



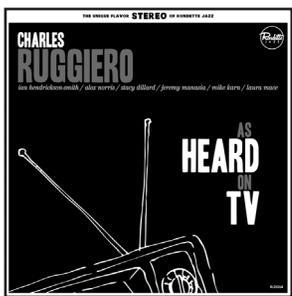
**Triangular III**  
**Ralph Peterson (Onyx-Truth Revolution)**  
 by Russ Musto

Drummer-led piano trio dates are uncommon entries within the jazz discography, differing from sessions under the leadership of pianists and bassists. Unshackled from the restrictive role of sideman, the drummer-leader is more apt to utilize the full dynamic range of his instrument, becoming more of a creative voice and less a metronomic timekeeper. Master drummer Ralph Peterson excels in the rarefied atmosphere of his own trio on *Triangular III*. He powers a group completed by pianist Zaccai Curtis and bassist Luques Curtis with polyrhythmic intensity, invigorating their spirited playing throughout this live set recorded at New Haven's Firehouse 12.

Opener "Uranus", the first of three compositions by pianist Walter Davis, Jr., is a joyous romp showcasing the alternately fluid and percussive piano of Zaccai Curtis. A selection from the Jazz Messenger repertory, it features a climactic Peterson solo where he exhibits his command of the Art Blakey rhythmic vocabulary. Following a funky drum set-up, Sam Rivers' "Beatrice" swings straightahead, then shifts gears into an AfroCuban mode, which includes a lyrical bass solo. Bass introduces the Latin-ized arrangement of Joe Henderson's "Inner Urge" with a montuno midsection and fiery drum finish. Davis' "Backgammon", another Messenger anthem, is a powerful Peterson workout with swinging solos from the brothers Curtis. The pianist's "Manifest Destiny" is a powerfully dramatic work, which clearly exhibits his original voice as composer.

Peterson's tasteful brushwork is on display throughout Hoagy Carmichael's "Skylark" while on Davis' "400 Years Ago Tomorrow" piano and bass share the spotlight with no-holds-barred drumming, as they also do on "The Art Of War", a tour de force Peterson original on which the three play with driving strength. Zaccai Curtis original "Moments" is an impressionistic work of beauty, offering a respite before the band closes with Peterson's swinging "Blues For Chooch".

For more information, visit [ralphpetersonmusic.com](http://ralphpetersonmusic.com). This project is at Dizzy's Club Apr. 26th-27th. See Calendar.



**As Heard On TV**  
**Charles Ruggiero (Rondette Jazz)**  
 by Terrell Holmes

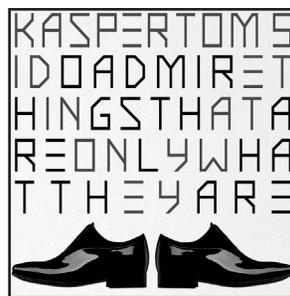
What can a jazz album of television theme song covers possibly offer? Twinges of nostalgia? Cute alternative meaning of "show tune"? *As Heard On TV* by drummer Charles Ruggiero invigorates classic theme songs from each of the past seven decades with new interpretations.

The infectious version of "Bewitched" scampers along, led by Alex Norris' muted trumpet and Ian Hendrickson-Smith's flute. Stacy Dillard's soprano sax on "Law and Order" defines coolness and austerity as

he moves the tune smoothly beyond the constraints of its opening credits timeframe. "Moonlighting" is a tango that's more sensual than the Al Jarreau blueprint and who won't sing along with "This Is It", the theme from *The Bugs Bunny Show*? Pianist Jeremy Manasia and bassist Mike Karn are outstanding as the band channels the John Coltrane Quartet—with some Oliver Nelson-like arranging thrown in—on the outstanding "Game of Thrones". Ruggiero's arrangement slows down the 2000s frenetic theme from *iCarly* ("Leave it All to Me") for the ol' folks, turning it into a mild romp with the help of some smoldering vocals by Laura Mace. The boogaloo version of "Good Times" would make both Joe Cuba and Lou Donaldson proud. The most surprising song, however, is "You Are My Greatest Love", the theme from *The Honeymooners*, written by the Great One himself, Jackie Gleason. In terms of structure and sentiment, it's a ready-made standard and the band, led by Dillard's soulful tenor, do it perfect justice. It's possible that this is an instance where a song's potential has been trumped by its pedigree.

