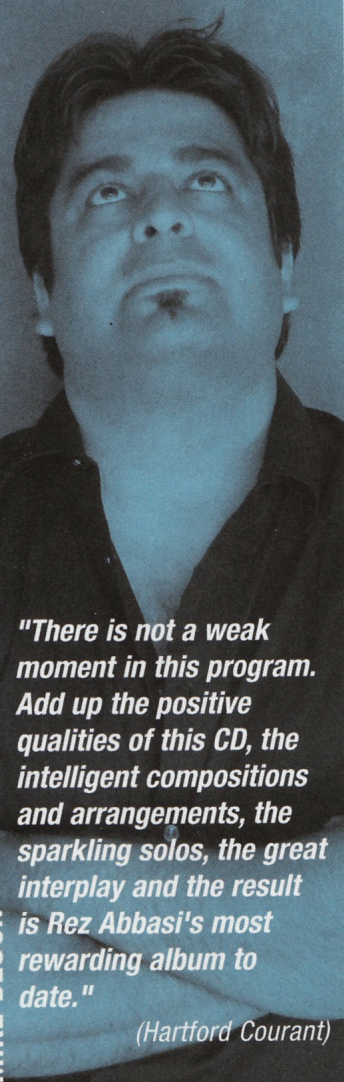
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"There is not a weak moment in this program. Add up the positive qualities of this CD, the intelligent compositions and arrangements, the sparkling solos, the great interplay and the result is Rez Abbasi's most rewarding album to date."

(Hartford Courant)



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