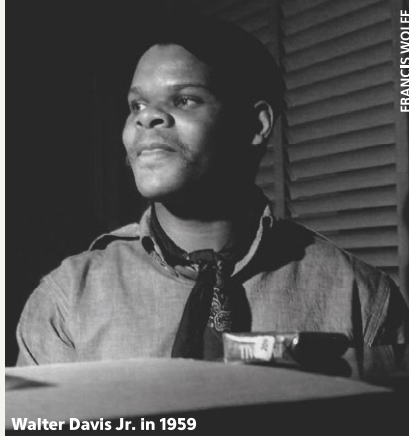


# Moments Etched in Vinyl

Released in that all-important year for the music, **Walter Davis Jr.'s *Davis Cup*** (Blue Note; ★★★★★ 37:55) is an almost-perfect statement for the era. By 1959, was playing piano for Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, where he built relationships with trumpeter Donald Byrd and saxophonist Jackie McLean, who both join him for this record. Rounding out the ensemble are bassist Sam Jones and drummer Art Taylor, who push the front-line improvisers beautifully on the album's bebop-inflected opening tune, "Smack It." In the original liner notes, critic Joe Goldberg places the pianist in the league of Horace Silver as one of the music's brightest young composers. But *Davis Cup* was his first and last release during music's bop phase, as he went on an extended sabbatical from the scene and worked as a tailor. Though he appeared on several records as leader and sideman in the '70s and '80s, the promise that Davis' 1959 record held out feels lost. Still, the re-release of *Davis Cup* as part of Blue Note's Tone Point Series offers listeners a glimpse of his considerable brilliance.

Another Tone Poet release, ***Freedom Sound*** (Pacific Jazz; ★★★★★ 33:01) is the 1961 debut record of the legendary **Cruaders**. Hailing from the jazz haven of Houston and originally consisting of pianist Joe Sample, trombonist Wayne Henderson, drummer Nesbert "Stix" Hooper and tenor saxophonist Wilton Felder, the group moved to Los Angeles ahead of this record, where they met Pacific Jazz's founder Richard Bock. They are joined on this date by bassist Jimmy Bond and on two tracks by guitarist Roy Gaines. The music is driving, even on the more contemplative grooves like Sample's "Freedom Sound." While jazz is in the dominant here, you can also glimpse the many influences they brought and the multiple directions that their future music would take.

**Andrew Hill's** 1968 record ***Grass Roots*** (Blue Note; ★★★★★ 32:54) has had the reputation of being "overlooked." Its recent addition to the Tone Poet Series will hopefully help shed that label. The pianist, who was known for being inventive and dynamic, stated in the liner notes of this release that here he was not out to prove himself. Joined on the date by trumpeter Lee Morgan, tenor saxophonist Booker Ervin, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Freddie Waits, the album has that characteristic Blue Note feel. The tunes are soulful and measured. The rhythms are catchy and tightly composed. Hill has played across the landscape of this music and here's an example of how, even in its most laidback iterations, there's still much to hear.



Walter Davis Jr. in 1959

FRANCIS WOLFF

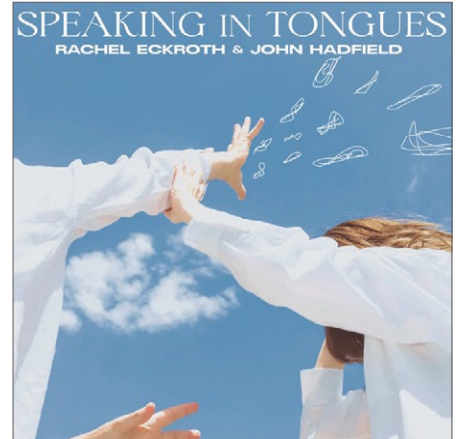
Ordering info: [bluenote.com](http://bluenote.com)

**Green Cosmos's *Abendmusiken*** (Frederiksberg; ★★★★★ 49:29) is the debut and only recording of the German quartet consisting of saxophonist Michael Boxberger, pianist Benny Düring, bassist Ulrich Franke and drummer Alfred Franke. Issued in 1983, the music here is a crisp mixture of Eurojazz and mellow mood music that is uplifting. The band feels at home in these idioms replete with some stretching that feels best when Alfred Franke deploys the kalimba.

