

Sports & Entertainment

Mack Avenue and Strata-East announce CD reissues of three iconic jazz albums: Shamek Farrah’s “First Impressions”; Cecil Payne’s “Zodiac” and Charles Brackeen’s “Rhythm X”; These jazz classics to be released in vinyl, CDs, and digital deluxe editions

• Audiophile Quality 180-Gram Vinyl, CDs and Digital Deluxe Edition of Farrah’s First Impressions Out November 27

• LPs Released Exclusively With Independent Record Stores Worldwide

“You can’t tell the story of jazz in the 1970s without a serious look at Strata-East.”
- The New York Times

“Capacious, inviting, auspicious — as a statement within a statement. The doors are open. Open for business. Open to anything.”
- The Washington Post

“The presentation and packaging are as heavy duty as the audiophile LPs themselves: This music is built to last.” - DownBeat

"It's a turbulent, exhilarating ride that's of that time 50 years ago, and of this time too. The music defies both time and genre." - Tracking Angle

October 21, 2026: Mack Avenue and Strata-East Records announce the CD releases of **Shamek Farrah’s** First Impressions (Deluxe Edition), **Cecil Payne’s** Zodiac, and **Charles Brackeen’s** Rhythm X, out November 27. Alongside the physical releases, Farrah’s First Impressions (Deluxe Edition) will also be released digitally with three never-before-heard tracks from the original sessions. Celebrating the revolutionary spirit of one of the most influential artist-owned independent jazz labels in history, the three titles are returning to physical format via both 180-gram vinyl and CD, with audio cut directly from the original analog tapes.

Cecil Payne’s Zodiac, Charles Brackeen’s Rhythm X, and Shamek Farrah’s First Impressions (Deluxe Edition) are also being released on vinyl exclusively with independent retail worldwide and in partnership with **UK Record Store Day Black Friday** 2026 (Farrah, Payne & Brackeen), and US Record Store Day Black Friday 2026 (Payne). With each purchase, Payne and Brackeen’s albums are accompanied by limited edition Dolphy Series collectible postcard sets, and Farrah’s is accompanied by a limited edition frameable album cover art print. (Vinyl Exclusively Available for RSD Black Friday US & UK)

Re-launching in 2025 in partnership with Mack Avenue, Strata-East released 32 historic titles on digital platforms, and reissued nine albums to CD and 180-gram vinyl for the first time to universal acclaim from The New York Times, The Washington Post, Mojo, DownBeat, Tidal, WRTI, JazzWise and JazzWax. This series of reissues tells the story of one of jazz’s most iconic labels, founded in resistance to major labels’ restrictions on artistic expression in the 50s and 60s. Strata-East’s commitment to freedom and high standards earned it a revered place in jazz history. Finally, the initial analog tapes have been remastered and re-released to continue its legacy for generations to come. Mastered by Kevin Gray, the releases



(Strata-East Album Covers, Credits)

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were pressed to 180-gram vinyl at RTI with audio cut directly from the original analog tapes. The LPs also include deluxe tip-on gatefold packaging with new liner notes and never-before-seen photos.

Widely regarded as a masterpiece of early spiritual jazz, alto saxophonist Shamek Farrah’s debut album **First Impressions** is one of the most sought-after recordings in the entire genre. Featuring a blend of spiritual jazz with Eastern influences, the project is being released as a deluxe edition, including three never-before-heard tracks. Farrah largely disappeared from public view after 1980, but following Mack Avenue and Strata-East’s 2025 digital re-release of the celebrated record, he was profiled by The New York Times, reflecting on its significance over 50 years later.

Cecil Payne’s **Zodiac** pays tribute to the memory of Wynton Kelly and Kenny Dorham with a bold, progressive take on post-bop. An in-demand baritone saxophonist for the likes of Dizzy Gillespie and Roy Eldridge, the album was produced by legendary tenor saxophonist Clifford Jordan and features Wilbur Ware (bass) and Albert “Tootie” Heath (drums).

Rhythm X is the debut album from saxophonist Charles Brackeen, featuring a backing band from the Ornette Coleman Quartet, including Don Cherry (trumpet), Charlie Haden (bass), and Ed Blackwell (drums). The album showcases Brackeen’s unique voice, with his four original compositions leading a free-flowing, dynamic session full of intricate interplay and bold expression. Brackeen did not record another album as a leader for 19 years.

Other recent critically acclaimed Strata-East reissues on CD and 180-gram vinyl include Charles Tolliver All Stars: Right Now...

And Then, The Heath Brothers’ Marchin’ On! (feat. Stanley Cowell), Cecil McBee’s Murtima, Pharoah Sanders’ Izipho Zam (My Gifts), Charles Tolliver & Music Inc’s Live at Slugs’, Volume I & II, Stanley Cowell’s Musa: Ancestral Streams, and Charlie Rouse’s Two Is One.



- Tracklistings:**
Charles Brackeen - Rhythm X
1. Rhythm X
2. Hour Glass
3. Charles Concept
4. C.B. Blues

- Shamek Farrah - First Impressions**
1. Meterologicly Tuned
2. Watch What Happens Now
3. Umoja Suite
4. First Impressions
5. Bantu Blues
6. Two For Three
7. Aisha

- Cecil Payne - Zodiac
1. Martin Luther King, Jr. I Know Love
2. Girl, You Got a Home
3. Slide Hampton
4. Follow Me

About Strata-East Records:
Founded in 1970 by Charles Tolliver and Stanley Cowell, Strata-East Records has embodied and pioneered artistic freedom in its highest form, supporting the visions of the most influential musicians of its time. Strata-East’s commitment to artist-produced records and high production standards has earned it a revered place in jazz history. This mission continues through a partnership with Mack Avenue Music Group, ensuring the highest quality releases from its historic catalog.

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See article on “Everest: The Other Side” on sports page 3
In theaters and IMAX on
October 30.

