



**Remembering Attila Zoller**  
(Live at Jazz at Kitano, New York)  
**Don Friedman Quartet (feat. Peter Bernstein)**  
(Edition Longplay)  
*Strength and Sanity*  
**Don Friedman (Newvelle)**  
by Ken Dryden

Don Friedman passed away in June 2016 after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer at the age of 81, leaving a recorded legacy spanning six decades. The pianist worked with many greats, including numerous sessions with Clark Terry, led many recording dates and was an underrated composer. His final sessions were made for companies specializing in 180-gram LP-only limited editions.

*Remembering Attila Zoller*, recorded in concert at New York's Jazz at Kitano in April 2016, salutes the late guitarist—with whom Friedman frequently collaborated—in a quartet completed by guitarist Peter Bernstein, bassist Harvie S and drummer Klemens Marktl. The fluid interpretation of Johnny Carisi's "Israel" finds Friedman at the peak of his powers and Bernstein's intricate solo demonstrating why he is a first-call guitarist. The remaining three songs were all penned by Zoller. Bernstein is prominent throughout much of "Meant To Be", a joyful ballad, Friedman's heartfelt playing and splendid interaction with the rhythm section essential to its interpretation. "Hungarian Rhapsody" is fueled by a catchy bass vamp and highlighted by the marvelous interplay between Friedman and Bernstein. The session wraps with the tender ballad "When It's Time" as Friedman and Bernstein create lyrical music worthy of comparison to the recorded meetings of Bill Evans and Jim Hall, with subtle work by the rhythm section.

Listening to this 180-gram LP reminds one of why analog recordings are so appreciated by audiophiles; there's an intimacy and warmth too often missing from CDs. The artwork accompanying each LP is important to Edition Longplay founder and producer Rainer Haarmann and this one features a creative ink drawing by Kerstin Kartscher. *Remembering Attila Zoller* has a pressing of only 500 copies and includes an mp3 download for listening away from the turntable. It is destined to become a treasured part of any jazz collector's library.

*Strength and Sanity* is a very different date, focusing on Friedman's adventurous work of the '60s. The eight songs were penned by trumpeter Booker Little and recorded in groups he led with Friedman on two LPs made in 1961 prior to Little's untimely death that year from uremia. The pianist features his working trio with bassist Phil Palombi and drummer Shinnosuke Takahashi. The lack of horns isn't an issue, as the musicians interact with the music as if it were part of their regular repertoire and, because Little's music has been rarely performed since his death, with little fear of duplicating earlier interpretations. "Moods in Free Time" shifted through several time signatures on Little's LP but Friedman chose to slow the tempo with the rhythm section providing sporadic response, making it seem like a free improvisation rather than a composition. "Looking Ahead" is a driving hardbop work worthy of greater attention; this interpretation extensively showcases Palombi and Takahashi. A trio version of the title track was recorded during the session, but Friedman's unaccompanied lyrical rendition of this forgotten ballad was used instead. "Calling Softly" is an enchanting jazz waltz featuring Friedman's brilliant improvising, giving the piece

a European movie theme flavor. "Victory and Sorrow" is an engaging bop vehicle, blending numerous twists in its breezy setting. In "Man of Words", emotional arco bass provides a hypnotic vamp as Friedman is full of surprising moments.

The audio is bright and warm on this limited edition 180-gram LP, sold exclusively as part of a subscription series of LPs Newvelle issued in its first year of operation, which makes it a bit pricey if one only wants one or two of the releases. The other quibble is that both the liner notes and the musician credits aren't in the gatefold jacket but only available for viewing online. The artistic concept of the packaging, which uses the photography of Bernard Plossu and a poem by Tracy K. Smith on the insert, was of more importance to the producer. This remarkable LP is also an essential part of Don Friedman's discography and will also likely become a valuable rarity.

For more information, visit [editionlongplay.com](http://editionlongplay.com) and [newvelle-records.com](http://newvelle-records.com).



**Rhapsody of the Oppressed**  
**Cosmic Brujo Mutafuka (Dimensional)**  
by Clifford Allen

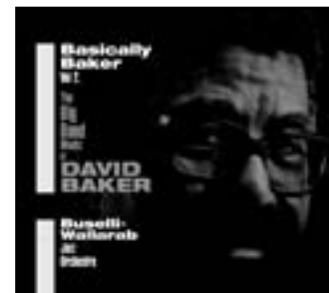
Creative musicians are often faced with two challenges that must be met and they are often not able to be met at the same time. Either one must dedicate a significant part of one's practice to creating a preordained structure that will sculpt improvisation or one must 'simmer in one's own gravy', building a language out of total spontaneity. There are pitfalls to both—either writing to the detriment of skilled play and deep listening or playing in one's own bag without regard to the other carts. Few but remarkable are those artists who are well equipped as free improvisers and burning soloists who can also write and develop an overarching sonic architecture. Alto saxophonist Marco Eneidi, who died last May at 59, was and is one such figure, unsurprisingly existing far outside of the jazz and improvised music mainstream through decades of work in the Bay Area, New York, Vienna and finally in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Though small groups were his mettle, Eneidi also composed for large units—the American Jungle Orchestra in the Bay area and aggregations from the Neu New York/Vienna Institute of Improvised Music, which he founded.

