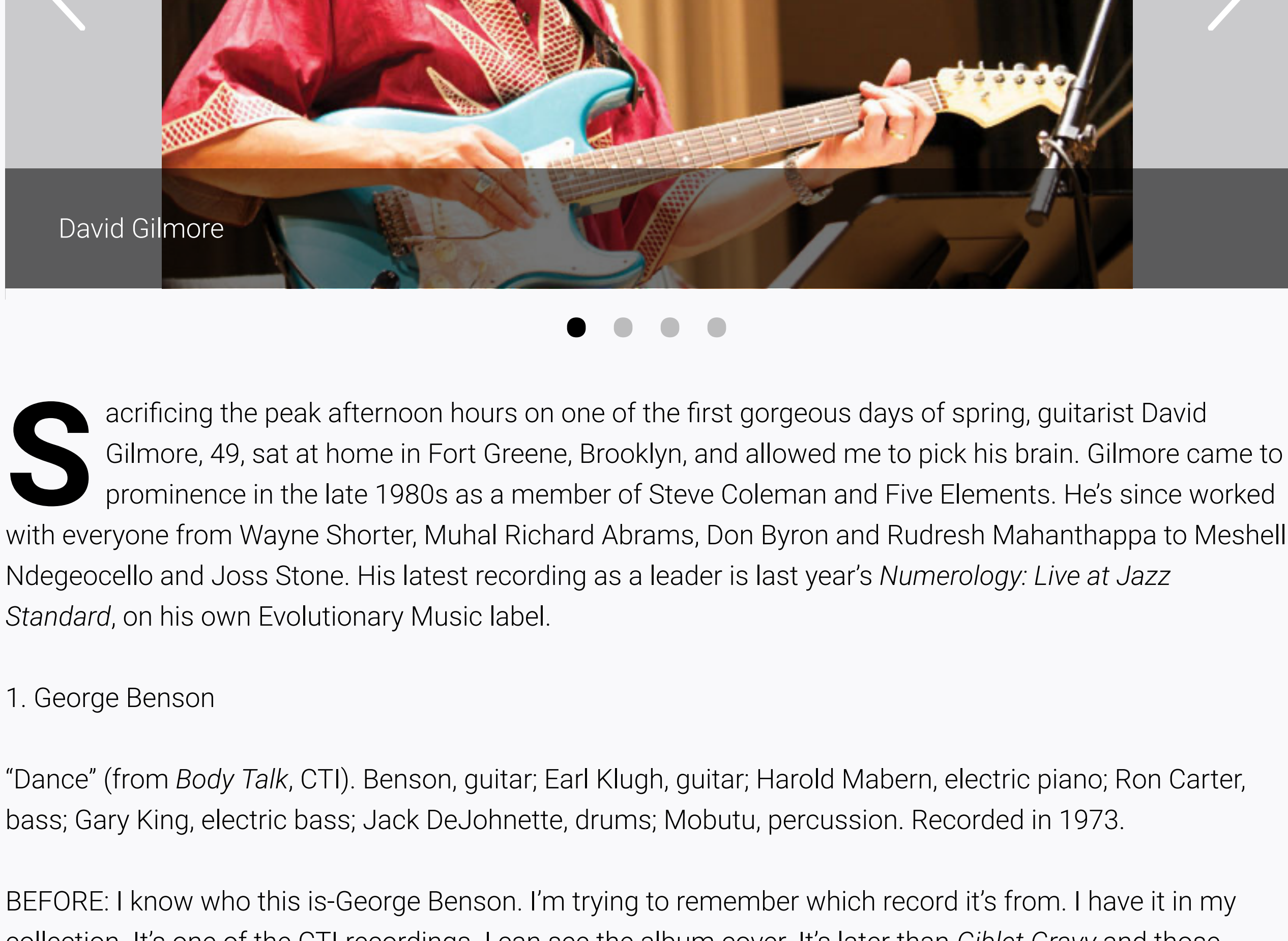


Home > Features > Before & After with David Gilmore

Before & After with David Gilmore

Listening with a guitarist who lives "in many different worlds"

