

STEVE SWALLOW

Steve Swallow was born in New York City in 1940, and spent his childhood in Fair Lawn, New Jersey. Before turning to the acoustic bass at age 14, he studied piano (with Howard Kasschau, who also taught Nelson Riddle) and trumpet. His otherwise miserable adolescence was brightened by his discovery of jazz. He took many of his first stabs at improvisation with Ian Underwood (who subsequently became a Mother Of Invention and an L.A. studio ace), with whom he attended a swank New England private school.

During his years at Yale University he studied composition with Donald Martino, and played dixieland with many of the greats, among them Pee Wee Russell, Buck Clayton and Vic Dickenson. In 1960 he met Paul and Carla Bley, left Yale in a hurry, moved to New York City, and began to tour and record with Paul Bley, The Jimmy Giuffre Trio and George Russell's sextet, which featured Eric Dolphy and Thad Jones. He also performed in the early '60s with Joao Gilberto, Sheila Jordan, and bands led by Benny Goodman, Marian McPartland, Chico Hamilton, Al Cohn and Zoot Sims, Clark Terry and Bob Brookmeyer, and Chick Corea.

In 1964 he joined the Art Farmer Quartet featuring Jim Hall, and began writing music. Many of his songs have been recorded by prominent jazz artists, including Bill Evans, Chick Corea, Stan Getz, Gary Burton, Art Farmer, Phil Woods, Jack DeJohnette, Steve Kuhn, Lyle Mays, Jim Hall and Pat Metheny. And he was sampled by A Tribe Called Quest.

He toured from late 1965 through 1967 with the Stan Getz Quartet, which also included Gary Burton (replaced in 1967 by Chick Corea) and Roy Haynes. In 1968 he left Getz to join Gary Burton's quartet, an association he maintained, with occasional time off for good behavior, for 20 years. He has performed on more than 20 of Burton's recordings, the most recent being *Quartet Live*, nominated for a Grammy in 2009.

In 1970 he switched from acoustic to electric bass and moved to Bolinas, California, where he wrote music for *Hotel Hello*, a duet album for ECM with Gary Burton, and played often with Mike Nock and Art Lande. He also took his first stab at band leading, in trio with Bill Connors and Glenn Cronkhite.

Returning to the East Coast in 1974, he taught for two long years at the Berklee College of Music. In 1976 he was awarded a National Endowment For The Arts grant to set poems by Robert Creeley to music, which resulted in another ECM album, *Home*. He performed with such diverse artists as Dizzy Gillespie, Michael Brecker, George Benson and Herbie Hancock, and recorded with Stan Getz (on an album featuring Joao Gilberto), Bob Moses, Steve Lacy, Michael Mantler and Kip Hanrahan. He also played on recordings produced by Hal Willner, on tracks featuring, among others, Carla Bley, Dr. John and James Taylor.

In 1978 he joined the Carla Bley Band. He continues to perform and record with her extensively, in various contexts.

He toured and recorded with John Scofield from 1980 to 1984, first in trio with drummer Adam Nussbaum, and then in duet. He has since toured often with Scofield, and has also produced several of his recordings.

He has also co-produced many albums with Carla Bley for her record companies WATT and XtraWATT, including *Night-Glo* (1985), which she wrote to feature him, and *Carla* (1987), a collection of his songs featuring her. In 1987 he also produced the first of four albums for the British saxophonist Andy Sheppard. In the ensuing years he produced recordings for Karen Mantler, Lew Soloff and Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen, and recorded and/or toured with, among others, Joe Lovano, Motohiko Hino, Ernie Watts, Michael Gibbs, Rabih Abou-Khalil, Paul Bley, Henri Texier and Allen Ginsberg.

In 1988 he and Carla Bley began performing duet concerts in Europe, the United States, South America and Japan. *Duets*, an album of their songs arranged for piano and bass, was released in 1988, and a second recording, *Go Together*, in 1993.

In December of 1989 he reunited, after 27 years, with Jimmy Giuffre and Paul Bley to record two discs for Owl Records entitled *The Life Of A Trio*. This trio toured frequently until Spring of 1995, and recorded for Owl and Soul Note Records.

In 1991 he composed and produced *Swallow*, an XtraWATT recording featuring his five-string bass and several of his longtime associates, including Gary Burton, John Scofield and Steve Kuhn.

