



BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

AUGUST 2013

Baltimore Jazz Composers' Showcase Winners	1
BJA at Artscape	2
Fay Victor: From Amsterdam to Mumbai to Baltimore	3
Jazz Meets Film Revisited	4
Jazz Jam Sessions	8
WEAA's Cool Jazz Pick of the Month	8
BJA Member Notes, Products and Discounts	10
Ad Rates and Member Sign-up Form	11

Jazz Meets Film Revisited



... jazz has returned to the silver screen in a new light, one that shines on its eclectic capacity to transform the moment into an infinite number of fantastic novelties.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MONICA LÓPEZ-GONZÁLEZ

From left: Monica López-González, César Orozco (piano), Adam Corson (saxophone), Jonathan Guo (bass)

The fifties were a golden moment for jazz and cinema. The frivolous and tantalizing subjects with which jazz was associated on *soundies*—three-minute 16mm films made during the 1940s—were transformed into more narratively suggestive scenes in many *film noirs*. Those *noir* jazz scenes themselves rapidly grew stereotypical, as they were inevitably linked to seedy gangsters, smoky nightclubs, and sexual innuendos. Robert Siodmak's classic 1944 *Phantom Lady*, with music by Hans J. Salter, is a case in point. Fortunately, Alex North's scoring for Elia Kazan's 1951 *A Streetcar Named Desire* paved the way for a new type of jazz in film. Jazz was no longer an extra on set; it was a legitimate narrative tool meant to express characters' emotional states, and to work as a second language interpreting visual imagery. The French New Wave filmmakers of the late '50s broke with all expectations as they challenged narrative, technical, and musical forms. Martial Solal's improvisations during the editing of Godard's classic first feature *Breathless* (1960) testify to that change of pace.

The epitome of improvised scoring to visual images, however, is Miles Davis's recording for Louis Malle's 1958 film *Ascenseur pour L'Echafaud* (*Elevator to the Gallows*). Fresh from co-directing the film *The Silent World* with Jacques-Yves Cousteau in 1956, 25-year-old Malle had just completed his

debut film about murder, mistaken identity, and unresolved love and needed it to be scored. Malle happened to meet Davis in a nightclub in Paris and asked him to score his film. Davis, Kenny Clarke, Barney Wilen, Pierre Michelot, and René Urtreger then recorded the soundtrack during a single evening in December of 1957. It was a first in many respects for all involved: Malle's first feature, Jeanne Moreau's first role as a gorgeous heroine, Davis's first film score, modal jazz's first screen soundtrack, and more importantly, the first time a film's soundtrack recorded what musicians improvised in the moment while watching the film. The soundtrack stands today as one of the most iconic jazz scores ever made for a film. Who can forget Moreau walking with aplomb through the rainy streets of Paris at night in search of her lover as Davis's trumpet sings her sadness, loneliness, and anger with modal perfection? As jazz critic Phil Johnson has observed, it's "the loneliest trumpet sound you will ever hear."

Notably brilliant jazz scoring of hard bop, free jazz, modal jazz, and Afro-Cuban styles continued through the '60s. Examples include Shirley Clarke's 1961 *The Connection*, with Freddie Redd and Jackie McLean; Irving Penn's 1965 *Mickey One*, with Eddie Sauter and Stan Getz; Michelangelo Antonioni's 1966 *Blow-Up*, with Herbie Hancock; and Peter

Yates's 1968 *Bullitt*, with Lalo Schifrin. This trend flourished in the 1970s (e.g., Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1970 *Notes for an African Orestes*, with music by Gato Barbieri; Bernardo Bertolucci's 1972 *Last Tango in Paris* with Barbieri; Martin Scorsese's 1976 *Taxi Driver*, with Bernard Herrmann), and 1980s (e.g., Jim Jarmusch's 1986 *Down by Law*, with John Lurie and Tom Waits). There were also a handful of films in the '90s, including Jon Amiel's 1990 *Tune in Tomorrow...*, with Wynton Marsalis; David Cronenberg's 1991 *Naked Lunch*, with music by Howard Shore and Ornette Coleman; and early 2000s (e.g., Spike Lee's 2006 *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts*, with Terence Blanchard). However, the concept of using improvised compositions has disappeared from the film world. As a cognitive neuroscientist who studies spontaneous musical production to understand the human creative capacity, and a photographer and filmmaker who characterizes the many layers of human emotions, I cannot find a valid reason why jazz is now so rarely a musical option for film scoring.

Perhaps jazz's association in the 1940s with criminality, sex, drugs, and nightclubs never left the non-jazz world's consciousness. But jazz has returned to the silver screen in a new light, one that shines on its eclectic capacity to transform the moment into an infinite number of fantastic novelties. On Sunday, July 21st I presented the culmination of my contemporary reenactment of Malle's and Davis's brilliant partnership at Artscape 2013. I projected my latest film, *Moments*, composed of five shorts about the six universal emotions, while local Baltimore musicians Adam Corson (saxophone), Jonathan Guo (bass), and César Orozco (piano), whom I selected from Peabody Institute, improvised a soundtrack live on stage. Like Malle, I met with the musicians beforehand to view the film, discuss the narrative, and play with musical possibilities. Nothing was scored, nothing was written down. The subsequent unfolding musical creativity that Malle experienced with Davis and his quartet, the Artscape audience experienced with my film, Corson, Guo, and Orozco. **Consider jazz in.**

– MONICA LÓPEZ-GONZÁLEZ

Editor's Note: *Streetcar*, which is not a film noir, was not the first film to use a jazz score. That honor goes to *The Strip*, a film noir that was released before *Streetcar*, in 1951, and that featured a score by Pete Rugolo, as well as performances by Louis Armstrong's band.

There's a way of playing safe, there's a way of using tricks and there's the way I like to play, which is dangerously, where you're going to take a chance on making mistakes in order to create something you haven't created before.

– DAVE BRUBECK

Mike Binsky's JazzArtistsManagement

PRESENTS AT THE EUBIE BLAKE JAZZ CENTER



Appearing in Baltimore for One Day ONLY!

SUNDAY, AUG. 18th 5 pm

★★★ JAZZ GREAT ★★★

LOUIS HAYES
QUARTET

featuring saxophone powerhouse

ABRAHAM BURTON

EUBIE BLAKE JAZZ INSTITUTE

847 North Howard Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

Tickets: \$25 advance/\$30 door/Students \$20 w/ID

ADVANCE TICKETS AT:

<http://www.instantseats.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.venue&VenueID=369>

Quite Place Books 410-466-1717 / JAM 410-922-0752

mikebinskyjazz@mindspring.com

FREE PARKING / HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE

FOOD & DRINKS AVAILABLE

www.eubieblake.org or 410-225-3130

COMING Sunday Sept. 22nd HOUSTON PERSON QUARTET!!!