UPDATED APRIL 26, 2019 — DAVID R. ADLER



Sacrificing the peak afternoon hours on one of the first gorgeous days of spring, guitarist David Gilmore, 49, sat at home in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, and allowed me to pick his brain. Gilmore came to prominence in the late 1980s as a member of Steve Coleman and Five Elements. He's since worked with everyone from Wayne Shorter, Muhal Richard Abrams, Don Byron and Rudresh Mahanthappa to Meshell Ndegeocello and Joss Stone. His latest recording as a leader is last year's *Numerology: Live at Jazz Standard*, on his own Evolutionary Music label.

1. George Benson

"Dance" (from *Body Talk*, CTI). Benson, guitar; Earl Klugh, guitar; Harold Mabern, electric piano; Ron Carter, bass; Gary King, electric bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Mobutu, percussion. Recorded in 1973.

BEFORE: I know who this is-George Benson. I'm trying to remember which record it's from. I have it in my collection. It's one of the CTI recordings. I can see the album cover. It's later than *Giblet Gravy* and those things. The problem is I haven't seen my album collection in so long-it's all virtual. I miss that.

Maybe Harvey Mason on drums, but that doesn't sound like Harvey.

Any other ideas for drummers?

Not sure. Lenny [White]?

Jack DeJohnette.

Oh, that's Jack! I should have known that.

George is definitely one of my biggest all-time influences, and I had a chance to hang out with him when he lived in Englewood [New Jersey]. I got invited over to his house a couple of times.

I remember seeing him on *Saturday Night Live* and it was "This Masquerade." I had just started playing guitar so I'd never heard of him. And I saw this guy scatting what he was playing. I was like, "Man, this is ... pretty damn cool." Then I started to check out the whole catalogue. I just loved the fact that he's got such rhythm. He's an R&B jazz player. He's assimilated all the [jazz] stuff before him, but he comes out of this R&B thing. That's what really pulled me toward his playing, a real funky sense of rhythm.

Did you learn his solos?

I picked apart phrases here and there. I remember pulling some stuff off of *Blue Benson*, like "Billie's Bounce." I used to play along to records a lot without actually transcribing. I would just solo along with it. It really helped. It pulled me into the mood and the vibe of what was happening.

2. John McLaughlin

"La Baleine" (from *Belo Horizonte*, Warner). McLaughlin, acoustic guitar; Katia Labèque, piano/keyboards; François Couturier, Rhodes/synthesizer; Jean-Paul Celea, bass; Tommy Campbell, drums. Recorded in 1981.

BEFORE: [after one phrase] Sounds like John McLaughlin, but let's see. [after the second phrase] Yeah, it's John. I think I might have this. Is this the one with Katia Labèque, and Tommy Campbell on drums? I really dug this record. My brother Marque has done a bit of work with Katia, I think a Bang on a Can project.

Has John done this song in another band, with Trilok Gurtu maybe?

I've seen a YouTube clip with him and Chick Corea playing it as a duo.

I remember the thing that frustrated me about this album was that the mix of the drums was so low. I know it's from the early '80s because I came to New York in '84.

Did McLaughlin influence you a lot?

I was really mesmerized by what he did. I remember *My Goal's Beyond* might have been the first record I discovered of his. "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," I learned a lot of what he was playing on that.

Early on I thought, "My God, this guy has ridiculous technique," and musicality as well. As I got older, I got more into George Benson, more straightforward kind of guys. Then I heard the stuff John did with Trilok, which I thought was killing. I really dig his acoustic playing, more so than his [current] electric playing.

I was trying to get my right-hand thing going again and I was like, "Man, how come I can't do that?" Well, you know, that's not me. Phrasing-wise, it's a different aesthetic, playing with every note being picked. It's not something I try to go for. I gravitate more toward the horn-type phrasing, with legato technique. Plus, I couldn't play that way even if I wanted to.