One of the reasons *As Heard On TV* is such a great listen, other than the splendid playing, is that Ruggiero figured out which songs to play more or less straight, which ones to stretch out and what their limits were. Everyone involved here clearly had a blast and this album, right down to the cover design, is a classic itself.

For more information, visit [rondettejazz.com](http://rondettejazz.com)



**I Do Admire Things That Are Only What They Are**  
**Kasper Tom5 (Barefoot)**  
 by Ken Waxman

This high-energy CD by Danish drummer Kasper Tom shows why, despite recent troubles, the European Union (EU) isn't likely to dissolve. Part of this session's appeal rests on contributions from Polish trumpeter Tomasz Dąbrowski and German bass clarinetist Rudi Mahall, with Tom's fellow Danes trombonist Petter Hängsel and bassist Jens Mikkel Madsen, adding up to 5.

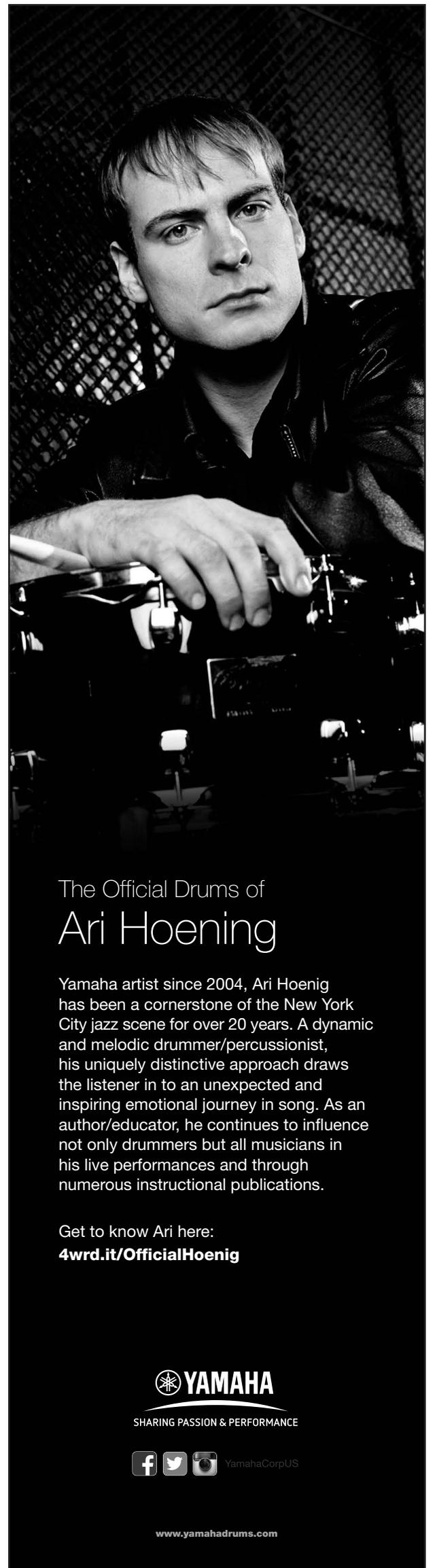
It's the melding of disparate textures that make this disc notable, though there's space for distinctive solos. "Hvid" features layered horn tones opening up into parallel contrapuntal licks from Mahall and Dąbrowski. Polyphonic improvising is highlighted on "Vranjo", as Mahall's billowing tone sharpens to meld with trumpet bites, backed by measured bass plucks.

Hängsel is the ear-catcher here. "Vanity" finds him leading a sour-sounding Albert Ayler-ian march where his variations forcefully mesh with Tom's rhythmic pulse, finally loosening up the theme with rugged tailgate excavations. Hängsel and Dąbrowski whine and puff at the top of "Bigos in Bydgoszcz", but later the former's pulsating blats are partnered by the latter's stop-time half-valve effects.

Tom steps forward with a martial beat on "Vanity" and goading the conclusion of "Play or Die" like Art Blakey did with his Jazz Messengers while sympathetic pulsing on "Nye Spor" recalls Cool Jazz. The latter's harmonic concordance is based on tension and release with shape determined by blending contralto clarinet lines, tremolo trombone slurs and cymbal stings.

There isn't much chance that Tom will become an EU civil servant but, by creating compositions whose shape and resolution reflects pan-Europeanism, he's advanced good politics as well as good music.

For more information, visit [barefoot-records.com](http://barefoot-records.com)



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