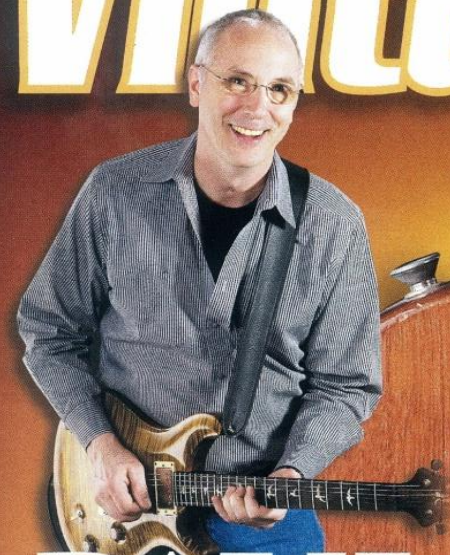


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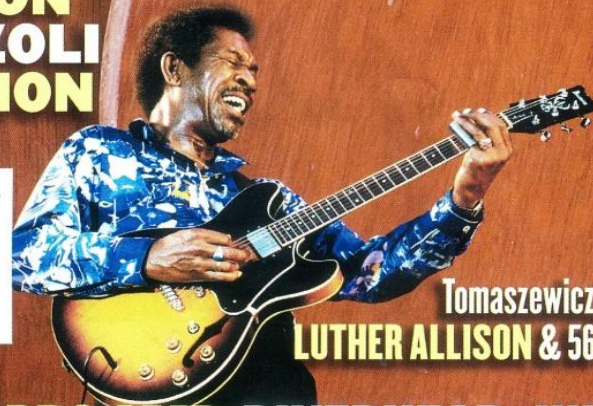
RUSSIAN (NON)REVOLUTION

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THE FIRST GUITARS MADE
BY PAUL SMITH. P.44

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Hit List



Ralph Lalama Quartet
The Audience
Mighty Quinn

Tenor saxophonist Lalama may be the leader on this ensemble's followup to 2006's *Energy Fields*, but the first solo out of the blocks is by guitarist

John Hart. On Wayne Shorter's "Marie Antoinette," he displays the same clean tone and spontaneity that have marked his own seven CDs – for Blue Note, Concord, and Hep.

Among Hart's many credits are his dozen-plus years with the late Jack McDuff – notable in that the organist's previous guitarists included George Benson, Pat Martino, and Mark Whitfield. Hart's many sessions include jazz singer Diana Hubka, saxophonist Bob

Belden, and multi-woodwind player Chris Potter.

On his own, he can be equal parts Jim Hall and Pat Metheny. The Hall element is to the fore here – heightened, not coincidentally, by Lalama's Sonny Rollins bent (two of the program's 10 tracks are associated with the saxophone colossus) and the unit's instrumentation (identical to Rollins' early-'60s quartet featuring Hall). But it's the intelligence and taste behind Hart's

playing that most resemble Hall; he's definitely his own man.

This CD was recorded in true jazz fashion, with no overdubs, and the musicians more than rise to the occasion. On Stevie Wonder's "Livin' For The City," Hart pulls triple duty, comping like an organ during the intro, then doubling the melody with Lalama's tenor, as well as shining on a bluesy solo.

Most of the repertoire is covers



Torben Waldorff,
American Rock Beauty (Artist Share) The title

is misleading; while here's plenty of rock mixed here, the feel is mostly jazz. Waldorff, saxophonist Donny McCaslin, keyboardist Jon Cowherd, and the rhythm section of Matt Clohesy and Jon Wikan paint vivid pictures with music full of great playing and soul. – JH



Delta Moon, *Hell Bound Train* (Red Parlor) With guitarists Tom Gray

and Mark Johnson playing mean slide guitars, Delta Moon is deep blues with a fury. The band's grooves are catchy and cool, and the setlist of mostly originals showcases fine songwriting. Hot stuff! – MD



Ringo Starr, *Y Not* (Hip-O/Universal) This is perhaps Starr's

strongest solo album—with the former Beatle co-writing all 10 songs (with Van Dyke Parks, Dave Stewart, Joss Stone, and others), including the poignant "Other Side Of Liverpool," and playing drums throughout. An all-star roster of guitarists – such as Stewart, Joe Walsh, Billy Squier, Keith Allison, and Steve Dudas, with some guy named McCartney on bass – doesn't hurt either. – DF



Tommy Filiault, *Brothers* (Self-distributed) Built-for-cruising

pop originals from a first-rate guitarist with a head for melody, harmony, and inventive chord changes. Not without heft, either ("Fabien"), there's plenty to sink one's teeth into, fabulous guitar ("Complain") and a very palpable sense of the joy of music making in every track. – RA

extra! EXTRA!



