

## 2008 TOP 10 CDs

Tell us what you were listening to this past year! Hit that "reply to all" and let's have it!

Again, these are the top 10 albums that I was listening to, not necessarily released in 2008, just what was the most influential, most-listened-to things in 2008:

### 1.) Pendulum: Mosaic Select: Pendulum: Live at the Village Vanguard

This is a Mosaic Select 3-CD set chronicling a live set by Dave Liebman, Randy Brecker, Rich Beirach and a rhythm section in the '70's. And no, they don't make groups like this anymore. Stylistically all over the map and unapologetic about it. Grooving but abstract. Great stuff, and most of it totally unavailable until now.

And while we're at it...in the past two years I've been dealing in Mosaic jazz sets on eBay, making some decent bread and throwing the discs into my 160GB iPod as I sell them off. This label really is the best jazz label ever, if you don't know about them, go to [www.mosaicrecords.com](http://www.mosaicrecords.com) and check them out. The big box sets that have really floored me include Wayne Shorter/ Lee Morgan, Herbie Nichols, Elvin Jones, and quite a few others; the smaller Mosaic Selects that are incredible include Grachan Moncur III, Don Pullen, and the Toshiko Akiyoshi/Lew Tabackin Big Band. Mosaic provides a way of making incredible jazz available without a big, "have to have a hit" release. My life is richer these days thanks to this label.

### 2.) Elvis Costello: Momofuku

I saw Elvis this summer with the Police, and I would have gone home happy after his set. This CD was slipped out before the tour and is a real return to form for him. When he's good, there's no rocker better.

### 3.) Various Artists: What It Is! Funky Soul and Rare Grooves

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I went to a birthday party for a young friend and an hour into it I went to the host and asked what it was he was playing. It was this. It's great funky music from little independent labels in the '70's, and is the ultimate party set.

4.) John McLaughlin: Floating Point

McLaughlin continues to grow and amaze. This was recorded with Indian musicians in Mumbai, but emphasizes fusion more than Indian music. Mind-boggling stuff.

5.) Jonny Greenwood: There Will Be Blood

When I went to see this movie on its release the soundtrack really grabbed me. It topped off the action in a really nonstandard, unusual way. An article in the New Yorker given to me by Jim Ryan mentioned how Greenwood is the guitar cruncher for Radiohead, but he's obviously a lot deeper and imaginative than that resumé would lead you to believe. The most interesting soundtrack of the decade (ineligible for an Oscar due to a technicality, but deserving of one).

6.) Maceo Parker: Roots & Grooves

Double disc set of MACEO! MACEO! Live stuff, funky, and some serious sax honking. Easy to overlook, easy to pigeonhole as James Brown's sidekick, but Maceo shows he's his own man and keeping his chops up with Prince as well.

7.) Steve Winwood : Nine Lives

Winwood, back with Clapton on one cut for the first time since Blind Faith, and offering his still-amazing voice and organ and guitar in his best release in years. How does he do it?

8.) Bob Dylan: Tell Tale Signs: Rare and Unreleased 1989-2006 (The Bootleg Series, Vol. 8)

Go ahead, heave the brickbats. This bootleg series gives us the tracks Dylan discarded along his way. So how come the anthology of them is more compelling than his official releases? Vol. 7 is a gem, too.

9.) Joe Zawinul & WDR Big Band: Brown Street

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Boy, do I miss this guy, the only real synthesist ever allowed into the hallowed jazz halls. It ain't fair. Anyway, on this double disc you get Zawinul playing a lot of his hits with one of the kick-assesst big bands of all time. It's really a pity that jazz has gotten so close-minded and elitist that people can't appreciate something like this.

10.) Todd Rundgren: Liars and other newer titles

I've ignored Rundgren for almost two decades, ever since he seemed to make computer programming more of a priority than music. But hang on, listening to Liars (and also checking out a GREAT concert of the Liars band on DVD) made me realize that he still writes catchy, compelling pop tunes when he wants. There's been a trickle of CDs he's released in the last decade, mostly on Japanese labels, and every one of them has something to offer.

From Bonnie Wright:

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Thanks for including me. I still consider myself a member of the musicians club, though for the moment my performing has been maybe twice a year.

