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**NICK MACLEAN/Can You Hear Me?:** An important Canadian jazzbo makes his solo piano debut after cleaning up in various sounding crews and getting notice from some heavy hitters that know their apples. Clearly a cut above the usual solo piano set, he's got the skills to pay the bills and keep you in thrall for two discs. Bouncing between originals, covers and improvs, this is a cat so many know well but you could stand to get to know better. A real wiz kid!  
(Browntasauras)

**MIKE NAGODA/Outside the Box:** Good thing for Nagoda that he's in Canada because in our Republican world, he'd be looked as someone with everything going against him. The funny thing is-- he doesn't play like it. A guitar slinging, jump blues belter, this kid could give pointers to those with everything in their favor. An unstoppable force, you need him at your next party because he is the party. Hot stuff.

**CHRIS TRINIDAD/Certain Times:** Trinidad has put together a suite of tunes inspired by his early years in San Francisco leavened by meetings he's had along the way. A spirited work that draws on the left leaning English progressive jazzbos that knew how to rock as well, this is moving and grooving instrumental work that prides itself on being out of the ordinary but doesn't wander off the reservation. Solid stuff that'll take you back to good places and good times.  
(Iridium 2014)

**CHRIS TRINIDAD/Changing Tides:** Where does creativity end and restlessness start? Trinidad battled the pandemic by revisiting his "Certain Times" work with a big band recreation of same but doing it via technology with none of the players being in the same time zone let alone the same anything else. The combo work is nice but this might have been meant for big band all along. Ala variations on a theme, maybe? Whether you view both works as different sides of the same coin or not, this is really cooking stuff whether you bookend them or not. Well done.  
(Iridium 2021)

**JOHN TAYLOR TRIO/Decipher:** Going deeper into the MPS catalog, we get a 1973 date from a contemporary of Keith Jarrett that might have wanted to be the man who wanted to be Jarrett. With a Tony Levin you don't know on drums, this trio knows how to raise the roof and play like there's no tomorrow. A veteran of working with period progressives, this second set finds him staking out his own turf in the mainstream with the proper high octane flourishes. If you haven't heard him before, prepare to give your ears a workout. Hot stuff.  
(MPS)

ART VAN DAMME/*Ecstasy*: The pre-eminent jazz accordionist found himself having to hie it off to the Black Forest to find anyone that wanted to record him once Beatles washed over everything. This 1967 date that finds him in the company of locals is a sweet date that is like a low key version of the Horst Jankowski easy listening stuff popular at the time. Since Van Damme was around in the early 40s, he never lost his classy vibe and that seems to keep this contemporary and non-clichéd today. Leave your pre-conceived notions at the door, there's nothing corny about anything going on here on this set of tracks that were already chestnuts back then.  
(MPS)

JOE PASS/*Intercontinental*: As sweet as all of Pass' solo dates on Pablo were, this trio set with Eberhard Weber and Kenny Clarke on a set of refashioned pop tunes from various periods is an ear opening, eye popper. Killer stuff played so deceptively simply, this really shows just how much genius he had in his finger tips. Wowsah, yowsah!  
(MPS)

CLARK TERRY/*Clark After Dark-The Ballad Artistry of Clark Terry*: The cat that used to sneak teen aged Miles into St. Louis jazz clubs gets to face off against a 50 piece orchestra with just his flugelhorn on a set of ballads that just plain puts all those Jackie Gleason mood records to shame no matter who really played on them. Maybe in today's short attention span times you don't need that many slow albums, and if that's the case, this is one you really need. Just killer stuff from the craftsmanship to the playing.  
(MPS)

GREG AMIRAULT/*News Blues*: Snazzy, snappy swinging guitar work from a quartet that has 20 years under it's belt in various formations. Each player brings something unique to the fore, everyone gets some and the end result is a solid groover that just doesn't quit. Mostly originals, this is a fine example of how dandy it is when everything is working and the gas is on high. Well done.  
(Cupfa 2)

CARN DAVIDSON 9/*History of Us*: They may not record often but when they do, serious recognition follows. Their third album finds them working on some personal suites about their family's travails in terms of getting to where they are. A solid and deep listening effort, this jazz/instrumental work is almost cinematic in scope and the seven horn line up is put to really good use in giving the music even more dramatic impact. Solid stuff for those times you have to go decidedly up market.  
(Three Pines)

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that doesn't sound lame.

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