Cosmic Brujo Mutafuka was the last small group Eneidi worked with, based in Mexico and presenting a return to his power-trio roots. Their lone disc, *Rhapsody of the Oppressed*, joins the saxophonist with bassist Itzam Cano and drummer Gabriel Lauber on a program of nine collective compositions, ranging in length from barely a minute to nearly a half-hour and delivered with as much joy, sorrow and ferocity as present in the titles themselves ("Uprising of the Downtrodden Saints", "A Child Walks In A Dream", "Liberation"). It should be noted that "brujo" is slang for a shaman while "mutafaka" calls to mind the French comic *Mutafakaz*, which traces the adventures of two friends through an amnesiac dystopia.

Things get down to business almost immediately—the one-minute overture "Exordium" halting to catch its breath before jumping into "'Language is Never Neutral"—Paulo Freire", hard-bitten, flinty alto cells and torqued curls dancing over shimmying, interlocked pizzicato and pulsative waves. Eneidi's tone is gruff and his cries dole out more than a half-century of

blues, but cutting through these hard-earned lines is a sense of jubilation, of play, a bitter, exuberant loquaciousness that speaks to love and humanity. Occasionally Eneidi will wander a bit around the studio, a little bit off mic, pontificating and preaching while bass and percussion continually stoke as a two-man congregation and modulating his speech to breathy delicacy on "A Child Walks in a Dream". *Rhapsody of the Oppressed* is full of life and an affirmation that the underground will always have a voice.

For more information, visit [downtownmusicgallery.com](http://downtownmusicgallery.com).



**Basically Baker Vol. 2: The Big Band Music of David Baker**  
**Buselli-Wallarab Jazz Orchestra (Patois)**  
by George Kanzler

The Buselli-Wallarab Jazz Orchestra consists of former students and acolytes of David Baker, who headed the Jazz Studies program at Indiana University for half a century and died in March 2016 at age 84. This second volume of Baker's arrangements, all but one his compositions, features music written from the mid '60s to mid '70s. Baker's works establish him as a major modern jazz composer, on a par with more celebrated ones such as Gil Evans, George Russell, Thad Jones, Quincy Jones and Duke Ellington. Like Evans, Baker expanded the tonal palette of the standard big band, augmenting the usual trumpets, trombones and saxophone with deep brass horn and tuba, as well as adding occasional vibraphone and celeste to the rhythm/percussion section. He also believed in fully utilizing the complete potential of the jazz orchestra, filling his charts behind soloists with riffs and more intricate backgrounds from the brass and reeds, including stop-time figures and drop-outs.

Although Baker was pushing the boundaries of big band jazz, he loved bop and one of the highlights of this album is the only cover, Dizzy Gillespie's "Bebop". A cappella horns and a drum break kick off the famous theme, delivered at the requisite furious tempo with full orchestral brio and Graham Breedlove's trumpet doing Dizzying runs, Rob Dixon's tenor searing through orchestral pauses punctuated by riffs and rhythmic bursts. There are also nods to Russell in "Honesty", a jaunty, boppish piece written for Russell's band, which Baker interspersed with Bach-like brass chorales, as well as stop-times during Tom Walsh's fervent alto solo. Another alto saxophonist, Bill Sears, echoes Johnny Hodges on the very Duke-ish, bluesy "Black Thursday", a definite salute to Ellingtonia, right down to Mark Buselli's muted, growling, vocalizing trumpet solo. "Walt's Barbershop" rides the surf of calypso rhythms and spritely rounds among the sections and "Shima 13" rolls along on an AfroLatin-inflected odd meter. The celeste is used as an intro before a swing feel and interlocking brass and reed figures take over on the infectious "Harlem Pipes".

The only true ballad here—"Soft Summer Rain" picks up to midtempo halfway through—is "Kristen's First Song", a lullaby for Baker's daughter, which is also the only track featuring the band's two guest soloists, guitarist Vic Juris and trumpeter Randy Brecker. It is a softly sumptuous piece with stately, muted brass and delicate reeds. The Buselli-Wallarab Jazz Orchestra covers an expansive range of Baker's always-inventive music with enjoyable verve.

For more information, visit [patoisrecords.com](http://patoisrecords.com).