to "Live Your Life" and the wryly conceived "One for the Parking Fairy."

Too often, contemporary jazz seems so fixated on identity politics and ideological statements of purpose—is it "Revivalist"? "Free"? "Smooth"? "Fusion"? "Postmodern"?—that the simple pleasures of a swinging, unpretentious good time are forgotten. It's something of a relief, then, to affirm that "a good time was had by all," and invite the listener to share in the happy results. **DAVID WHITEIS**

MARILYN MAZUR

Elixir (ECM)

Elixir is a soundtrack in search of a film. Percussionist Marilyn Mazur and saxophonist Jan Garbarek, who plays on roughly half the disc, create a world of soundscapes and moods within these 21 tunes—21 outlines, really, since the tunes are short, sparsely populated and barely developed. There's a lot of introspection and meditation going on here, what with all the song titles like "Pathway," "Joy Chant," and "Spirit of Air."

Mazur conceives percussion in a broader sense than most practitioners. Her panoply of percussive devices do more than keep rhythm—they create melody, harmony, color, texture and atmosphere. Her kit includes everything but the kitchen sink: kettle drums, gongs, marimba, glass percussion, bells, a vast array of cymbals and numerous unidentifiable things made of wood and metal. Who knows, maybe she *does* have a kitchen sink in there, or at least a ceramic basin and a few pieces of plumbing.

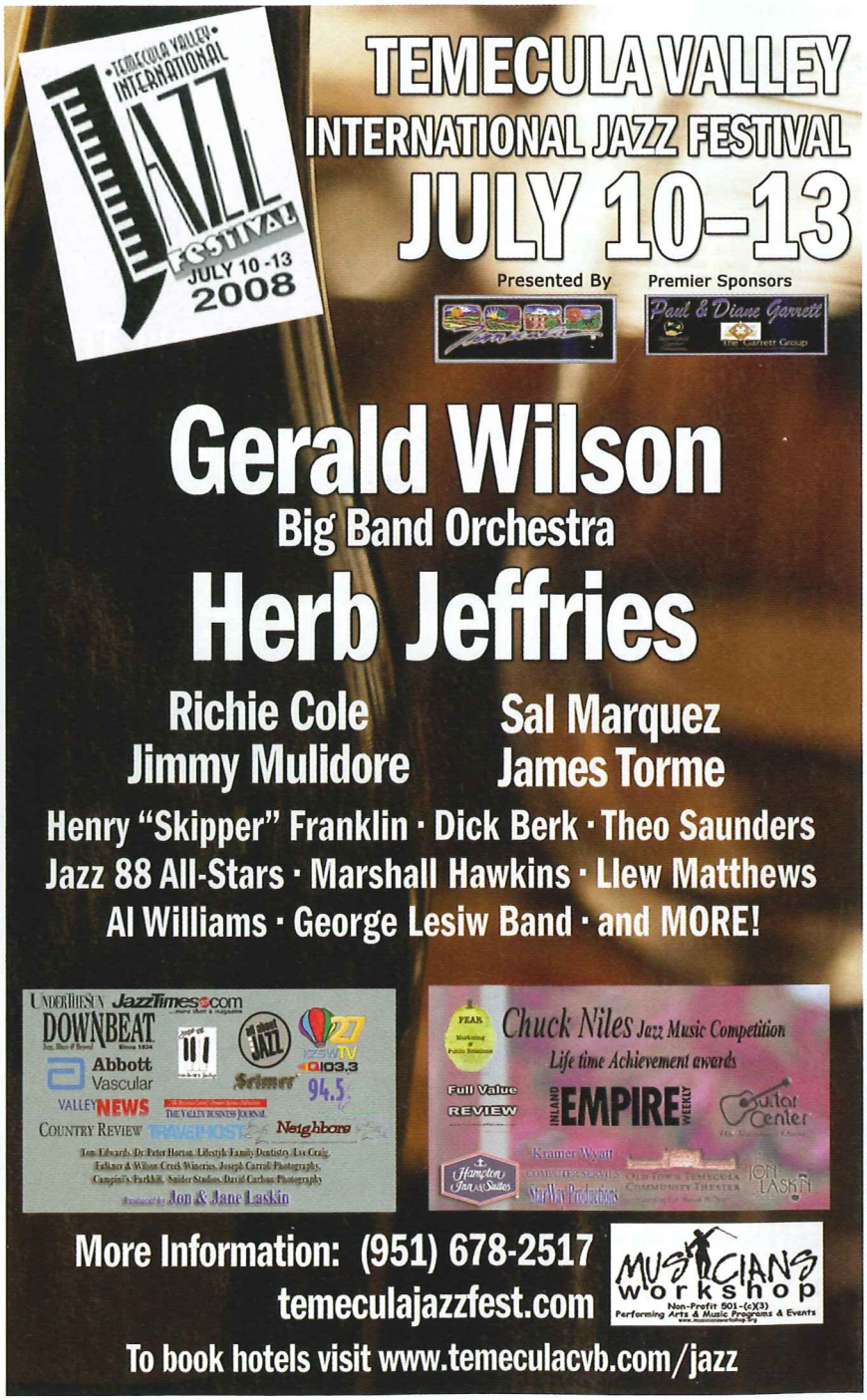
Garbarek blows soprano plaintively while Mazur bangs on the kettles and gong, ominously, on "Clear," as if to signal that some sort of duel is about to get underway. "Dunun Song" is a giddy march, with Garbarek playing a vaguely Caribbean melody on tenor. Mazur plays what sounds like steel pan on "Joy Chant," and her metal gadgets sound almost electronic on the ambient "Metal Dew." Garbarek's flute gives "Mountain Breath" a Native American feel. Mazur finally gets juiced on "Talking Wind," using most of the available square inches on her drum kit, but then she turns in a meditative marimba solo on "The Siren in the Wall." *Elixir* is a wide-reaching experience. **STEVE GREENLEE**

BRAD MEHLDAU TRIO

Live (Nonesuch)

Brad Mehldau's first trio with Larry Grenadier and Jorge Rossy was together 10 years and made some of the most important piano trio recordings of the turn-of-the-century era, like the five-volume series *The Art of the Trio*, on Warner Bros. Two of these volumes (#2 and #4) were recorded live at the Village Vanguard.

In late 2004 Jeff Ballard replaced Rossy on drums. The double-CD, *Live*, Mehldau's third recording from the Village Vanguard, demonstrates that the new trio has found itself and surpassed its predecessor. It has achieved a level of three-way interactive creativity reached only by very special piano trios, like those of Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett.

Mehldau plays here with a daring abandon that sweeps all of the 12 performances far from where they began. Yet he is not reckless; every piece sustains one large idea. Grenadier and Ballard never crowd the musical space, yet their indispensable, defining roles occur in the foreground, Grenadier with his wicked ostinatos and lines of sinuous grace, Ballard with his wealth of clear, specific, pointed information.

The two rock songs are inspired acts of