Ordering info: [frederiksbergrecords.bandcamp.com](http://frederiksbergrecords.bandcamp.com)

Two reissues of saxophonist **Noah Howard's** music are primed to introduce new listeners to one of the most underrated exponents of the New Thing. Hailing from New Orleans, Howard explored the New York scene of the mid-1960s, releasing his first records near the end of the decade before decamping to Europe, where he would release several more. ***Berlin Concert*** (Troost; ★★★★★½ 38:52) and ***Schizophrenic Blues*** (Troost; ★★★★★½ 39:14), released by the German label Free Music Production (FMP) in 1977 and 1978, respectively, finds Howard in the midst of his creative output. Recorded in 1975, *Berlin Concert* features an explosive Howard engaging both free and modal territories, supported by Japanese pianist Takashi Kato, bassist Kent Carter, percussionist Lamont Hampton and drummer Oliver Johnson. For *Schizophrenic Blues*, Howard chose a pianoless unit, with Johnson returning alongside trumpeter Itaru Oki and bassist Jean-Jacques Avenell. This live date has its moments. For the most part, the horns retain the same energy of the previous release and offer inspired front-line improvisation over Howard's tunes, plus a Stevie Wonder original. Both records are must-haves for the free-jazz enthusiast. **DB**

Ordering info: [trost.at](http://trost.at)



## Rachel Eckroth & John Hadfield *Speaking In Tongues*

ADHYĀROPA

★★★★★

Here is living proof that digital and analog can get along and make some beautiful and inventive music together. Fundamentally, this empathetic duo — concocting persuasive recipes steeped in jazz conduct, ambient and innately cinematic qualities — consists of pianist Rachel Eckroth (whose resume includes work with St. Vincent and Rufus Wainwright) and drummer John Hadfield. But the textual palette expands to include subtle electronics, hand percussion, vocal snippets and other workable sounds in the mix.

This 10-track set flows in suite-like fashion, with vaguely Christian/mythological overtones and titles. As an opener, the funky, feisty "God Particles" leads into the warped-waltz-y "Gospel Of" and "Sanctus," starting out with a meditative chord cycle and spinning out, derisive-like, a tactic similarly built into "The Jesus Side." Contextual asides and playful references sneak in, as on the title track "Speaking in Tongues": Eckroth's quicksilver piano lines are suddenly channeled onto another plane, the sound wave reversed as if alluding to the Pentecostal practice of "speaking in tongues."

At times, we get ghostly snatches of hyperactive house music, but with jazz clearly in the house. In sharp, revealing contrast to higher-energy pieces, the suite closes on an unplugged note, with the two-part piano/drums workout "Phase and Libration." Apart from some subtle electronic percussion and a last-minute wash of cathedral-sized reverb on the piano, the finale is all about real humans playing real instruments in real time. —Josef Woodard

**Speaking In Tongues:** God Particle; Jeanne D'arc; Blood Moon; The Gospel Of; Sanctus; Andromeda; The Jesus Side; Speaking In Tongues; Phase And Libration Part 1; Phase And Libration Part 2. (44:33)

**Personnel:** Rachel Eckroth, grand piano, Wurliitzer 200a, Vintage Vibe electric piano, synthesizers, Mellotron M4000D, Moog Subsequent 25; John Hadfield; drums, crotales, kalimba, Myanmar bells, Moribeats Gamelan Strips, OP-1, Roland TR-808 drum machine, Patterning drum machine.

Ordering info: [adhyaroparecords.com](http://adhyaroparecords.com)