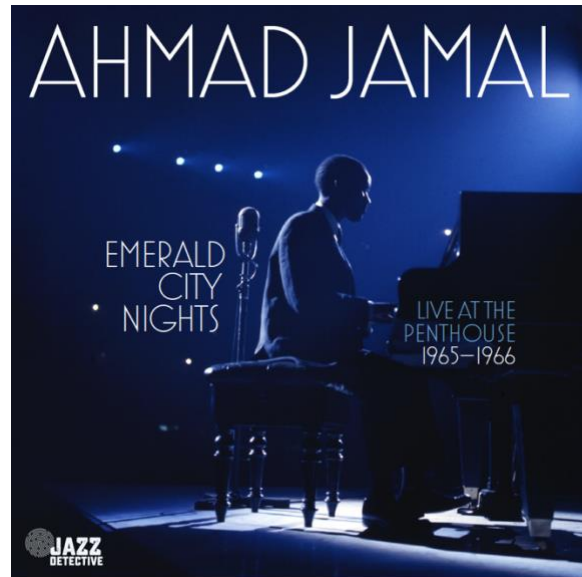
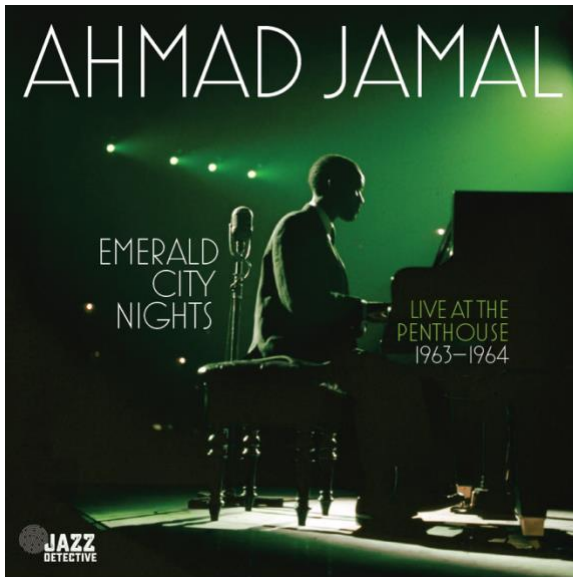




PRODUCER ZEV FELDMAN'S NEW IMPRINT, JAZZ DETECTIVE, LAUNCHES ON RECORD STORE DAY'S NOV. 26 BLACK FRIDAY EVENT WITH TWO DOUBLE-LP SETS OF PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED LIVE RECORDINGS BY AHMAD JAMAL

Two Volumes of *Emerald City Nights: Live at the Penthouse*, Capture Spectacular 1963-64 and 1965-66 Performances by the Master Pianist's Trio at the Penthouse in Seattle, Also Available as Two-CD Sets and Downloads on December 2

Packages Include Reflections by Jamal, Interviews with Pianists Ramsey Lewis, Jon Batiste, Kenny Barron, and Hiromi, Essays by Eugene Holley, Jr., Photos by Don Bronstein, Chuck Stewart and More



Producer and music sleuth Zev Feldman launches his new label venture, Jazz Detective, a division of the newly created Deep Digs Music Group, on Record Store Day's **November 26** Black Friday independent retail event with the release of two deluxe limited edition double-LP volumes: *Emerald City Nights: Live at the Penthouse (1963-64)* and *(1965-66)*, featuring previously unreleased performances by master pianist **Ahmad Jamal**.

The vinyl sets will be issued on 180-gram discs transferred from the original tapes and mastered by the legendary Bernie Grundman. The music will also be available as two-CD sets and downloads on December 2. A third two-LP volume devoted to Penthouse recordings from 1966-

68 will be released at a later date. All the packages have been produced by Feldman and supervised by Ahmad Jamal himself.

Taking its name from Feldman's handle "the Jazz Detective" and reflecting his determined work unearthing hitherto unheard, award-winning treasures, the Jazz Detective label is an imprint of Deep Digs Music Group, a partnership with Spain's Elemental Music, with which Feldman has enjoyed a long professional relationship.



Photo by Don Bronstein

Feldman says, "Deep Digs Music Group is a new archival record company that embodies my love and care for archival music around a variety of different genres. Jazz, to no surprise, is an enormous part of the fabric of the company, and the newly formed Jazz Detective imprint will focus on releasing previously unissued jazz treasures such as this wonderful music from Ahmad Jamal. It's an enormous thrill for me to be working with Mr. Jamal, whom I've been listening to my entire life. He's a true original and beyond category. I couldn't be more proud of this new endeavor and these releases."

The new label's premiere offerings feature dazzling performances recorded at the intimate Seattle club The Penthouse by local radio host and live broadcast engineer Jim Wilke. Other magnificent live sets from the venue produced by Feldman have been released by Resonance Records (Wynton Kelly and Wes Montgomery, and the Three Sounds) and Reel to Real Recordings (Cannonball Adderley, Harold Land and the duo of Johnny Griffin and Eddie Lockjaw Davis).

