

prelude



New  
Hawaii

**BY THE TIME HAWAII WAS CHRISTENED THE 50TH STATE IN 1959**, mainlanders had already fallen in love with this island paradise in the faraway Pacific. Visions of swaying palms, golden-hued sunsets, endless beaches and nubile, lei-bearing maidens had long captured America's collective imagination. And it all came with an equally beguiling soundtrack — a seductive blending of Latinesque rhythms and Far Eastern sonorities that perfectly captured the exotic and romantic essence of this almost mystical South Seas haven. Honolulu-bound or not, suburbanite hipsters throughout the continental United States slipped into flamboyant Hawaiian shirts, sipped coconut lime rickeys and guava daiquiris, loaded their record players with a stack of LPs by practitioners of the new "exotica" sound and let the soothing, jazz-accented arrangements transport them to a tropical dreamland. Tunes like Martin Denny's "Quiet Village," with its serenade of bird calls, and vibraphonist Arthur Lyman's equally impressionistic "Taboo" unconsciously laid the groundwork for the world music, New Age and smooth-jazz movements that would follow years later.

Except for a rare take on the genre by mainstream jazz artists, such as vibraphonist Cal Tjader's mid-1960's albums *Several Shades of Jade* and *Breeze From the East*, the style has been dormant for decades. Today, however, there is a good reason to consider dusting off those old tiki lamps and making sure the bar is well stocked with rum and pineapple juice. The Waitiki 7, a born-in-Honolulu ensemble loaded with virtuoso talent, updates the classic exotica mood on *Adventures in Paradise* (Pass Out) — a 13-track excursion that pays respect to the venerable music's roots while charting its own distinctive course.

The band's one certifiable link to the past is the presence of percussionist and bird caller Lopaka Colon, the son of Augie Colon, a rhythm master whose ability to re-create the songs of macaws and parrots gave pianist Denny's group its trademark sound. On tracks like a reworking of Denny's sultry "Manila," a cascade of cooing, chirps and hoots complement the unit's Cuban-style percussion, rippling vibes and airy flute work. But Waitiki 7 ranges stylistically further and with a more pronounced jazz dialect than its forerunners dared. "Craving" strongly suggests the influence of avant-garde tangó in its rhythm backdrop, while the late trumpeter Lee Morgan's "Totem Pole" introduces a hint of hard bop. The contributions of woodwind player Tim Mayer, trombonist Mike Dease and violinist Helen Liu provide Waitiki 7 with substantial improvisational firepower. Laka, the Hawaiian goddess of song and dance, should be smiling. —Mark Holston

## Out of Cannonball's shadow

**JESSE JONES JR. NEVER MET CANNONBALL ADDERLEY**, but the jazz giant's influence proved profound. Growing up in Miami's Liberty City, Jones certainly heard the music of the alto saxophonist, who taught briefly at Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale in the 1950s. In fact, Jones was so moved by Adderley's recordings that he coerced his younger brother, Melton, to learn the trumpet so that the two could emulate Cannon and his younger brother, Nat.

"Cannonball brought the church into jazz," Jones says. "He brought the gospel feeling into jazz. His music made me realize, 'Hey, this is what I wanna do.'"

So it's only natural that Jones, 65, would kick off his most-recent recording, *The So Then Collection* (LP&J), with the jaunty, self-penned hard-bopper "Cannon B," a tribute to his greatest influence. Alongside him, as he has been for decades, brother Melton Mustafa figures prominently. Jones displays his affection for Mustafa with the riff-laden "My Brother Melton." The tune features dynamic solos by both men, as well



as by dazzling South Florida pianist Silvano Monisterios.

The curious title of the recording also hints at autobiography. When Jones was growing up, he explains, his father would tease him and his siblings by responding to their breathless tales with a deadpan, "So then?" Other personal touches include the slinky "Blues for Jarin," the title of which references Jones' youngest son, and the spry groover "Young Sprout," which was the nickname Jones gave his mom, who lived into her 90s.

Jones' gospel leanings can be heard on the rousing "Having You Is a Blessing" and "To the Mighty Son," both of which showcase his appealing vocals. On the former, he unleashes joyful and inventive scat chops.

Jones' saxophone skills — and first-rate showmanship — have taken him all over the world, including Kaliningrad, Russia, and the Umbria Jazz Festival in Perugia, where he recently accompanied vocalist Allan Harris. His schedule should allow for even more travel: After 23 years, Jones just retired from his day job as a bailiff at the Miami Dade Courthouse. For more information, go to [www.jessejonesjr.com](http://www.jessejonesjr.com). —Bob Weinberg