Rhythmically, this guy has got it all together. I met him in Vienne, France, back when I was playing with Wayne Shorter in '95. And backstage we actually traded guitars-his had this really low action but it was set up so perfectly and it made sense. Then I found out years later that one of his luthiers, Abe Wechter, is Uri Caine's uncle.

3. Wayne Krantz

"War-Torn Johnny" (from *Krantz Carlock Lefebvre*, Abstract Logix). Krantz, guitar; Tim Lefebvre, electric bass; Keith Carlock, drums. Recorded in 2009.

BEFORE: OK, now that I've listened to it for a minute, I think it's Wayne Krantz. It must be Tim Lefebvre on bass. What gave it away first was the drums, Keith Carlock. I knew it was a New York cat; it didn't sound like any West Coast thing. And then I was hearing the Strat-like sound. At first I thought it was Jim Black-it's this big, open kick-drum sound. This is such a great group. They just go into these groove realms that are so nasty.

I've seen Wayne many times. He's got a really strong sense of rhythm and he's incorporated that into his aesthetic. Those are the kind of guitar players I really dig, who use the guitar as a rhythm instrument. This is killing. It's different. It has this really cool rhythmic drive. One of the best projects out there.

I saw Wayne do a master class at Berklee. He's excellent at conveying his ideas about rhythm. He talked about speaking rhythms, sort of singing rhythms and playing at the same time. It was getting your body in the groove by finding the holes. This band is all about finding the holes in the groove. It's really artful.

You've played a lot of solidbody guitar as well.

I just did a tour with my Tom Anderson, a Strat-like guitar. It wants to scream. It wants to be hit. It wants to be played really hard. It was a trio gig with [drummer] Gene Lake and [bassist] Reggie Washington, and we just rocked out and funkyed out and played some jazz on it too.

4. Anthony Wilson

"The Circle Game" (from *Seasons: Live at the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Goat Hill). Wilson, Chico Pinheiro, Julian Lage, Steve Cardenas, "Four Seasons" archtop guitars made by John Monteleone. Recorded in 2011.

BEFORE: Sounds like an older recording. The dynamic range, there's not a lot of low end. [after a minute] I'm just wondering if it's the same guy overdubbing or if it's multiple guitar players.

Good question.

It could be ... I'm thinking Larry Coryell or Ralph Towner, but it doesn't sound like Towner. I'm not familiar with this at all. It sounds ECM-ish.

You might also recognize the song.

I don't recognize it so far. It started out in five. I'm stumped. It's beautiful. [after several more minutes] I'm not sure how many guitars I'm hearing. Three at least. [another minute] OK, it's different players. So it's a guitar group I'm unaware of. I was thinking of the Assad Brothers from Brazil, but it's definitely not them.

AFTER: Anthony Wilson? Julian Lage and Steve Cardenas I know, of course.

Anthony has played for years with Diana Krall.

Oh, now I know! I remember being really impressed by him.

I wouldn't be able to identify Julian individually in that mix. The first time I met Julian was in a performance skills class of mine at Berklee. I had a bunch of badass kids in that class and he was definitely one of them. It was just like, "OK, what are you doing here? You don't need to be here." He came to two classes and I think he placed out. He's such a sweet guy. He's a refreshing player on the scene and he's got a very clear approach to music education.

5. Pat Metheny

"Mastema" (from *Tap: John Zorn's Book of Angels, Vol. 20*, Nonesuch/Tzadik). Metheny, guitars, sitar guitar, bass, keyboards, electronics; Antonio Sanchez, drums. Released in 2013.