Teri Joyce, *Kitchen Radio* (Cow Island Records) Country

traditionalist Joyce distributes a magnificent record that is, in the immortal words of Marty Stuart, "...too country for country radio." Great songs, great vocals, and fine playing by Dave Biller and others make this stick with you. – JH



Lawrence Arabia, *Chant Darling/Bella Union* (Yep Roc) Wacky modern

pop from New Zealander James Milne under a nom-de-plume combines sweetness with cool. Beatlesque production at times overwhelms the melodies, yet Milne consistently delivers aural excitement. The processed lead vocals and textured backing tracks display the flair of a young musician at home immersed in the deepest recesses of a recording studio. – SS



Rich McCulley, *Starting All Over Again* (Self-distributed) The death

of two friends gave put his alt-rocker in a country mood. Melancholy and hope mix to create a record that inspires and makes the listener sigh in contemplation. McCulley's playing on various instruments holds it all together. – JH



Dailey And Vincent, *Sing The Statler Brothers* (Cracker Barrel)

Leading off with "Flowers on the Wall," this 12-song CD captures the upbeat character

of the Statlers' best work. While Dailey and Vincent don't take many liberties with the arrangements, two-part harmonies and the band's deft picking makes every song worth another visit. – SS



Joscho Stephan, *Django Nuevo* (Acoustic Music)

With youthful vigor and rock and roll enthusiasm, German Gypsy Joscho Stephan plays the Beatles' "Michelle," Santana's "Revelations," Mozart's "Rondo alla turca," and a host of originals in a nuevo Gypsy jazz style. The songs are packed with acoustic-guitar fireworks and dizzying runs. – MD



T-Model Ford, *The Ladies Man* (Alive Natural-sound) Pushing

90 and having a pacemaker installed shortly before this was cut, James Lewis Carter Ford sounds a bit tamer than on his 1997 Fat Possum debut, *Pee-Wee Get My Gun*. But he delivers strong covers of Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf and idiosyncratic originals like "Chicken Head Man" between chats with his backup band, fellow Mississippians GravelRoad. – DF



Walter Jr., *Standing on the Word* (Self-distributed)

Louisiana's finest serves up more great, funky music with guitar rhythms and solos from the soul. The only difference this time is the material is sacred. His playing and

vocals make you a believer. A true treasure. – JH



Derek Frank, *Let the Games Begin...* (Self-distributed) Bassist Derek

Frank lays down nonstop funky grooves on this collection of original funk and too-cool covers of Curtis Mayfield, Hall and Oates, and other soul classics. The band is tight and so retro: chunky guitars, flutes, horns, and plenty of keyboards. From the cover artwork to the music, Frank has got the vibe – in spades! – MD



Scott Greeson and Kevin Ludwig, *Wabash Gypsies* (Hoosier

Surf) Original instrumentals recorded mostly live without tracking, Greeson and Ludwig at times remind one of DeGrassi in the late '80s. "Tunnel of Trees" has a mellower, new-age feel. These two guys plus two guitars equals fine music. – SS



The Hepcats, *Meet The Hepcats* ('78) (Hepcat) The

storyline about guitar-playing cartoon cats is cute (and would make for great video), but the bottom line is that surf instrumental pioneer Paul Johnson shows he can play a lot more than "Mr. Moto" and "Squad Car." Great multi-acoustic arrangements of everything from "Jambalaya" to "Lullaby Of Birdland," from "Midnight In Moscow" to "Stars And Stripes Forever." – DF

Drink Up Buttercup, *Born and Thrown on a Hook* (Yep Roc)



An omnivorous approach to tunesmithing, this is theatrical like

Queen but rude as the Stranglers. The band luxuriates in an aural landscape populated by effects, synths, and tracks layered thick. Want to stretch your ears a bit? Take a big toke on *Born and Thrown on a Hook*. – SS



Rebecca Rippey, *Telling Stories* (Rebecca Rippey Laney) With a

girlish voice and grown-up pop sensibilities, Rippey and her autobiographical songs operate from where a seasoned – and lucky – Taylor Swift may yet reach. Rippey and Terry Wheeler's acoustic guitars and Douglas Barnhill's electric shine, but cellist Victoria McLaughlin elevates things a notch or three. – RA



Lionel Loueke, *Mwaliko* (Blue Note) Hav-

ing recorded with jazz legends like Herbie Hancock and Charlie Haden, the West African guitarist is intricate and rhythmic one moment, almost New Age atmospheric the next. Originals with spare backing and vocals by Angélique Kidjo, Esperanza Spalding, and Loueke himself are contrasted nicely with a guitar/drums duet on Wayne Shorter's "Nefertiti." – DF



Ken Will Morton, *True Grit* (Sojourn Records) Guitar-

ist/songsman Morton's first release was a double album basically split electric/acoustic. But the country-ish rocker shows no signs of running out of creative melodies and intelligent, engaging lyrics with this follow-up. "Gamblin' Man's Blues" is one of several examples here of Morton at his clever but heartfelt best. – RA