I am reminded by these emails how much I don't listen to albums much at all anymore. I work long hours, listen to KYW1060, talk radio, and NPR in the car, and put the TV on for every waking moment I am at home for companionship. I remember in what seems like the distant past putting on albums or CD's and blasting the living room stereo to 10 and cleaning the house to Emmy Lou, or Manhattan Transfer, or Jessie Collin Young, or Sinatra, or Streisand's show tune album, or Chick Corea's Light as a feather album, or Nine Inch Nails, or Filter..... Guess I changed the way I clean the house or something. There is so much out there I haven't heard.

Once in awhile I still whip up a quick (usually over a weekend) song with Reason 4 and Tracktion 3 (if i get an idea and if I am willing to sit in that chair in front of the mic and computer with my headphones for at least 12 hours a day, without realizing where the time has gone). Some day I'd like to take the Berkleymusic online courses on recording as I am frustrated with my engineering limits....

But I of course hear all the music clips on TV, the bumper music on the radio (NPR has the best), movie and series sound tracks (I still

love the grandeur of the french horns on the Dances with Wolves sound track, when they see the herd of buffalos; and I liked the theme song to the HBO series "In Treatment," though I didn't like HBO's portrayal or the therapist's lack of professional boundaries). And just yesterday in the medical records room at the Philadelphia Prison, where i currently work as a psychiatrist, I was boppin' to Stevie Wonder's "Do I Do," the LP version with Dizzy G, on a crappy little radio for what seemed like 10 minutes as I rhythmically pulled my charts and imagined the warmth of stage lights. I'm still hearing that song in my head. God I miss playing a great groove with great players. Those of you who still play--what a gift and privilege you have. If you ever need a chick drummer, for a gig where the drums are already set up, that's not way past my bed time or too far away, and that doesn't require fancy clothes or cleavage, I'll play for free.

So let me make a list here:

1. I went to the fund raiser at Harrah's last April thanks to a phone call from the fabulous Geri Mingori and enjoyed hearing some of the best local performers around. My heart goes to Paul Jost (Yost?), who is so refreshingly different in his percussion and singing. I was very impressed. Please forward this to him if he is not married, gay, or an alcoholic.
2. I went to see Doug Grigsby, bass player/composer/recording engineer extraordinaire in a couple venues, once when he was with Urban Gorilla Orchestra in West Philly (awesome big funk band--my son and I were the only white people in the audience, I think), and once at Zanzibar Blue with a terrific latin band whose name escapes me (my apologies to the band).
3. In April I surprised my son at his school when his dad's band was performing for senior assembly. I left work for a few hours, snuck on the the stage wearing a huge afro, including pick comb, and sat in as a guest drummer for a song. He didn't know it was me until I took my bow, throwing the afro wig at him in the front row. Great fun!!
4. I found a chorale arrangement of "Once in Royal David's City" in the itunes store. This is my favorite Christmas song, which they sing beautifully at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Center City as the opening number for the 8PM Christmas Eve service, where I receive my annual alcohol quota at communion (please forgive me, Lord). I missed the service this year, hence my search in the itunes store, But last year I had the pleasure of sitting next to as amazing singer Mary Ellen Desmond for the second year in a row. You must hear her voice

and classical control. I believe she sings every style, including country, and she sings Jazz at the Four Seasons.

5. Yo Yo Ma, I loved you on Garrison Keillor's Christmas program on NPR .....

6. In fact, I really enjoy Garrison Keillor's band, especially the ragtime feel and the jazz tunes. Makes me happy. This is what I listen to on the way to and from Genuardi's grocery store on the weekends with my dog. I confess the opera singers, folk singers, and many of the other entertainers he gets, though excellent, get on my nerves big time. I wanna hear the funny stories, daw gone it.

7. Sound track from Castaways. So well timed, so dynamic, only there when it's supposed to be. Gives me chills. Makes me cry.

8. Theme song from Band of Brothers by Michael Kamen. Speaks for itself, especially when you pair it with the images of the soldiers in battle. Oops--there go the chills and tears again.....

9. I found an old song called Paradise by the band Change that is a blast from the early 80's for me when I went dancing at Rainbows on Walnut and 13th til 2 am. Great sound system...this song sounded soooo good. Damn that was a fun time, except for when it wasn't...