He recorded often in the nineties. John Scofield and Pat Metheny's *I Can See Your House From Here*, on which he played with drummer Bill Stewart, was released on Blue Note Records; this quartet toured in the summer of 1994. *Real Book*, his third XtraWATT disc, was recorded in December of 1993 and released in 1994; its cast included Tom Harrell, Joe Lovano, Mulgrew Miller and Jack DeJohnette.

In Spring of 1994 he was featured at the London Jazz Festival in a concert of his compositions with lyrics written and sung by Norma Winstone. 1994 also contained concert appearances in Japan with Steve Kuhn and in Europe with The Very Big Carla Bley Band, Jimmy Giuffre and Paul Bley, The Paul Motian Electric BeBop Band, Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen, and Carla Bley and Andy Sheppard. A live recording of this trio, *Songs With Legs*, was released on WATT in early 1995, at which time they again toured Europe. He also recorded in Spring of 1995 with Steve Kuhn, Michael Franks, John Taylor, Pierre Favre and Julian Arguelles. In July he and Carla Bley performed duets in Brazil, and in the fall returned to Europe for a lengthy tour.

In Spring of 1996 he found himself again touring Europe, first with Bley and Sheppard and then with John Scofield and Bill Stewart. He subsequently co-produced and played on Scofield's first album for Verve Records, *Quiet*. He also co-produced and played on *The Carla Bley Big Band Goes To Church*, recorded live at Umbria Jazz in Perugia, Italy, and toured and recorded with Paul Motian.

In November of '96 he introduced the Steve Swallow Quintet, with Chris Potter, Ryan Kisor (subsequently replaced by Barry Ries), Mick Goodrick and Adam Nussbaum, to audiences in Europe, and recorded with this group after its tour. The resulting album, *Deconstructed*, features his compositions based on classic Tin Pan Alley song structures; it was released in early 1997.

He toured relentlessly in 1997 with Trio 2000 (with Paul Motian and Chris Potter), Carla Bley, John Scofield and several others, and recorded with several diverse artists, including Henri Texier (with Lee Konitz and Bob Brookmeyer), Glen Moore, Ettore Fioravanti and Michel Portal. He also produced the first of two recordings by French drummer/composer Christophe Marguet.

In the Spring of 1998 he toured and recorded with Lee Konitz and Paul Motian, and toured with Brazilian guitarist Paulo Bellinati. He also participated with Carla Bley in the Copenhagen Jazzvisits program, and was nominated for the 1999 Danish Jazzpar. In April he directed and performed his music for big band with the Harvard University Jazz Band, and in June recorded with pianist Christian Jacob. In July he participated in a tour presenting the concert version of Carla Bley's *Escalator Over The Hill*, and toured in trio with Lee Konitz and Paul Bley. He toured in the Fall with Paul Motian's Electric BeBop Band, and with John Scofield and Bill Stewart. He also performed in duo with Carla Bley, which resulted in a third Duets CD entitled *Are We There Yet?*

In March and April of 1999 he toured again with his quintet. Reviewing the band's performance at Ronnie Scott's Club in the Times of London, Chris Parker wrote "...this was as near a perfect display of small-group jazz - robust yet exquisitely poised, cogent but surprisingly delicate - as has been heard in London in recent years." An XtraWATT CD entitled *Always Pack Your Uniform On Top*, recorded live at Ronnie's, was released shortly thereafter.

2000 proceeded apace. After a return to Tokyo with Carla Bley, this time performing Fancy Chamber Music, and to Sao Paulo performing Duets, he roamed Europe again with Paulo Bellinati. European festival-goers found him with Bobby Previte in July, and with John Scofield in August. In September he reunited with Lee Konitz and Paul Bley for appearances in the USA, and then returned to Europe for further tours with Bobby Previte and Carla Bley.

2001 proved adventurous. After a Spring Trios tour with Carla Bley and Andy Sheppard, he toured and recorded with Gerard Marais in France, recorded with Michael Gibbs (with a band of elite studio sharks) in New York City, with Bobby Previte (with Ray Anderson, Wayne Horvitz and Marty Ehrlich) in rustic Pennsylvania, and with Wolfi Puschnig (with Victor Lewis and Don Alias) in industrial Hoboken. In the Fall he also recorded with Akira Ishii, Arrigo Cappilletti, Maria Pia DeVito and Giovanni Mazzarino, and toured with Scofield, Bley and Previte. The year thundered to a conclusion with a triumphant tour and live recording by *Damaged In Transit*, Swallow's trio featuring Chris Potter and Adam Nussbaum. An XtraWATT CD followed soon after.

