

Music Extra Jazz



Musical leaning: Gretchen Parlato draws on an artistic background for her third album *Picture: David Bartolomi*

Putting a name to a talented face

If you're looking for a good name to drop in hip young jazz circles, try Gretchen Parlato. The US singer/songwriter's ethereal lyricism reaches new heights on **The Lost And Found** (ObliqSound), which marries Parlato's sensuous vocals with contemporary beats. The young New Yorker has an immaculate musical pedigree: the daughter of former Frank Zappa sideman Dave Parlato, she won the prestigious Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition in 2004 and hasn't looked back since. The highlights on her third album are numerous and the way the self-penned bossa-tinged *Winter Wind* builds to its climax is an airy miracle. Throw in delightfully delicate jazz makeovers of Simply Red's *Holding Back The Years* and Lauryn Hill's *All That I Can Say*, and you've got the perfect summer soundtrack.

Not so long ago, the cool new jazz name to drop was Madeleine Peyroux. But the Billie Holiday-esque French-US chanteuse seemed to mature too quickly into comfortable musical middle age. Happily, her fifth album, **Standing On The Rooftop** (EmArcy/

Universal), sees Peyroux shaking things up with a small shift away from wispy folk-jazz towards a rootsier vibe. As ever, the covers are beautifully executed, including a banjo-led take on The Beatles' *Martha My Dear* and an eerily atmospheric account of Robert Johnson's *Love In Vain*. The latter was memorably covered by the Rolling Stones 40-odd years ago, and former Stones bassist Bill Wyman turns up as the co-writer of the funky standout original here, *The Kind You Can't Afford*.

No one does heart-on-the-sleeve emotions quite like Liane Carroll. Not many do joy like her, either. The much-garlanded Hastings-based singer/pianist's new album, **Up And Down** (Quietmoney), captures her in peak form in both modes, from the radiant soulfulness of *Buy And*

Sell through to the shimmering resignation of *I Can Let Go Now*. Carroll's versions of well-worn jazz standards sound as vital as her frequent dips into less familiar waters (such as Tom Waits): the coupling of a particularly adrenalinised assault on *Witchcraft*

with an emotionally tumultuous reading of *My Funny Valentine* is a one-two knockout. Most moving of all, though, is *Turn Out The Stars*, featuring the great Kenny Wheeler on flugelhorn.

Jazz is a US artform in origin but it's always been keen to fuse with outside influences.

'Cubop' – bebop-based improvisation crossed with traditional Afro-Cuban rhythms – was first popularised in the 1940s by trumpet giant Dizzy Gillespie, who co-wrote

enduring classic *Manteca* with Cuban percussionist Chano Pozo. Though politically estranged from the US, Havana has remained a hotbed of high-class jazz activity. Three outstanding young US-based instrumentalists – vibist Stefon Harris, saxophonist David Sánchez and trumpeter Christian Scott – recently journeyed to the Cuban capital to perform with the bands of acclaimed local pianists Rember Duharte and Harold López-Nussa. The resulting album, the deeply groovy **Ninety Miles** (Concord Picante) – the title refers to the distance from Cuba to the US – proves once again that music is the greatest and most adaptable of international languages.

Robert Shore