BEFORE: Oh, electric sitar action! I always wanted to get one of those things. [listens more] That's cool. I'm hearing it in 11, or five and a half. It sounds like a very new recording. Is it Garaj Mahal, that band with Fareed Haque? [listens to extremely distorted solo] Cool! I don't know who this is. Who does that?! It sounds like an Elliott Sharp thing, but it's not his music. I don't recognize anybody. I like it. It's very cool.

AFTER: I just heard about this! Pat is one of the pillars. What can I say? I love his compositions, particularly his ballads. The first thing of his I heard was *Bright Size Life*, and I fell in love with that record, every damn tune on it. *Question and Answer* was something I really dug, and also *Rejoicing*-the title track is the only Metheny solo I ever transcribed. It's a "Rhythm" changes tune. I didn't know what the hell he was doing. It was just drums [Billy Higgins] and guitar for several choruses and Charlie [Haden] comes in. It sounded so atonal at the time to me, but then I played chords to it and that's when I said, "Oh man, I know what he's doing."

One time Pat sent me a really nice e-mail. I was asking him about some label stuff, and months later I got a reply saying, "Sorry it took me so long. First of all, I just want to tell you I saw you playing with Wayne. You're one of my favorite guitar players out there." I was like, "What?!" For him to take the time to get back to me was really special. I just saw him in Newport last summer with the Unity Band; I was on the side of the stage. What a group. I'm floored by the energy he brings to every performance.

To read the rest of this story, purchase the issue in [print](#) or from the [Apple Newsstand](#). Print and digital [subscriptions](#) are also available.

Originally Published August 18, 2013

Most Valuable Vinyl Records

Best Sounding Speakers

1. First Signs of Lung Cancer

2. Rare Vinyl Records

3. Download Music Albums

4. Vinyl Albums For Sale

Ad

POPMARKET.COM

Who Can I Be Now? (1974 To 1976) ...

\$120.79 David Bowie: Who Can I Be Now? (1974 To 1976) - 2016 twelve CD box set. David...

PROFILES

The Changing Nature of Protest in Jazz

What better way to offer is a positive notion, B...

LISTS

10 Best Jazz Albums of the 1970s: Critics' Picks

What better way to celebrate the 50th anniversary...

New Glasses Takes US by Storm

Everyone Over 55 is Rushing to Get These Revolutionary Reading Glasses

Festivals & Events

Apr 6 - May 25

From 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM EDT

Flushing Town Hall Presents Jazz 101

Flushing, New York

Apr 22

From 8:00 PM to 9:30 PM EDT

Guitarist Stephane Wrembel Performs Django Reinhardt

Apr 24

From 7:30 PM to 8:45 PM EDT

John Scofield

Ridgefield, Connecticut

SEE MORE

Editor's Picks

LISTS

Year in Review: The Top 40 New Jazz Releases of 2020 (10-1)

For our 2020 Year in Review section, we...

Ad

POPMARKET.COM

Who Can I Be Now? (1974 To 1976) ...

\$120.79 David Bowie: Who Can I Be Now? (1974 To 1976) - 2016 twelve CD box set. David...

PROFILES

The Changing Nature of Protest in Jazz

What better way to offer is a positive notion, B...

LISTS

10 Best Jazz Albums of the 1970s: Critics' Picks

What better way to celebrate the 50th anniversary...

NEW JAZZ NOW

New jazz albums you need to know about

SEE MORE

JazzTimes

jazz congress 2021

May 17-20
Register now for free!

JazzTimes Newsletter

America's jazz resource, delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP FOR OUR FREE NEWSLETTER

Home

About JazzTimes

Advertising

Contact Us

Terms of Use

Privacy Policy

Manage Your Consent

JazzTimes

AMERICA'S JAZZ MAGAZINE

Published since 1970, *JazzTimes*—"America's Jazz Magazine"—provides comprehensive and in-depth coverage of the jazz scene. Often controversial, always entertaining, *JazzTimes* is a favorite of musicians and fans alike.

FOLLOW US

f

t

i

g

+

© 2021 Madavor Media, LLC. All rights reserved.