

# One critic's picks for top jazz and blues albums of 2000

By Michael G. Nastos  
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Michael G. Nastos hosts "Evening Jazz & Blues" weeknights on WEMU-FM, 89.1, in Ypsilanti, Michigan, as he has for 22 of his 30 years in radio. He has written for the *Alchemist*, the *All Music Guide*, the *Ann Arbor News*, *Arts Midwest*, the *Blues Review*, *Cadence*, *Coda*, *Detroit Jazz*, *Downbeat*, *Jazz Journal International*, *Jazz Times*, the *Metro Times*, and *Swing Journal* magazines and the SEMJA (Southeastern Michigan Jazz Association) Update. He is past Jazz Chair of the Michigan Council of Arts & Cultural Affairs, and edited Robert Sweet's *Music Universe—Music Mind: A History of the Creative Music Studio*.

Many people ask at year's end what I think are the top jazz and blues albums. I listen to about 1,500 CD's a year. I also vote in the *Downbeat International Critics Poll*, choosing a Top Three, am a yearly judge for AFIM (Association for Independent Music) and was the chief jazz reviewer for the *All Music Guide* for most of 2000. I believe there are many worthwhile recordings—regardless of style—in jazz, blues and world music, and have therefore compiled this extensive list of recommended CD's for buyers and listeners. The selections are listed in no particular order.

## Top Ten Jazz CD's of 2000

1. *Summer Days* /Eddie Allen (Enja)
2. *Wandering Moon* /Terence Blanchard (Columbia)
3. *Colors* /Avishai Cohen (Stretch/Concord)
4. *Katewalk* /Lew Del Gatto (Naxos)
5. *Impressions Of Mary Lou* /John Hicks (High Note)
6. *Prime Directive* /Dave Holland (ECM)
7. *Jazztimes Super Band* (Stretch/Concord)
8. *Masterpiece* /Eddie Palmieri-Tito Puente (RMM)
9. *Watch What You're Doing* /Herlin Riley (Criss Cross)
10. *In & Out* /Martial Solal-Johnny Griffin (Dreyfus)

## High Honorable Mention

1. *Danger, High Voltage* /George Coleman (Two & Four)

2. *Actual Size* /Peggy Stern (Koch)
3. *In the Spur of the Moment* /Steve Turre (Telarc)

## Big Band

1. *More Beautiful Than Death* /Either-Orchestra (Accurate)
2. *Basie & Beyond* /Quincy Jones-Sammy Nestico (Qwest)
3. *Allegresse* /Maria Schneider (Enja)

## Latin Jazz

1. *Chanchullo* /Ruben Gonzalez (World Circuit/Nonesuch)
2. *The Legend of Cuban Percussion* /Patato (Six Degrees)
3. *Tribute To Chombo* /Rumba Jazz (Sunnyside)
4. *Live @ The Village Vanguard* /Chucho Valdes (Blue Note)
5. *Descarga Total* /Orlando "Maraca" Valle (Ahi-Nama)

## World Music

1. *Baila Mi Son* /Felix Baloy (Tumi)
2. *Sudani* /Patrick Brennan (Deep Dish)
3. *Tribute to the Cuarteto Patria* /Eliades Ochoa (Higher Octave)
4. *Buena Vista Social Club Presents...* /Omara Portuondo (World Circuit/Nonesuch)
5. *Cape Verde* /various artists (Putumayo)

## Traditional/Early Period

1. *Tough Assignment* /Eddie Metz (Nagel Heyer)
2. *The History of Jazz, Vol. I* /Michael Moore (Arbors)
3. *Swing Is The Thing* /Flip Phillips (Verve)

## Vocals/Male

1. *Live in Chicago* /Kurt Elling (Blue Note)
2. *When a Smile Overtakes a Frown* /Luqman Hamza (Catalyst)
3. *Some Time Ago* /Mark Murphy (High Note)

## Vocals/Female

1. *Wind From The South* /Claudia Acuna (Verve)
2. *Over the Years* /Abbey Lincoln (Verve)
3. *The Poems of Elizabeth Bishop & Other Songs*

/Luciana Souza (Sunnyside)

### **Avant Garde**

1. *Africa D'Na Blues* /Kahil El'Zabar's Ritual Trio (Delmark)
2. *Hidden Gardens* /Lan Xang (Naxos)
3. *Thirty Fifth Reunion* /New York Art Quartet (DIW)

