

Vibraphonist **Joe Locke** opened the first of two sold out Friday night sets at Mezzrow (Jun. 9) – with his trio featuring Jim Ridl (piano) and Lorin Cohen (bass) – playing a rubato four mallet improvisation, the metallic sound of his chords echoing throughout the intimate space. The trio then dynamically morphed into the leader’s “Betty One Note”, a thinly veiled contrafact based on the chord changes of the Benny Golson classic “Along Came Betty”; all three soloed with hardbopping aplomb. Changing pace, they followed with Brazilian session guitarist Conrado Goys’ exhilarating arrangement of the Carpenters’ 1970 pop hit “(They Long To Be) Close To You” (Burt Bacharach/Hal David): Locke began with an ethereal unaccompanied vibraphone prelude before launching into the well-known melody over a racing bass line that buoyed his fiery improvisation as well as Ridl’s sparkling solo. Segueing into Wayne Shorter’s elegant “Miyako” (which Locke confessed to have never played before), the band exuded unabashedly lush beauty. The remainder of the set, featuring three songs from Locke’s 2023 release, *Makram* (Circle 9), highlighted each player’s skill as composer. Cohen’s “Interwoven Hues” had the group swinging the pretty melody over a potent walking bass line. Ridl’s “Song for Vic Juris”, a moving tribute to the late guitarist, began with classically tinged solo piano before moving into the waltzing melody. The set ended with the trio digging in powerfully on the new album’s intrepid title track, Locke’s dedication to Lebanese bassist Makram About Hosn. — *Russ Musto*

Let’s face it, **Nels Cline** is the guitarist we need in these times: daringly collectivist, insistently experimental, casually artful and possessing astonishing technical skills. It’s been a long time since Hendrix’ “Manic Depression” drove him to embark on this career, cutting lanes through jazz, rock, Tom Verlaine and countless other types of music. For his concert at Le Poisson Rouge (Jun. 2), his hand-picked Consentrik quartet absolutely flourished in the moody, smoky atmosphere. Ingrid Laubrock (tenor, soprano), Chris Lightcap (bass) and Tom Rainey (drums) are all seasoned veterans at the height of their powers. The venue was jam-packed with listening enthusiasts, while the gripping, interwoven sounds spilled off the stage. The music ranged from ECM-like (“23”, “You Noticed”) to Zappa-esque. Laubrock, long established as a vital voice on reeds, seems at a new, inspired level of artistry, just as comfortable with tempo-less, rubato sobbing and wailing over guitar lines (the effect of this interplay with Cline: magical) as with burning intensity. Lightcap also demonstrated utter brilliance in both rhythm duties and independent forays in which notes seemed to ricochet off his soundboard, and even when Rainey was left maintaining the groove, his solo flights were songs in themselves (“The Bag” by Cline was written specifically for the drummer). Throughout the evening, the music shredded boundaries (“Sotomi” in particular), incorporating punk rage and modal play (read: more of what we need). — *John Pietaro*

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Joe Locke @Mezzrow

ALAN NAHIGIAN



Nels Cline @Le Poisson Rouge

Leading his quartet with Ron Jackson (seven-string guitar), Paul Beaudry (bass) and Vince Ector (drums), versatile multi-instrumentalist **TK Blue** appeared at The Django (Jun. 1) and delivered a set that reflected his versatility and years of experience working with Randy Weston, Abdullah Ibrahim and Little Jimmy Scott. Kicking things off on alto saxophone, he launched into his longtime employer Weston’s staple, “African Village Bedford Stuyvesant”, his tart-toned horn soaring soulfully on the dancing melody, after which Jackson took off on a harmonically deft improvisation, followed by lyrical bass and roaring drum solos. Things got downright funky on Blue’s “Follow the North Star”, which drew on the sound of electric Miles Davis, Jackson’s bluesy guitar ringing out thick dissonant chords with Blue’s alto over pounding drums in a solo tagged with a quote from Davis’ “Jean Pierre”. Switching to flute, the leader calmed the crowd with an unaccompanied introduction to his pretty “A Single Tear of Remembrance”, a Brazilian-flavored outing that had the audience swaying in their seats. Blue’s ringing solo kalimba introduced “The Wise One Speaks”, a bluesy flute feature that he dedicated to Weston. From his soon to be released Arkadia album *The Tide of Love*, he was back on alto for the standard “That’s All”. Vocalist Eleanor Rae sat in on “All of Me”, before the set ended with the band’s theme song, John Coltrane’s “Mary’s Blues”. (RM)