2002 yielded further excitement. After the customary Spring Trios tour, Swallow directed the Bohuslän Big Band, based in Goteborg, Sweden, in performances of his compositions and arrangements, and then toured Scandinavia with Jonas Johansen and Hans Ulrik. After another

Bobby Previte tour and work with Maria Pia DeVito, he barnstormed the summer festival circuit with Carla Bley's big band. In the waning days of summer he participated in the recording of *L'Histoire Du Clochard*, a Palmetto Records CD featuring arrangements by Ohad Talmor of his music. He then returned to Europe for performances with John Taylor and with Wolfi Puschnig, and toured the USA with Bobby Previte. After a quick trip to Korea for a one-nighter with Carla Bley and Andy Sheppard, he returned to Europe for the year's breathless finish, with singer Antonio Placer and Paulo Bellinati.

The pace hardly slackened in 2003, which began with Eurotours with Bobby Previte, Gerard Marais, Antonio Placer and in duo with Paulo Bellinati. Swallow returned home in June to do his laundry and to pick up Carla, with whom he ventured to Porto, Portugal, for a memorable big band concert in a magnificent Rem Koolhaas concert hall, at the time still under construction. Carla's big band then toured briefly in the USA. Swallow worked often during the second half of the year with John Scofield and Bill Stewart, detouring in September to play with Ulrik and Johansen. The Fall also saw the birth of Carla Bley's new quartet, The Lost Chords; drummer Billy Drummond joined Bley, Sheppard and Swallow. The band toured and recorded an eponymous album in November. A December engagement at the Blue Note in New York City with Scofield and Stewart also yielded a live album, *En Route*.

A trio tour with We 3, a cooperative band with Dave Liebman and Adam Nussbaum, began the 2004 season. Yet another tour with Bobby Previte followed, and gave way to work with Nussbaum and pianist Giovanni Mazzerino. This summer's traditional European festival dance was performed with Scofield and Stewart. Kip Hanrahan called, and Swallow found himself in a trendy SoHo studio in August with a roomful of great drummers and percussionists. September was spent in the company of Scofield and Stewart. After yet another round with Ulrik and Johansen (this trio had come to be called Tin Pan Aliens), and a brief stint with Puschnig, a Lost Chords tour wrapped up the year.

Spring of 2005 was spent once again in the company of Scofield and Stewart, and in May We 3 repaired to a studio in upstate New York to record their debut CD, *Three For All*. In August Swallow, his old friend Steve Kuhn and the Cikada Quartet recorded music composed by the bassist to poems written and read by Robert Creeley. The album, titled *So There*, was released in November 2006. In a review of it in the New York Times, Ben Ratliff said "It's a record with a soul, remarkably curious and thoughtful..." September of 2005 was spent with the Lost Chords, October with Antonio Placer and Ohad Talmor, and November with Scofield. He also recorded in duet with pianist Deidre Rodman for Sunnyside Records.

2006 began with a We 3 tour, and proceeded to projects with Scofield and with Bley. In June Swallow reunited with Gary Burton and Pat Metheny (with drummer Antonio Sanchez) for concerts in Japan and the USA, which were recorded for future release. He spent the summer happily with Carla Bley in a variety of contexts, which included a big band tour of the European festivals. He also flew to Ludwigsburg, Germany to record with Kenny Wheeler and John Taylor. September was spent touring and recording with the Scofield trio, October with Tin Pan Aliens and again with Scofield, and November with Ohad Talmor. He also recorded in Brooklyn with Pietro Tonolo, in the company of Gil Goldstein and Paul Motian. The year ended with a joyous concert of Christmas carols directed by Carla Bley.

In spring 2007 our intrepid bassist toured first with Scofield, then with Bley (with The Lost Chords and Paolo Fresu). A recording made in France at the end of their tour produced a WATT CD, which was released later that year. While in France he also recorded with Jean-Sebastien Simonoviez. After an appearance at Zankel Hall in New York City with Lee Konitz, Swallow galloped across Europe with Liebman and Nussbaum in July and played duets with Pat Metheny in August. The fall began with a trip to Sweden, to record an album of his music with the Bohuslän Big Band. This album, called *Swallow Songs*, was released in early 2008. Tin Pan Aliens also recorded again, with guests Bobo Stenson and Ulf Wakenius. After a tour of the UK with Michael Gibbs' band, he polished off the year with further tours with Bley and Scofield.

