

OTHER VIEWS *continued from page 22*

delivers just what you would expect, subtle swing, exquisite taste and an avoidance of flashy excesses. (www.natenajar.com)

■ Ever since Charlie Byrd and Stan Getz brought the sounds of Bossa Nova to these shores, Brazilian jazz has remained a steady favorite among a significant sector of American jazz fans. One of the primary advocates for this music today is harmonica/vibraphone player **HENDRIK MEURKENS**, German-born, but of Dutch heritage, who now resides in New Jersey. His latest recorded foray into the Brazilian idiom is **New York Samba Jazz Quintet (Zoho-200701)**. For a December 2005 gig at Cecil's Jazz Club in West Orange, New Jersey, Meurkens added Jed Levy on tenor sax and flute to his regular quartet players, pianist Helio Alves, bassist Gustavo Amarante and drummer Adriano Santos. The nine tracks on this album include four Meurkens originals, four tunes by the Brazilian composers Joao Donato, Djavan and Antonio Carlos Jobim, and the Duke/Gershwin standard, "I Can't Get Started." This dynamic group explores three Brazilian idioms on this disc, Bossa Nova, Samba and Choro. The varying rhythms make for refreshing listening. Of course, given the high level of musicianship present in these players, the results are an album that grabs you right from the start and never lets your attention wane. (www.zohomusic.com)

■ Thad Jones was a composer who created music that was both challenging and accessible. **One More: The Summary — Music of Thad Jones, Vol. 2 (IPO-1011)** brings back an all-star group to explore nine tunes written by Jones plus a Jerome Richardson composition, "Groove Merchant," that Jones arranged for the big band that he co-led with Mel Lewis. The players are **BENNY GOLSON** and **JAMES MOODY** on tenor sax, **FRANK WESS** on tenor sax and flute, **EDDIE DANIELS** on tenor sax and clarinet, **JIMMY OWENS** on trumpet and flugelhorn, **JOHN MOSCA** on trombone, **HANK JONES** on piano, **RICHARD DAVIS** on bass and **KENNY WASHINGTON** on drums. It would be impossible, given the space available, to analyze each selection and list the solos on this disc. Suffice to say that Jones was a superior creator of jazz tunes, and these gentlemen play them with immense improvisational imagination. Excitement

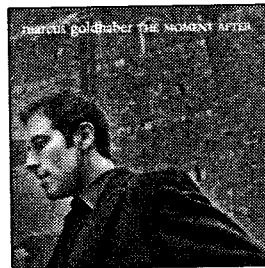
is a word that is often used excessively, but it surely applies to this exemplary program.

■ Finding albums of Christmas music that sound fresh is not an easy task. **Snowriding (RIDGE ToNe Music-6244)** is the second holiday offering from Pittsburgh pianist **RICK GALLAGHER**, and, like his first, is just what the doctor ordered for those who want a Christmas album that has a jazz flavor, but still respects the source material. The album opens with one of my favorite secular Christmas selections, "Silver Bells." Others in this vein are the title tune by Gallagher, Paul McCartney's "Wonderful Christmas," and Frank Loesser's "What Are You Doing New Year's Eve?" The carols include "O Little Town of Bethlehem," "The First Noel," "Carol of the Bells," "I Saw Three Ships," "Joy to the World," "Here We Come A-Wassailing," "Caroling, Caroling" and "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear." Bassist Paul Thompson and drummer Thomas Wendt accompany Gallagher, with percussionist George Jones also present on six tracks. They have created an album that will bring an uplifting spirit to any Christmas season gathering. (www.rickgallagher.com)

■ It doesn't take very long listening to **Music Is the Magic (Sapphire-7612)** to realize that **KELLEY JOHNSON** is the real thing. This is a young lady who can sing! She does the hippest "Tea for Two" this side of the recently departed Anita O'Day, and includes the rarely heard verse. For some reason, "Moon and Sand," a haunting song penned by Alec Wilder, Morty Palitz and William Engvick, has had a renewed popularity in recent years, and Johnson's version on this disc, done with a Bossa Nova flavoring, makes others that I have heard fade from memory. Among the musicians who back her are pianists Geoff Keezer and John Hansen, trumpeter Brian Lynch and alto saxophonist Steve Wilson. This is Johnson's second album, and you can be certain that it will not be her last. (www.kelleyjohnson.com)

I don't get many albums to review by male vocalists that really catch my ear, but this time out, I have two to recommend.

■ Vocalist **MARCUS GOLDHABER** reminds me of Chet Baker, but with more warmth and a nicer feeling for the lyrics that he sings. His 12-tune



debut album, **The Moment After (Fallen Apple Records-837101207423)** is simple, straightforward and engaging. Buried in the middle of a group of standards is a surprisingly winning

version of "Old Cape Cod," a song that would normally seem a bit overwhelmed by the likes of "Like Someone in Love," "Be Careful, It's My Heart," "Keepin' Out of Mischief Now," "The One I Love Belongs to Somebody Else," and "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams." Goldhaber, who has been performing frequently in New York City, is accompanied by Jon Davis on piano, Paul Gabrielson on bass, and Kyle Strive or Will Terrill on drums. This is an encouraging first recording. (www.marcusgoldhaber.com)

■ **A Lot of Livin' to Do (Pacific Coast Jazz-121215)** also marks the recording debut of vocalist **JONATHAN PORETZ**. Poretz is an old school swinger. He is well abetted in his swinging by Noel Jewkes on several horns, Lee Bloom on piano, Pierre Josephs or Jeff Neighbor on bass, and Harold Jones or Vince Lateano on drums. There are 11 tracks with songs like "A Lot of Livin' to Do," "Then I'll be Tired of You," "Come Rain or Come Shine," "I'll Remember April," "It Never Entered My Mind," "On the Street Where You Live" and "Just One of Those Things." The tracks that most caught my ear were "My Time of Day/I've Never Been in Love Before," "This Time the Dream's on Me," "I See Your Face Before Me," and "How Insensitive," with some fine flute support from Jewkes. Poretz owes a lot to his stated influences, "Frank, Tony, Mel and Bobby," but he seems to have found the key to absorbing their lessons without resorting to slavish imitation. I believe that Poretz is, as Harry Connick has already done, finding his own individual approach to material that has been done many, many times before. Good songs bear repeating, and it is nice to have a new singer who can find some individual nuances to add to this repertoire. (www.jonathanporetz.com)

Remember that these albums are not available through NJJS. You should be able to obtain most of them at any major record store. They are also available on-line from the websites shown after each review, or from a variety of other on-line sources.