10. I was doing outreach with a female senior citizen with schizophrenia, who wore purple underwear on her head and upside down sun glasses, and who had stopped her medication, and refused to open her apartment door and speak to me. Inside I heard KYW as well as WRTI both blasting: RTI had classical in the morning, and jazz in the afternoon when I would stop by again and drop off some water or toiletries or cigarettes in an attempt to gain her trust. This woman was awesome. She became one of my very favorites. She loved every kind of music, even rap, and did an interesting rendition of 'The house is on fire..let the motherfucker burn!' with appropriate hip gyrations. She is one of the many folks I miss when I leave a job to go to my next adventure. Even the craziest people I've had the privilege of getting to know have great knowledge of and appreciation for music. Of course, some of us are musicians.....

Happy 2009 to all of you!

Bonnie Wright MD



## From Chico Huff:

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Hello Folks,

Here's my eclectic sampling of some of the music that got me through 2008.

Have fun!

Chico

Antonio Carlos Jobim/Elis Regina "Elis & Tom"

What a beautiful disc! To me this contains the definitive version of Waters of March (Aguas de Marco). Elis Regina was amazing and passed on far too young.

Bela Bartok "The Great Composers Series Disk 46" (at least I think that's the title. Got it from the library)

This disc contains two of my favorite Bartok pieces, "Concerto for Orchestra-Introduction:Andante non troppo:Allegro" and( particularly) Game Of Pairs:Allegretto scherzando. I'm fairly new to the vast world of classical music. It's exciting to find something new to sink my mind into.

Bill Frisell "History, Mystery"

Frisell small band with added string quartet. Vibe for days. Visual music.

Boomish "Clearance Sale"

Great Drum and Bass disc. This is mainly drummer Zach Danziger and bassist Tim LeFevre's project. The disc guests Jim Beard and Frisell. Anyone who's a fan of the Drum and Bass idiom should definitely give this a listen. Equal parts humor and kick ass.

Gary Willis "Actual Fiction"

Bassist extraordinaire Willis working in the more loopish, electronica mode. Brilliant stuff. I think more of the world needs to know about Willis. He seems to have been missed in the world of Wooten.

Charlie Haden Family and Friends "Rambling Boy"

Haden returns to his roots on this one. He even sings "Shenandoah"(a beautiful, heartfelt rendition). With members of his family as well as Jerry Douglas, Pat Metheny, Stuart Duncan, Sam Bush etc etc this is one heck of a great listen. This disc seems to have spent the most time in the player last year (and this).

Little Dragon "Little Dragon"

Great new band from Sweden. I love how Yukimi Nagano sings. Quirky small scale electronica. This is probably my pick for best new band of 2008.

M.I.A. "Kala" (Arular is badass, too)

I guess I'm regressing to my youth. I love this music! Anyone I mention it to seems to be surprised. When I say that her music was featured in Slumdog Millionaire they seem to a little more accepting. Anyway, who cares? Big fat beats and killer hooks. Great driving music as well. If you want to avoid seeing a 50 + hippie trying to dance, stay away when I'm listening to this! Yes, I'm regressing.

Schubert "String Quartet in C Minor"

My son turned me on to this. The second movement (adagio) is absolutely beautiful.

Crooked Still "Shaken by a Low Sound"

Great new band from Boston with a fresh take on American and Irish folk and roots music. The band is primarily voice, banjo, cello, and bass. A big part Of the sound on this disc is the presence cellist Rushad Eggleston who has since left the group. I've seen the the band since his departure and the new members fiddler Brittany Haas and cellist Tristan Clarridge more than make up for it. Awesome.

Well, there you have it. A small sampling of music that passed my ears last year.

Have a great New Year!!  
Chico Huff

From Steve Carl:

Hey Dave,

Sorry for the delay in responding. I kept meaning to, but age-related time dilation principles keep kicking in.

As usual for recent years, I haven't been listening as much as I used to. There a few items on my iPod that I've enjoyed greatly in the past year, including:

Baseline "Standards" - Baseline is a trio featuring Hein Vandegeyn, John Abercrombie and Joe LaBarbera playing pieces like "Alone Together", "My Romance", "My Funny Valentine", etc.

Glenn Gould "Goldberg Variations" this is the original recording he did, at the beginning of his career.

Herbie Hancock "River The Joni Letters" a tribute to the music of Joni Mitchell.