Carla Bley beckoned again in early 2008; Swallow gladly signed onto a trio tour with her and Andy Sheppard. This was followed by lots of work with Scofield, in the company of Bill Stewart and a motley horn section. The usual summer European frolic was accomplished first with Bley, and then with Burton/Metheny. The fall provided work in trio with Talmor and Nussbaum, with Steve Kuhn and Al Foster, and with Enrico Pieranunzi and Paul Motian; The Lost Chords closed the year with a trip to Brazil.

Further touring with Tin Pan Aliens and Giovanni Mazzerino (with Nussbaum, of course) began 2009, and was followed by recording in Norway with Tore Johansen, featuring Lars Jansson and Anders Kjellberg. Dates with Burton/Metheny, the Bohuslän Big Band, We 3 and Carla's big band followed.

Swallow was named Artist In Residence for the 2009/2010 season at the Essen Philharmonie. In September he, Carla (playing organ), Chris Cheek and Steve Cardenas convened to form The Swallow Quartet. The first concert of the Essen residency featured this quartet, coupled with the first Duets performance in many years by Bley and Swallow. Subsequent residency concerts featured The Norddeutscher Rundfunk big band with Norma Winstone, performing his compositions arranged by Mike Gibbs and by himself, and We 3.

2009 closed with tours with Talmor and Nussbaum, the Norrbotten Big Band, and the Lost Chords. After a short rest, 2010 began with a Swallow Quartet concert at the Institute for Contemporary Art in Boston and a lengthy European tour with The Lost Chords. Swallow and his perennial sidekick Nussbaum then met with two Brits, Mike Walker and Gwilym Simcock, to form The Impossible Gentlemen, which toured in June, and again in July. An album recorded at the end of these concerts was subsequently released. Further recording with Jonas Schoen was followed by concert and TV appearances with Scofield, and by yet more work with the Bohuslän band, this time playing Carla's music.

In October Henri Texier reunited his Transatlantik Quartet, with Joe Lovano, Aldo Romano and Swallow, for a short tour. The Scofield trio with Bill Stewart came next, and the year concluded with a two-part tour featuring Carla's trio and then Carla's Christmas Carols.

2011 began with a brief residency with Carla at the New England Conservatory, concerts with Talmor and Nussbaum, and a trip to Korea with Pat Metheny. Subsequently Swallow

recorded twice in rapid succession, with Hans Koller's big band in London and with Michel Godard in an abbey deep in France. The Impossible Gentlemen swung back into action in June, as did the Mazzerino trio in July. The Jazz Masters - Dave Liebman, Steve Kuhn, Billy Drummond and Swallow - played its second stint at Birdland in New York City in August; a recording with Kuhn and Joey Barron followed. After yet more touring with Talmor and Nussbaum, he reunited with Bobby Previte for concerts in Europe.

Meanwhile, The Swallow Quartet became The Swallow Quintet with the addition of drummer Jorge Rossy. This band toured Europe in November and recorded an album to be released in Spring 2012. Will it never end?

Steve Swallow placed first (electric bass) in the Downbeat International Critics Poll since 1983, and in the Downbeat Readers Poll since 1985, until the late twenty aughts, when he was overtaken by younger, fleetier players. He also won the Jazz Times Poll (electric bass) for several years, and has been voted the Jazz Journalists Association's electric bassist of the year since 2001, when that category was instituted. He lives now in contented isolation with Carla Bley, in the mountains of upstate New York.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

AS A LEADER:

Swallow Songs Vara Konserthus (with the Bohuslän Big Band)
So There XtraWATT 12
Damaged In Transit XtraWATT 11
L'Histoire Du Clochard Palmetto PM2103 (with Ohad Talmor)
Always Pack Your Uniform On Top XtraWATT 10
Are We There Yet? WATT 29 (with Carla Bley)
Deconstructed XtraWATT 9
Real Book XtraWATT 7
Go Together WATT 24 (with Carla Bley)
Swallow XtraWATT 6
Duets WATT 20 (with Carla Bley)
Carla XtraWATT 2
Home ECM 1160
Hotel Hello ECM 1055 (with Gary Burton)

FEATURED WITH OTHERS:

Carla Bley, The Lost Chords Find Paolo Fresu WATT 34

Carla Bley, Night-Glo WATT 16

Carla Bley, Sextet WATT 17

John Scofield, En Route Verve B0001699-02

John Scofield, Shinola ENJA 4004

John Scofield, Out Like A Light ENJA 4038