

Top 20 Soul Jazz for 2003
as selected by Chuck Ingersol, host of *Soul Jazz Spectrum*

1. Ron Levy, FINDING MY WAY – Levy adds vibes, Fender Rhodes, even cello to his soul jazz mix, plus guest artists Karl Denson and Melvin Sparks. Rarely has soul jazz been so diverse and melodically interesting, while maintaining a rock-solid groove.
2. Javon Jackson, EASY DOES IT – Jackson seems far more excited and into his second soul jazz album than he was on his first a few years ago. Strong writing and great sidemen make for one of the year's best soul jazz releases.
3. Roy Hargrove & the RH Factor, HARD GROOVE – It's hip hop, rap and soul jazz, much more shaken than stirred.
4. Melvin Sparks, WHAT YOU HEAR IS WHAT YOU GET – Originally released on his own label, Savant picked up "WHAT YOU GET" in 2003. Inspired Sparks guitar and rowdy vocals produce an album that never drops below a slow boil.
5. Rodney Jones, SOUL MANIFESTO LIVE – Following up the SOUL MANIFESTO studio session, guitarist Jones and sidemen play with fire and imagination, and throw in a pretty ballad or two.
6. Dr. Lonnie Smith, BOOGALOO TO BECK – Contrary to what you may have initially thought, Dr. Lonnie proves you can, indeed, boogaloo to Beck!
7. Bill Heid, DA GIRL – One of the most technically adept and harmonically advanced organists, Heid blends post-bop and soul into a tasty mix more sophisticated than created by most organ combos.
8. The Crusaders, RURAL RENEWAL – The Crusaders re-energized, with catchy tunes and guest appearances from gospel singer Donnie McClurkin and Eric Clapton. Three of the original Crusaders' members take part and play as if delighted to be reunited.
9. BWB, GROOVIN' – Rick Braun, Kirk Whalum and Norman Brown skip the smooth jazz cliches and get all the way down with lots of fine covers, including "Up for the Down Stroke," "Povo," "A Woman's Worth" and the title track, originally by The Rascals.
10. John Scofield, UP ALL NIGHT – "Sco" finally does a cover – a tasty rendition of the Dramatics' "Whatcha See Is Whatcha Get," and bridges the gap between jazz and jam band styles with his trademark chunky funk.
11. Pancho Sanchez, OUT OF SIGHT – Pancho mixes Latin percussion with a great guest appearance by Ray Charles, including a killer version of "Mary Ann."
12. Charles Earland Tribute Band, KEEPERS OF THE FLAME – Nicely maintaining the tradition of "The Mighty Burner," Joey DeFrancesco fills the Hammond B3 chair and top-notch folks like Pat Martino and Eric Alexander help out.

For more information about the Soul Jazz Spectrum, contact Chuck Ingersoll at chucketal@aol.com, or visit www.jazz901.org.