Kim Kashkashian & Robert Levin "Asturiana - Songs from Spain and Argentina" a beautiful collection of pieces arranged for viola and piano.

Nguyen Le "Purple - Celebrating Jimi Hendrix" I love the music of Jimi Hendrix. Not just the way he played, but the songs he wrote. Hearing "Manic Depression" in whatever language they're singing in is a treat, as are the rest of the songs.

Pat Martino "Remember" who could forget

Strunz and Farah "Jungle Guitars" nuevo flamenco from a South American



guitarist and an Iranian guitarist, along with their band. I've enjoyed these guys' music for years.

John Williams "El Diablo Suelto" the guitarist, not the composer/conductor, playing beautiful and exciting music from South America.

Of course, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, Goldberg Variations, as well as smaller pieces played by Segovia and Parkening always find their way onto my mp3 player.

Later,

Steve

## From Jack Loughhead

To the Most Honorable Mad Dog:

Another crazy year goes by, and we're still in the game (more or less). I had a stab from the past the weekend before last when I went to hear a band my sister and niece sing in at Chaplins in Spring City, and the opening act was Robbie Dickenson. He certainly doesn't look or act his 60 years! He said to say hello.

As to this year's listening, some of my top ten have already made other people's lists. I too dug McLaughlin's latest, and the Maceo double CD has spent a lot of time in the player. Chico beat me to Charlie Haden's disc, which I thought had some breathtakingly beautiful stuff, and mixed up the different songs and artists in such a way to make it a great album to listen to all the way through. Same with Frisell, who I'm always a sucker for. I caught him up at the Blue Note about 6 weeks ago playing for McCoy Tyner's birthday party, and the CD release of his "Guitars" album. It was an interesting show, somewhat marred by the fact that the piano didn't seem to be too well miked. Frisell only got to play on about half the numbers, as the real star of the show was Savian Glover, who did some astounding tap dancing. While thoroughly enjoyable, I would rather have seen more of Frisell and McCoy. At any rate, the Guitars album has gotten a good bit of play, also featuring Marc Ribot, Derek Trucks, and Bela Fleck (stretching the definition of guitar just a bit.)

Here's a few more:

- Carla Bley - The Lost Chords Find Paolo Fresu - A small group with a very big sound - especially the horns. At one point, a tune named "Four" (not Miles) somehow ends up as the Beatles "She's So Heavy", before spinning off in another direction entirely.

- Mutet - Mutopia - Some cool stuff from Fleck's sax man, along with Futureman actually playing real drums, Kofi Burbidge on keys and flute, and some pretty kick ass bass from Pastorius junior (Felix).

- Stanley Jordan - State of Nature - Stanley mixes up the tapping stuff with some more traditional guitar technique for a disc that is all over the place stylistically. I heard an interview with him this summer on NPR, and this guy has some fascinating ideas, including a project attempting to use sound to interpret statistical analyses (such as stock market results), since our ears are much better able to discern subtle patterns, etc., than our eyes. At least it's something like that.
- Hiromi's Sonicboom - Beyond Standard - Some interesting renditions of standards, featuring Fuze on the fretless guitar.
- David Sanborn - Here and Gone - Sanborn goes back to the roots with a homage to Hank Crawford. Nice arrangements, and a great backup band with Steve Gadd, Christian McBride, Gil Goldstein, and Wallace Roney, as well as guest appearances by Clapton, Sam Moore and Joss Stone.
- Buena Vista Social Club Live at Carnegie Hall - I always liked the studio album that came out 10 years ago, but this beats the pants off it. Why did they wait 10 years for this?
- Taj Mahal - Maestro - First release in 5 years from Taj, and it's a good one. He has teamed up with all sorts of people for this, but anybody who can get Los Lobos as a back up band gets a vote from me.
- Finally, my current favorite, thanks to my son Tigh at Christmas - David Byrne and Brian Eno's "Everything that Will Happen Will Happen Today." Described by the two as "electronic gospel", it consists of instrumental tracks composed by Eno, to which Byrne added the lyrics. Not nearly as ambient as some of Eno's stuff, several of the tunes really have gotten their hooks into me, and the lyrics (and the vocals themselves) are great.

Hope to catch up with you sometime in 09 Hartl. Happy New Year!

Jack

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