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hector cvr1.qxt\_Layout 1 11/11/15 5:54 PM Page 1 man of the Los Angeles jazz scene, dividing his time among performing, educating and wrangling one of the region's most respected large ensembles. On Kaleidoscope Eyes: Music of The Beatles, Daversa's Progressive Big Band mangles Beatles tunes in a psychedelic frenzy of joyful postmodern grooves. The Liverpool lads have often been rendered in brass, but rarely with this much wit, exuberance and experimental zeal. The collection is indeed kaleidoscopic, drawing from various corners of The Beatles repertoire. Other than the obligatory inclusion of orchestral classics like "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds" and "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," the set list contains ballads and hits from the early '60s. It's hard to imagine a big-band arrangement of "And I Love Her" until you hear it overflowing with flamboyant swells reminiscent of Stan Kenton's orchestra. Daversa also traverses a vibrant stylistic spectrum, as on a 10-and-a-half-minute "I Saw Her Standing There" suite that throws in mere glimpses of the original tune as samples in a scorching funk/hip-hop groove. On tracks such as "Here Comes the Sun," unabashedly dramatic flourishes intermingle with moments of jarring postmodernism. Abrupt breaks and meter changes seem playful and unpretentious in light of the band's down-to-earth emotional nature. They, in turn, lend a cerebral edge to heavy-handed climaxes that would otherwise sound sappy. Kaleidoscope Eyes is no substitute for the Fab Four's timeless music. And with arrangements liberal enough to be considered original compositions, it obviously doesn't try to be. It is, however, an audacious homage, and a unique, exemplary work in its own right. Daversa channels The Beatles' spirit in his audacious pursuit of grandeur and oddity. — Asher Wolf Hector Martignon's Banda Grande The Big Band Theory (Zoho) After several decades backing leaders such as Ray Barretto and Paquito D'Rivera, and fronting his own small groups, Colombian-born pianist, composer and arranger Hector Martignon finally surrendered to a long-held passion: to write for his own large ensemble. As rhythmically rambunctious and thematically expansive as it

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is orchestrally audacious, The Big Band Theory draws as much from European classical- and Latin American- folkloric influences as it does from the contemporary big-band tradition. Martignon crafts uncompromisingly personal orchestral schemes and pairs seemingly disparate source material. On “Mozart Interrupted/Sorrindo,” for example, a string quartet provides a formal introduction. Then, the horns enter, blowing warm-up notes and stirring a cacophonous interlude before launching into Brazilian composer Hermeto Pascoal’s festive “Sorrindo.” J.S. Bach’s “Erbarne Dich” spotlights Brenda Feliciano’s luxuriant operatic soprano vocals and a more formal approach from the horn section before Martignon enters with a driving montuno vamp on piano, and the big band struts to an Afro-Cuban pulse. The leader is masterful in his creative pairing of instruments. On “Estate,” the Italian bossa classic, he provides an accordion background figure to contrast with Christos Rafalides’ vibraphone solo. Trombonist Luis Bonilla adds a gritty swagger to the arrangement as the horn sections provide biting, overlapping riffs. Martignon’s South American roots provide some of the session’s best moments. On “Nostalgias del Futuro,” an original by the leader in the loping 6/8 tempo of the Venezuelan joropo, he places strings and the large ensemble behind Edmar Castañeda’s folkloric harp. “Maestra,” also by the pianist, is another effective blending of avant-garde- oriented large-ensemble writing with a folkloric instrument — this time, the Colombian gaita, a large bamboo flute played by Martin Vejarano. The Big Band Theory sometimes threatens to overpower listeners with the unrelenting drama of its harmonically dense arrangements. Nonetheless, its pleasures are many. — Mark Holston

Kris Allen Beloved (Truth Revolution) Saxophone dream bands seem to come in two distinct flavors: those that do battle (Johnny Griffin vs. Lockjaw Davis; Dexter Gordon vs. Wardell Gray) and those that support each other (Lee Konitz with Warne Marsh; Dave Liebman with Steve Grossman). The two-saxophone team of alto/soprano saxophonist Kris Allen (student of the late altoist Jackie McLean) and tenor player Frank Kozyra fit into the latter category. This is not to say Allen and Kozyra don’t mix it up. But more often, their musical relationship is copacetic to the point of outlining chords and dictating rhythms for one another, and sharing spontaneously devised melodies. They’re all ears and, in jazz, that’s major. Add the pliable rhythm duo of acoustic bassist Luques Curtis and drummer Jonathan Barber, and you have today’s saxophone dream band. In addition to strong chops and listening skills, the group displays a vast knowledge of jazz vocabulary. The medium/up-tempo “Mandy Have Mercy,” with its fugue-like opening and enigmatic unison-horn melody, calls to mind pianist Lennie Tristano’s repertoire. The ballad “Lord Help My Unbelief,” with Curtis’ arco bass and Barber’s mallets, channels an updated rendering of drummer Chico Hamilton’s 1950s Pacific Jazz quintet. And yet, Allen’s quartet is ultimately contemporary. Nearly every tune is a

JAZZIZ Fall 2016 123