

**Geof Bradfield/
Ben Goldberg/
Dana Hall Trio**
General Semantics

DELMARK 5035
★★★★

Saxophonist Geof Bradfield, clarinetist Ben Goldberg and drummer Dana Hall keep things compact here. But the group's energy, sharp writing and quick thinking across 11 relatively short tracks on *General Semantics* offer a plethora of ideas.

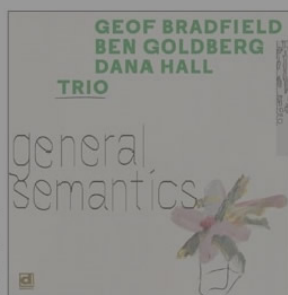
Their dialogue immediately enlivens Goldberg's "Last Important Heartbreak Of The Year." The three gently goad each other—Hall picking up steam as Goldberg's clarinet responds to Bradfield's tenor cues. Then it turns into the kind of collective improvisation that suggests what could have resulted if Jimmy Giuffre spent more time in New Orleans. The trio emphasizes the exuberance in presenting an instrumental arsenal that deviates from standard small jazz ensembles, not least of which is the absence of a chordal anchor. Goldberg's contra-alto clarinet implies the bass on a take of Duke Ellington's "Half The Fun." At the same time, Hall conveys as many different melodic colors as five woodwinds. While they direct each other through a few wide-ranging interpretations—including Cecil Taylor's landmark "Air"—no single player dominates.

—Aaron Cohen

General Semantics: Air; Tioga Street Zenith; Last Important Heartbreak Of The Year; Lamentation; Hit Flip Switch; General Semantics; Half The Fun; 3-4-5; 8 De Augusto; Never Met A Stranger; Under And Over. (50:14)

Personnel: Geof Bradfield, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, bass clarinet; Ben Goldberg, B-flat clarinet, contra-alto clarinet; Dana Hall, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: delmark.com



**Wind/Catherine/
van Rooyen**
White Noise

LAIKA
★★★★

A title like *White Noise* might seem to come from the industrial end of things, but bassist Martin Wind intends it to refer to the gentler sounds of wind or water that can help soothe the clatter and contention of everyday life. The title piece was written specifically to be played with guitarist Philip Catherine and flugelhorn player Ack van Rooyen, and it's perfectly suited for them.

Wind interweaves his own compositions with standards, leaving respectful room for 90-year-old van Rooyen's elegiac but not mournful "Autumn Bugle." It's a pity, perhaps, that there isn't room for something by Catherine, a mere stripling at 77. But the fact is, this is very much the bassist's record. That's obvious from the almost Bach-like arco that opens Kenny Wheeler's "Canter." Wind is a master with the bow, but it's his plucked lines—gracious and singing—that define his sound. He resembles no one more than another European master, Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, who was an early influence. "The Dream" was written for a duo with Pat Metheny, but Catherine's lightly amplified, ringing tone is perfect for it, too. The title still might mislead, but, taken as intended, it offers pure balm.

—Brian Morton

White Noise: Canter; Everything I Love; White Noise; But Beautiful; The Dream; Autumn Bugle; A Genius And A Saint; I Fall In Love Too Easily. (44:14)

Personnel: Martin Wind, bass; Philip Catherine, guitar; Ack van Rooyen, flugelhorn.

Ordering info: lalka-records.com



**Derrick Gardner &
The Big dig! Band**
Still I Rise

IMPACT 002
★★★★½

Tribute might be the operative word on *Still I Rise*, the album's title a salute to author Maya Angelou, while several of the tracks conjure the sounds of Count Basie's band.

On "Soulful Brother Gelispie," drummer Curtis Nowosad pays tribute to another time-keeper, educator Randy Gelispie. Then there's an homage to trumpeter Derrick Gardner's father with "Blues À La Burgess" where the Basie beat erupts with splendid profusion from the bandleader. Another unforgettable nod to Basie comes on "8 Ball, Side Pocket" with pianist Zen Zdravec reprising a recognizable intro from the big band. One final tribute is "Melody For Trayvon"—written for Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old African American slain by a Florida neighborhood watch coordinator in 2012. It's a lament that captures the tragic incident, Gardner's horn burnishing its mood. The Basie influence here is unavoidable—though it by no means detracts from the essential sound and swing of the 18-piece Big dig! Band. And given the group's collective ascendance and promising skills, its next album could be called *We Have Risen*.

—Herb Boyd

Still I Rise: Push Come Da Shove; Still I Rise; Soulful Brother Gelispie; Melody For Trayvon; Blues À La Burgess; 8 Ball, Side Pocket; Heavens To Murgatroyd! (71:09)

Personnel: Derrick Gardner, Bijon Watson, Jeff Johnson, Curtis Taylor, Andrew Littleford, trumpet; Mark Gross, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone; Greg Gattien, alto saxophone; Rob Dixon, Tristan Martinson, tenor saxophone; Ken Gold, baritone saxophone; Vincent Gardner, Joel Green, Anthony Bryson, Bill Green, trombone; Zen Zdravec, piano; Luke Sellick, bass; Kasey Kurtz, guitar; Curtis Nowosad, drums.

Ordering info: derrickgardnermusic.com



John Minnock
Herring Cove

DOT TIME 9093
★★★★½

Singer John Minnock's third album chronicles different facets of the gay community, a subject still rarely discussed in jazz. Erick Holmberg's lyrics in these songs emphasize the challenges that Minnock, his family and friends still face. But courageous storytelling isn't the only strength of *Herring Cove*. Minnock's phrasing seamlessly veers from romantic to lighthearted and acerbic alongside an accomplished crew that includes saxophonist/producer Dave Liebman.

Minnock, a veteran of New York's jazz and cabaret scenes, consistently uses his dramatic inflections to serve the songs' contrasting tones. This comes across on his tongue-in-cheek kiss-off, "Tell Him I'm Fine," highlighting his sharp timing alongside pianist Enrique Haneine. On his dialogue with singer Deborah Lippmann, "Now There's You," their dissimilar timbres blend as they recount the Reagan era and the emergence of the AIDS epidemic. A sense of loss also pervades the moving title track, which refers to a popular LGBTQ+ beach in Provincetown, Massachusetts. While it would be a stretch to say that Cher's "If I Could Turn Back Time" will appear at future jazz jams, Minnock's understated performance shows how this LGBTQ+ star's hit belongs in these spaces.

—Aaron Cohen

Herring Cove: Tell Him I'm Fine; If I Could Turn Back Time; On Green Dolphin Street; Unconditional; It Goes Like It Goes; A Melody; Now There's You; Herring Cove; After All These Years; Kansas City; Stardust. (55:17)

Personnel: John Minnock, vocals; Dave Liebman, saxophone, flute; Enrique Haneine, piano; Carlos Mena, bass; Pablo Eluchans, drums; Deborah Lippmann (7), vocals.

Ordering info: dottimerecords.com

