

New Music For July 26th

By [Paul Wilson](#) | July 26, 2019 6:00 AM

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Charlie Roth - "I'm The Smile" - Self Released

Folk singer Charlie Roth writes he smiles a lot when he performs. He does so because he's happy doing something he loves to do. The eighth release by Roth is a mostly folk based work and something that could also qualify as easy listening. And on one or two tracks, the term "rock" might be possibly applied. With simple arrangements spearheaded by Roth's guitar, he sings of life, love and current issues. Very poignantly, one song is about his Mom and the pain he feels at her loss. He also sings about his Dad and how he treasures their time together now that his Dad has become elderly. While he makes his home in Minnesota, the album was mixed and recorded in Dripping Springs, TX. Not the go to destination for making a record but many of the artists Roth has long admired are from there and he wanted to record with them. All in all, great music, easy to listen to and perhaps best of all, music that tells a story.



Overall: 8

Sonics: 8


Ian Wardenski Quintet - "Collective Thoughts" - Self Released

Ian Wardenski certainly has an impressive musical educational background. He began his studies at age 15 at the Creative Music Institute in Emmaus, PA. He continued at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, CA where he received a BA in Music. His Masters work in Music Theory was completed at Duquesne University in Pittsburg, PA. And to top it all off, he holds a Ph.D. in Music Theory from Catholic University in Washington, DC. Putting all this education to work, Wardenski has released a straight-ahead jazz work that is part chamber music, part improvisational jazz. Now don't let that description scare you into thinking this is not superior music. Because that is what it is, within the confines of traditional jazz. I found this work to be very melodic and yet, was surprised at the change ups and how the pace and tempo flowed along. I'd say Wardenski hit this nail right on the head.




Overall: 8


Sonics: 8



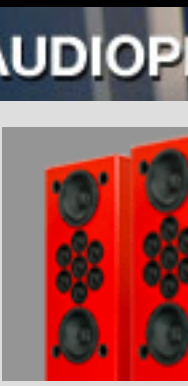
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Larry Corban - "Emergence" - Nabroc Records, Inc.

Suffice it so say that Larry Corban has worked with so many noted musicians that listing them all is not possible. All that experience has served him well as an earlier release, "Corban Nation" was ranked on four different jazz charts from #18 to #1, depending on which jazz chart was keeping score. In his fifth and most recent release, Corban sets down eight tracks of straight up, traditional jazz. And through them all, Corban is using a burgundy Gibson L-5 for all the guitar work. He is joined by the traditional jazz instruments of bass, piano, drums and saxophone. All throughout this release, each musician takes his turn at some measure of a solo showcasing his own particular skills. While this is traditional jazz, it is also, on most tracks anyway, upbeat and in possession of a pretty good tempo. I found this to be a highly listenable work of traditional jazz and one that kept my interest - meaning I didn't feel like I wanted to skip to the next track. Really good, this one. I'd say thumbs up.

Overall: 8

Sonics: 8

Hazel Mitchell-Bell - "Stronger Than Ever" -- Self Released

When I initially picked up the CD case and looked at the cover picture my first thought, I'm almost ashamed to admit, was that Mitchell-Bell looked like someone's grandmother. I frankly didn't know what to expect having never heard anything by her before. What I discovered about ten seconds later, after loading the CD and pushing play, is that this lady has a superior voice. I mean very easy, without strain, and sounding like she could sing all day long if necessary. Producer Vince Evans said of her: "...every once in a while, someone comes along that is truly extraordinary - this is that someone." Stylistically the thirteen tracks are covers of timeless classics from the Great American Songbook. Backed by an eleven piece, what, call them an orchestra, Mitchell-Bell never seems overshadowed by the musicians. She holds her own with style and grace and music just flows along. Sit and enjoy a superior vocalist who can easily, very easily in fact, deliver the goods.

Overall: 8.5

Sonics: 8

Rich Willey's Bopstism Big Band - "Down & Dirty" - Wise Cat Records

Looking at the CD cover I immediately thought, "my stars, how many musicians are there in this group?" Answer, and according to the liner notes, forty-six. That is more than a big band ensemble, that's a symphony orchestra. And with track names like "Boogie Feast," "Dancing Hippo," "Funk Heap," and of course, the title track, I thought I was probably in for a pretty good time. I'm not sure how this work should best be classified. I mean, the words "big band" shows up right smack dab in the title. And then there are all those many musicians which also says big band. But for whatever reason, I didn't get that impression. I mean, there are clearly elements of big band styled jazz, but also funk, Latin and shoot, even a bit of good ole rock and roll. I was tappin' my foot and bouncing around in my listening chair having a great ole time. This is fun music, regardless of how it might be classified.

Overall: 8.5

Sonics: 8



Eyal Vilner Big Band - "Swing Out!" - Self Released

I had not even looked all that closely at this CD when I realized I had reviewed one of their works before. What I liked about Vilner in his earlier work and in my [review](#), I liked even more in this one. Stylistically, the same big sound with a large orchestra. Vilner's mission is to promote and even resurrect swing music. On his latest release, he furthers that goal by devoting the compositions and arrangements to dance. So, this is an upbeat, frolicking feel good work. In fact, as much as I enjoyed the previous work I reviewed, "Almost Sunrise," I enjoyed this one even more. I'll admit, I get really excited by an up tempo, foot tappin', barn burnin' song and "Swing Out!" does that with aplomb - throughout almost the entire CD. There are twelve works of both originals and well as covers interpreted by Vilner's vision of danceable big band music. If this work is any indication of Vilner's dedication to resurrecting big band music, my guess is he's on the right track.



Overall: 9

Sonics: 8

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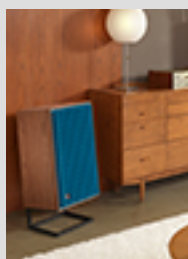
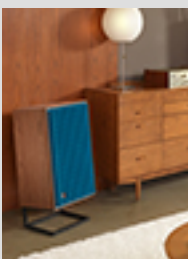
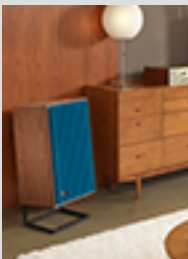
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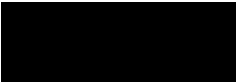
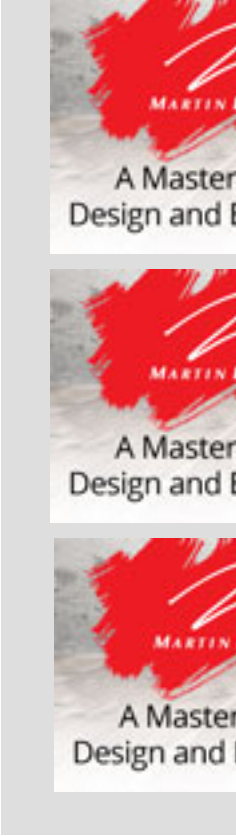
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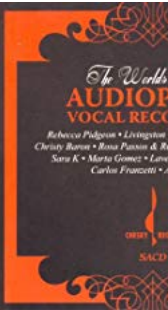
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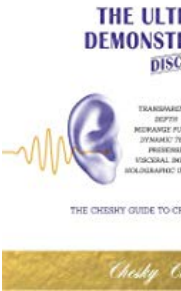
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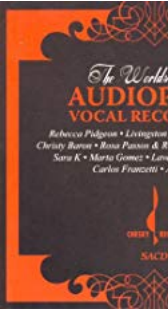
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