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# Black Plastic Bag BLOGS

Music in the District and beyond

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## Archive for December, 2008

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### Jazz 2008: The Outliers

Posted by **Michael J. West** on Dec. 31, 2008, at 3:24 pm

I'm keenly aware that my [Top Ten](#) for the year included very little in the way of the avant-garde in jazz. What can I say? My favorites were my favorites. Yet I can't help but feel like some great "out" records got overlooked in the shuffle to compile these best-of-'08s, and so I've got a handful here of five avant-garde albums — three new releases, two archival — in 2008 that deserve your attention.

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**1. Keefe Jackson's Project - *Just Like This* (Delmark)**

All right, I'm cheating: *Just Like This* was a December 2007 release. Nonetheless, it set a great tone for the year, with rich, soulful free jazz placed into a big band context that was great fun to listen to and to decipher. I wrote at its release that "It's no coincidence that Project

Project is from Chicago: *Just Like This* places Jackson into the tradition of Windy City stalwarts like Henry Threadgill and Muhal Richard Abrams. Those giants aren't yet passing the torch, but Jackson will be a worthy recipient when they do."

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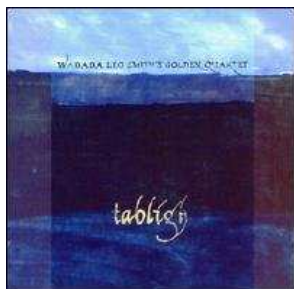
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**2. Wadada Leo Smith - *Tabligh* (Cuneiform)**

An AACM stalwart since the '60s, trumpeter Smith makes music as mysterious as it is cerebral and culture-spanning. *Tabligh* uses sinuous elements of European, Asian, and especially Middle Eastern music to forge musical links between Muslim religious rites ("Tabligh"), American musical

traditions ("DeJohnette") and even the civil rights movement ("Rosa Parks"). A quartet of legends young and old—pianist **Vijay Iyer**, bassist **John Lindberg**, drummer **Ronald Shannon Jackson**—make breathtaking contributions to the effort.

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Crafty Blog



**3. Mary Halvorson - *Dragon's Head* (Firehouse 12)**

28-year-old Halvorson's debut as sole leader (she's co-led sessions in the past) is very likely the most exploratory album on this list. The minimalist leader's *Head* is inspired

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Katy on Q&A: Thievery Corporation's Rob Garza: Saw them Thursday night...their live show is AWESOME! Keep it up Thievery!...

Pop Cesspool on The Godfather Acts: That might be my favorite photo of Chuck, ever....

Chris on Q&A: Thievery Corporation's Rob Garza: Saw them last night night for 1st time...Two words. BLOWN AWAY!...

turtle on EATMEWHILEIMHOT!: awh, eatmewhile!mhot! sounds better than mister owl. ... yeah that's all i wanted to say....

dylan on EATMEWHILEIMHOT!: you my good fellow are very wrong emwih/misterowl my not be as "hardcore" as you might say they are ...

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Passion Pit Moved to Black Cat Mainstage Passion Pit's previously sold-out Tuesday night show has been moved from Black Cat's backstage to th...

John Fahey Is Selling Vaseline So I'm-a sittin' here fighting off a head cold and watching a little Life on Mars, when comes a com...

Maryland Deathfest 2009 All Set Well, it's at Sonar in Baltimore, not in D.C., but the continent's best extreme metal festival (acc...

The Godfather Acts The legendary Chuck Brown is a man of many, many talents. You probably already know that, in additi...

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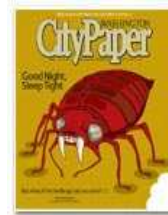
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