The scene: a reconstructed Brooklyn garage serving as a performance space and gallery, within the million-dollar view of the Williamsburg Bridge. 411 Kent (Jun. 10) played host to another of the large gatherings it’s known for, in this case the closing night of the **Infrequent Seams Festival**. Presented by Anti-Social Music and the iconic S.E.M. Ensemble, Infrequent Seams has been bringing together a disparate group of new music purveyors for several years now. Hosted by bassist James Ilgenfritz, the raw musical elegance opened with “Liken To”, an eight-movement work by Aaron Jay Myers for solo violin. Nicole Parks’ performance of the piece made colorful use of extended techniques, with modernist rapid bowing, terrorist dynamics and false harmonics. The violinist stayed onstage as Ilgenfritz, Andrew Drury (percussion) and Thomas Buckner (vocals) joined for an improvisation blending legato melodic fragments into fierce hypnotics. The evening progressed with numerous variations of personnel. The trio of Buckner, Ilgenfritz and Drury developed patterns of hyper-linguistics, throat-singing and klangfarbenmelodie. Drury taunted with bass marimbula (a bass thumb piano), gong and elephantine sounds on a Gretsch floor tom (his specialty). Later, pianist Alexis Marcelo, caught in a beautiful time warp between ’20s Paris and NY now, mixed it up with veteran multi-instrumentalists JD Parran and Daniel Carter. At points, the latter two on flutes seemed to satirize “Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun”, but then moved beyond and, as expected, far out. Les Six tangoed with Cecil Taylor here and no one complained. (JP)

## WHAT’S NEWS

TNYCJR Co-Founder and Editor Emeritus Andrey Henkin has developed a website, “**Jazz Passings**”, dedicated exclusively to up-to-date jazz musician obituaries, which currently dates back to 2012. You can search by name, year, month or date and check out the monthly blog posts for updates. For more info visit [jazzpassings.com](http://jazzpassings.com).

**Jean-Michel Basquiat’s** *Now’s the Time* (a 1985 seven-foot-wide acrylic and oilstick on wood work, depicting a warped 45rpm record of Charlie Parker’s jazz classic) sold for over \$28 million at a Sotheby’s auction in May. The self-taught Neo-Expressionist painter Basquiat (1960-1988), whose Haitian-American and Puerto Rican heritage informed much of his work (from late ’70s NYC graffiti to later collaborations with Andy Warhol), dedicated numerous jazz-inspired works to the likes of Bird, Dizzy Gillespie, Lester Young and others. For more info visit [sothebys.com](http://sothebys.com).

Sher Music Co. has published *The Practice Notebooks of Michael Brecker* (who passed away in 2007), offering fans unique insight into the tenor saxophone legend’s improvising acumen, musical theories and mental process. With over 700 exquisitely engraved entries chronicling 35 years, there are first-hand accounts from colleagues and bandmates including pianist Richie Beirach, saxophonist Dave Liebman, bassist John Patitucci and many others. For more info visit [shermusic.com](http://shermusic.com).

The 2023 JAJSF (**John Abercrombie Jazz Scholarship Fund**) grant recipients have been announced and include guitarists Steven Amoikon and Maurice Mosely. Named after the great guitarist (who passed away six years ago this August), JAJSF sets out to honor his legacy with an endowment that provides essential tuition support to musicians each year. Abercrombie was a true original and innovator throughout his career, from his first records with Johnny “Hammond” Smith and the group Dreams to the Gateway trio (with Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette) and his long association with ECM Records. For more info visit [johnabercrombiejazzfund.org](http://johnabercrombiejazzfund.org).

As part of the NYC Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment’s celebration of New York Music Month, **Greenwich House Music School** has been offering free studio rentals since the beginning of June and through July. For more info and registration details, visit [greenwichhouse.org](http://greenwichhouse.org).

Living jazz legend, octogenarian pianist **Herbie Hancock** received an Honorary Doctorate Musical Arts Degree from Manhattan School of Music (MSM) at the school’s commencement ceremony on May 18. Hancock is an alumnus of MSM, Class of 1962. For more info visit [msmny.edu](http://msmny.edu).

The new, 140,000 square foot **Louis Armstrong Center** opens in Queens on Jul. 6, with an exhibition titled *Here to Stay*, curated by Jason Moran, pianist and Kennedy Center Artistic Director. The new center will house 60,000 items from the archives of Louis and Lucille Armstrong in addition to a 75-seat venue offering concerts, films and lectures. The Louis Armstrong House Museum will present a garden concert featuring vocalist Catherine Russell on Jul. 4, the birthday Armstrong celebrated (he was actually born on Aug. 4, 1901). For more info visit [louisarmstronghouse.org](http://louisarmstronghouse.org).

Osaka-born, NYC-based pianist **Eri Yamamoto’s** film *A Woman With a Purple Wig* (named after her fourteenth and most recent release as leader) recently won the prize for Best Music Video at the prestigious Big Apple Film Fest. Directed by Aleksandra Szczepanowska, it depicts the powerful music that came from the pianist’s experiences as an Asian woman living in New York through the pandemic. For more info visit [eriyamamoto.com](http://eriyamamoto.com).