### **Local Detroit/Ann Arbor**

1. *Live @ Montreux-Detroit Jazz Festival* /Larry Nozero (Dominic)
2. *Non Yawn Varieties* /Oopapada (Uquipleu)
3. *Timescape* /Ed Sarath-Karl Berger (AES Inc.)
4. *Be Ware, It Might Be Love* /Barbara Ware (Digimedia)
5. *Deep Woods* /Steve Wood (Corridor)

### **Combos/Ensembles**

1. *Soul of an Angel* /Billy Harper (Metropolitan)
2. *Premonition* /Jason Lindner (Stretch/Concord)
3. *Melody from the Sky* /Scott Robinson (Arbors)

### **Jazz Fusion**

1. *Electric Rosary* /Living Daylights (Liquid City)
2. *In Moscow* /Oregon (Intuition)
3. *Shades of Miles* /Dave Stryker (Steeplechase)

### **Jazz Reissues**

1. *Complete Hot Fives & Sevens* /Louis Armstrong (Columbia)
2. *Complete, 1955-1961* /Miles Davis-John Coltrane (Columbia)
3. *Message From Walton Street* /MJT+ III (Vee Jay/Koch)
4. *Bird Lives!* /Ira Sullivan-Chicago Jazz Quintet (Vee Jay/Koch)
5. *Lanquidity* /Sun Ra (Philly Jazz/Evidence)

### **Honorable Mention/New Releases**

1. *Riding the Nuclear Tiger* /Ben Allison (Palmetto)
2. *Spirit Song* /Kenny Barron (Verve)
3. *Nu Soul Zodiac* /Gold Sparkle Band (Squealer)
4. *Time on My Hands* /Eddie Higgins (Arbors)
5. *Dusk* /Andrew Hill (Palmetto)
6. *My Backyard* /Mike Lee (Omnitone)
7. *Holy Mischief* /Eddie Marshall (Ruddy Duck)
8. *No Walls* /Virginia Mayhew (Foxhaven)
9. *Octet Plays Trane* /David Murray (Justin Time)
10. *You Are Here* /Neufeld-Occhipinti Jazz Orchestra w/Don Byron (Koch)
11. *Together; Live @ Sweet Basil* /Jean-Michel Pilc (A)
12. *Live @ Birdland-Neuberg* /Enrico Rava-Michel Flugel (Double Moon-Challenge)
13. *Young At Heart* /Larry Vuckovich (Robbins-Tetrachord)
14. *David X. Young's Jazz Loft* /various artists (Jazz

Magnet)

15. *Music Of Eric VonEssen* /various artists (Cryptogramophone)

### **Top Ten Blues**

1. *Vudu Menz* /Corey Harris-Henry Butler (Alligator)
2. *Matriarch of The Blues* /Etta James (Private)
3. *Rush Hour Blues* /Sam Lay (Telarc)
4. *Snakebite* /Magic Slim & The Teardrops (Blind Pig)
5. *Central Avenue Confidential* /Big Jay McNeely (Atomic Theory)
6. *Double Shot* /Snooky Pryor-Mel Brown (Electro-Fi)
7. *Maestropiece* /Wardell Querzerque (Louisiana Red Hot)
8. *Speculatin'* /Dave Specter (Delmark)
9. *My Heart's In Memphis* /Irma Thomas (Rounder)
10. *New Role Soul* /Robert Ward (Delmark)

### **Detroit/Ann Arbor Blues**

1. *Butler Boogie* /Butler Twins (Back Porch Blues Project)
2. *We Play The Blues* /Bill Beid-Detroit Blues Masters w/Johnnie Bassett (Black Magic)
3. *A Portrait In Blues* /Robert Jones (Rojo)
4. *Sensational Rhythms* /Motor City Sheiks (No Cover)
5. *Live @ The Ark* /Peter "Madcat" Ruth (Beancake)

### **Blues Reissues**

1. *There Is Always One More Time* /Johnny Adams (Rounder)
2. *Blues & Other Love Songs* /Charles Brown (32)
3. *Complete, 1979-1982* /Buddy Guy (JSP)
4. *Classic Cobra Recordings, 1956-1958* /Otis Rush (Fuel)
5. *Raining In My Heart* /Roosevelt Sykes (United/Delmark)

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