



**Forward-Thinking Saxophonist, Clarinetist & Composer Jeff Lederer Announces *There's a Yearnin'*
A Historic First Recording of Long-Buried Works by Eric Dolphy, Ornette Coleman & Oliver Nelson**

**Out May 1 2026 via Little (i) music
Featuring the Wildebeest Wind Quintet and Vocalist Mary LaRose**

Saxophonist, clarinetist, and composer **Jeff Lederer** has never lacked for bold ideas — sacred Shaker songs reimagined with ecstatic gospel fire, Albert Ayler by way of sea shanties, Schoenberg refracted through surreal cabaret. But *There's a Yearnin'* may be his most ambitious statement yet: a convergence of jazz and notated music that restores significant, under-heard works to circulation. Due out May 2026 on his own imprint, **Little (i) Music**, the album features the first recording of a woodwind sextet by Eric Dolphy, a new realization of Ornette Coleman's rarely performed *Forms and Sounds*, and newly arranged Oliver Nelson works for winds and voice — all framed by a freshly rescored original from Lederer.

Each of the three composers — Dolphy, Coleman, Nelson — pursued notated composition as a vital arm of their artistry. Coleman's quintet was commissioned in the late 1960s yet seldom revived; Nelson composed ambitious concert works even as commercial scoring demands dominated his schedule; and Dolphy's manuscript, preserved in the Library of Congress, had never been performed in his lifetime. "There's a little bit of a sense of a dream unfulfilled with Dolphy and his notated music," Lederer says. When he located the neglected Dolphy score during a visit to the Library of Congress in Washington, "it really lit a spark for me." That spark became the basis of this entire project.

Lederer's partner, vocalist **Mary LaRose**, serves as a key collaborator throughout the album. Her longstanding engagement with Nelson's music — including writing lyrics inspired by his themes and solos — opened a pathway to reimagine Nelson's material for winds and voice. In their newly arranged form, the Nelson selections complete a triptych of composers whose contributions shaped jazz history while extending well beyond it.

To realize the project, Lederer turned to the Brooklyn-based **Wildebeest Wind Quintet** — flutist Michel Gentile, oboist Katie Scheele, clarinetist Mike McGuinness, bassoonist Sara Schoenbeck, and French hornist Nathan Koci — an ensemble fluent in both the precision these formidable scores demand and the improvising ethos that defined their creators. "I needed a group that could really improvise," Lederer notes. "They're all improvisers at their core." With LaRose and Lederer joining them, the music is activated from within — performance rooted in living tradition rather than archival-minded recreation.

Recorded at Guilford Sound in Vermont, the album's aesthetic is shaped by its environment: woodwinds surrounded by woodlands, the grain of grenadilla and maple resonating in a purpose-built studio tucked into the forest. Lederer describes the wind-quintet format itself as "a curious instrumentation — a little musty, deep-in-the-closet," and that very quality becomes part of the project's expressive identity.

Lederer further contributes *Cruxifiction (not a word)* — originally composed in 1982 while studying with the late composer Wendell Logan at Oberlin College, newly arranged here for winds and the saxophonist’s own alien, immersive electronics. Inspired by Marian Anderson’s landmark performance of “**They Crucified My Lord,**” the work engages themes of silenced dissent and withheld voice. The title is deliberate: *crux* as the central issue, stripped of religious framing — a work confronting censorious American leadership, and their attempts to stamp out dissent.

Connections across generations run throughout the album. The Coleman materials were provided directly by Denardo Coleman; Dolphy’s manuscript was brought to Lederer’s attention by George Schuller, drummer and son of Gunther Schuller, whose midcentury Third Stream initiatives linked Ornette and Dolphy historically; and Oliver Nelson, Jr., a flutist and guardian of his father’s legacy, fully supported the expansions of Nelson’s material. These relationships maintain continuity between eras of innovation — musical families, literal and artistic, ensuring work does not vanish into archives.

There’s a Yearnin’ will be released to coincide with a planned premiere performance at Bang on a Can’s Long Play Festival (invitation pending), extending this repertoire into public performance and future scholarship. The project’s aim is direct: to bring these works into current practice — acknowledged not as sidelights to renowned improvisers, but as meaningful contributions to the concert repertoire.

This is not Lederer’s first foray into the intersection of jazz and classical worlds – in 2003 Lederer was commissioned to create a reimagining of Vivaldi’s iconic Four Seasons concerti for a combined ensemble of the Ravinia Festival Orchestra and salsa icon Jimmy Bosch’s group. The piece, called “Los Sazones” was a huge success and toured nationally for years with such orchestras as the LA Phil at the Hollywood Bowl.

“Lederer created a forum in which both the classical and jazz units could collaborate and exchange ideas-yet without compromising or demeaning either musical language.”- Chicago Tribune review of the premiere of “Los Sazones”.

“This project is historically based,” Lederer says, “but I would love for it to be heard as just beautiful music for woodwinds and voice.”

Track Listing — *There’s a Yearnin’*

Music for Winds and Voice

- Cruxifiction (not a word) (Lederer)
- Dolphy Wind Sextet (Dolphy)
- Forms and Sounds 1,2,3 (Coleman)
- Images (Nelson/lyric LaRose)
- Lem and Aide (Nelson /lyric LaRose)
- Nocturne (Nelson //lyric LaRose)
- There’s a Yearnin’ (Nelson /lyric LaRose)
- Three Seconds (Nelson /lyric LaRose)

