

Don't miss last year's finer jazz

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By JON POSES

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No doubt with the onslaught of the holidays, many quality releases were lost in the high-profile exposure of major artists. My friends in marketing tell me

"positioning" is ultimately what sells recordings.

Here's a subjective overview of a few titles that deserve recognition — read

"positioning."

Jazz lovers know that Cedar Walton, now

approaching 60, is one of the most inventive present-day mainstream composers. Many of his pieces have in the past 15 years become standards, joining the ranks of jazz literature interpreted by everyone from high school outfits to his peers.

"Composer" (Astor Place), as one might guess from the title, is a collection of nine Walton originals, many never before recorded.

Walton leads about as perfect a band as one could hope for: tenor saxophonist Ralph Moore, alto saxophonist Vincent Herring, trumpeter Roy Hargrove, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Victor Lewis. "Composer" is sweetness on disc.

Three years ago, Kirk Lightsey moved to Paris from Detroit.

Although he returns far too infrequently, we do have the pleasure of his company via sojourns such as "Goodbye Mr. Evans" (Evidence), the title referring to the late pianist Bill Evans. This is a trio date with Dutch bassist Tibor Elekes and drummer-percussionist Famoudou Don Moye.

While I must confess a lack of familiarity with Elekes, Lightsey and Moye are cohorts in The Leaders and have worked together in a variety of formats over the past 20 years.



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