

cians, Parlato has also won raves from the press. Her 2009 recording *In a Dream* was voted "Best Vocal Jazz Album of the Year" by the *Village Voice* and was listed in the Top 10 Best Music



picks of the year by NPR. On her follow-up, *The Lost and Found* (Obliqsound), the singer recruits collaborators old and new and presents songs recent and vintage. Bassist Derrick Hodge and drummer Kendrick Scott return, while Taylor Eigsti takes over the piano chair and Robert Glasper adds his own simpatico flavors as associate producer. In addition to culling material from Eigsti and trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, Parlato applies her emotionally honest vocals to classics such as Bill Evans' "Blue in Green" and Wayne Shorter's "Juju," as well as to a sprinkling of original compositions. "Winter Wind," an example of the latter and included here, typifies Parlato's bossa nova update as she effortlessly floats poetic lyrics atop her magnetic rhythm section.

On her fifth release, *Blue in Blue* (Piloo), pianist **Kerry Politzer** spotlights her lyrical and evocative original melodies alongside a superb quartet featuring



saxophonist Donny McCaslin. The influence of Brazilian music has often colored her compositions, as it does here, most overtly on "Shifting Clouds" and "Brazilian Accents." But, as the album title suggests, Politzer examines various shades of indigo on pieces such as "Desolation or Hope," "Early Spring Chill" and "Washington Park," which offer complex explorations through shifts in mood and tone. Bassist Paul Beaudry and drummer George Colligan provide sensitive colors and shadings,



**Phil Woods** was so impressed with the playing of then-14-year-old saxophonist **Grace Kelly**



that he literally took off his hat to her. In fact, the legendary alto player presented one of his trademark caps to the teen prodigy after inviting her to join him onstage at the Pittsfield City Jazz Festival. Woods' confidence in the young altoist was well-placed. At age 15, she recorded an album with another alto-sax giant, Lee Konitz. For her most recent project, *Man With the Hat* (Pazz), Kelly, now 18, reunites with Woods for a lyrical, swinging set that belies both their ages (Woods turns 80 this year). The twin altos converse eloquently

with one another and a dynamic combo comprising pianist Monty Alexander, Kelly's touring bassist Evan Gregor and Woods' longtime drummer Bill Goodwin. Kelly showcases her fine vocals on a couple of tracks, as well, including a lovely version of Benny Carter's "People Time." The title track, a Kelly original and our selection, seems to express the great joy the young saxophonist seems to have in working with one of her heroes, as she and Woods play harmony lines and trade solos. Alexander's jubilant, bluesy solo provides an additional treat.

as well as rhythmic drive. Politzer's playing is full of depth and beauty, and it's technically impressive as well. The pianist goes it alone on our selection, "Left Unsaid," a gorgeous meditation that she dedicates to the late pianist, composer and educator Charlie Banacos, an important mentor to several generations of jazz greats.

The talents of New York-based reed player **Erica von Kleist** are on full display in her self-released sophomore recording *Erica von Kleist & No Exceptions*. Trading

among alto and soprano saxophones,



flute and piccolo, she leads an abundantly skilled group of musicians on original compositions and some exhilarating reinterpretations,

such as a Latin boogaloo read of Michael Jackson's "Thriller." Working with the likes of Darcy James Argue's Secret Society and the Nicholas Payton Big Band, and participating in programs at Jazz at