

Genius Takes Many Forms

By Kevin C. Madigan

Thelonious Monk with John Coltrane—*The Complete 1957 Riverside Recordings* (Riverside)



A brief collaboration in 1957 of two jazz giants, pianist Thelonious Monk and saxophonist John Coltrane, is still bearing fruit years later. In addition to Blue Note Records' 2005 release of the long-lost Carnegie Hall concert, we now have this double-disc set, which wraps up everything the two recorded during their lamentably short time together. Both men were at the top of their game that year, playing live sets at New York's Five Spot Club. On this release, which encompasses their studio work, even false starts, rehearsal versions and mistakes have a fascinating resonance.

The first disc starts with Monk, Coltrane and bass player Wilbur Ware attempting two takes of "Monk's Mood," and various stabs at "Crepuscule With Nellie" and "Off Minor." Disc two presents well-known pieces such as "Ruby My Dear," with Hawkins joining in—a gem and the best piece of the set.

Detailed liner notes reflect the unique perspective of producer Orrin Keepnews, who was present at every session. Throughout these recordings, it's Monk who is in charge, but the famously taciturn pianist is more than generous with Coltrane and the other players. He was lucky to have them.

Jeremy Enigk—*World Waits* (Lewis Hollow)

Having fronted Sunny Day Real Estate and The Fire Theft, two eclectic pop bands that were cult favorites, Jeremy Enigk loves grand gestures. Just to make sure you're paying attention, he introduces his second solo album with a piece called "A New Beginning," with a sneaky, growing guitar refrain that leads into a burst of luscious orchestration, strings swirling all the way and barely a minute and a half long. No lyrics necessary.

Enigk, who wrote all the words and music for *World Waits*, is not afraid to borrow ideas, but is there anyone in rock 'n' roll who hasn't? "River To Sea" includes a musical passage from, of all things, "Happy Christmas - War Is Over" by John Lennon, and it fits in just fine. Enigk is also a fan of Elvis Costello and the master himself, Bob Dylan, and he wears his influences proudly.

The gestation of the record took ten years, but then this artist is known as something of a perfectionist, readily admitting that his musicians need to tell him when enough is enough.



Mindy Smith—*Long Island Shores* (Vanguard)

One Moment More, Mindy Smith's debut, had critics salivating and made her live shows indispensable. She made a big impact in a short amount of time. A crystal clear voice, lovely, personal songs, and endorsements from the likes of Dolly Parton and Patty Griffin didn't hurt either. Her new work is equally satisfying, and Smith seems settled and secure, not allowing the increased attention to affect her outlook. This portends well for her career.

Smith has made no secret of her spiritual leanings, but wisely avoids bludgeoning the listener with them, using subtlety where others use bombast. She includes a love song to her adopted state of Tennessee, letting us know at the same time what she listens to: "I can see stars shining in your night / Your daytime seems like Cash and Patsy Cline." The song "Long Island Shores" is about returning to the place of her childhood, and makes reference to her late mother, who was also captured to poignant effect on *One Moment More*. Luckily, this album works as well as its predecessor.

Worthy of Mention: Re-issues from reggae pioneer *Studio One* (Heartbeat) are now available, in a splendid series of re-mastered titles celebrating 50 years of this great genre. The Scottish label Greentrax continues to produce high-quality traditional folk music, and their standout artists Kathleen Macinness, Bodega, The Whistlebinkies and Dick Gaughan all have new material on the market. Versatile producer, composer and singer T Bone Burnett has a new recording, *The True False Identity* (Columbia) and a comprehensive retrospective, *20/20: The Essential T Bone Burnett* (Legacy) out now. ➔

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