Both Jazz Detective packages include extensive booklets with new reflections by Jamal about his work; photographs by Don Bronstein, Chuck Stewart and others; and essays by Feldman, Wilke, journalist Eugene Holley, Jr., Charlie Puzzo, Jr. (son of late Penthouse owner Charlie Puzzo), and Marshall Chess of Chess/Argo/Cadet Records (the label that released Jamal's bestselling, career-making albums in the '50s). The 1963-64 volume includes new interviews with Jamal's hit-making contemporary and Argo label mate Ramsey Lewis and Japanese pianist Hiromi, while the 1965-66 collection contains interviews with 2022 Grammy Awards album of the year winner Jon Batiste, veteran pianist Kenny Barron and virtuoso Aaron Diehl.

On the Penthouse recordings Jamal is heard in his three-piece element, backed by bassists Richard Evans and Jamil Nasser and drummer Chuck Lampkin on the 1963-64 shows and by Nasser and drummers Lampkin, Vernel Fournier, and Frank Gant on the 1965-66 dates.

In 1958, the pianist became a household name — a rare feat for a jazz pianist — with a pair of live trio recordings that soared into the top reaches of the American record charts. *Ahmad Jamal Trio at the Pershing: But Not For Me*, cut live in the lounge of Chicago's Pershing Hotel,

reached No. 3 nationally in the year of its release; its successor *Ahmad Jamal: Volume IV*, captured at the Spotlight Club in Washington, D.C., climbed to No. 11.

In his overview of the National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master, Kennedy Center honoree, and Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, writer Holley says, “Pittsburgh-born Jamal has achieved jazz immortality in a myriad of ways: A child prodigy trained in European and American classical traditions who was professionally working at 14, Jamal developed a protean and profound pianism that ingeniously melded pianist Art Tatum’s swing-at-the-speed-of-sound and his hometown hero Errol Garner’s tender and torrid touch with Franz Liszt’s boundless keyboard technique and the azure French Impressionism of Ravel and Debussy.”

Though Jamal has recorded prolifically in a variety of settings — his most recent album *Ballades*, a studio session he released in 2019 at the age of 89, comprises solo and duo piano-bass recordings — he has always stated his preference for a live environment.

“There’s no comparison between performing live and performing in a studio,” he says in the new *Emerald City Nights* collections. “That’s art — performing remotely, not in the studio. It’s all live, but remotely from the studio is a science and an art. If you can capture that, as some of us have, you always come up with spectacular things, in my opinion. Being in a studio has its constraints, has its difficulties. When you’re performing remotely, away from the studio, it’s a different thing altogether. All you need is a good engineer.”

The many unique facets of Jamal’s genius are lauded by other players in admiring testimony on the new releases.

“He uses a whole 88 keys on the piano.” says Ramsey Lewis, who racked up his own top-10 albums on Argo in the ‘60s. “With many jazz piano players, the left hand comps and the right hand does a lot of work. Well, we all do that, but there are also many times during that song or other songs during that show that we don’t say, ‘Look, ma, one hand.’ We’d say, ‘Look, ma, both hands.’ And Ahmad is one of the both-hands piano players. Left hand, right hand: Ahmad can take care of the business.”

Hiromi, who brought Jamal to Japan to perform on tour, says, “What I really learned from his playing is when you improvise or when you write music, you have to tell stories. Jazz improvisation is made of a lot of scales and chord progressions and everything you can learn from the book, but something that you cannot learn from the book is telling your own story. And whenever he plays, I always feel he’s telling his story of life. And that’s how I want to be.”

Jon Batiste, who first encountered Jamal when he was a 19-year-old phenom touring Europe for the first time, says, “When you hang with him, you realize he’s a spontaneous composer, in the same way that someone would improvise a solo. He has the ability to compose at that level of hyperspeed. He’ll sit down at the piano and he’ll play something when you’re hanging out and it’ll just be him messing around, if you will. From that will come an incredible composition.

You'll ask him, 'When did you write that? When did you compose this incredible composition that we just heard?' He'll, oftentimes, say, 'Oh, just now. I just played that right in this moment.' Typically, when he's in a state of performance, he has the freedom and the mastery to do that."

Homing in on an important element of Jamal's style, veteran Kenny Barron says, "He leaves a lot of space for the rhythm section. And one of the things that's nice is sometimes he'll play an idea, and in the next course you expect him to play it again, except maybe he won't, and the rhythm section plays. So he leaves all of this space for the rhythm section to either finish an idea or complete it. And it's really nice. It's like he kind of orchestrates the piano, kind of orchestrates everything. It's just so beautiful to hear. And I know that's what one of the things that Miles loved about him."

"Miles" is, of course, Miles Davis, Jamal's most ardent champion in the jazz world. In his 1989 autobiography *Miles*, the late trumpet player put his finger on the abiding qualities that one hears in Jamal's music, and on the vibrant performances on *Emerald City Nights*:

"He knocked me out with his concept of space, his lightness of touch, his understatement and the way he phrased notes and chords and passages....I loved his lyricism on piano, the way he played and the spacing he used in the ensemble voicing of his groups. I have always thought Ahmad Jamal was a great piano player who never got the recognition he deserved."

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