

Gabriel Vicéns

Days

INNER CIRCLE MUSIC 055

★★★★★

Gabriel Vicéns is a jazz guitarist from Puerto Rico. His music is essentially post-bop jazz influenced by the modern New York scene. The guitarist, who contributed all of the songs to the date, is a thoughtful improviser with a quiet tone who makes every note count.

From the start of the opening “El Teatro,” trumpeter Alex Sipiagin emerges as one of the set’s key soloists, displaying fire and creative ideas. A tricky but infectious bass pattern is heard much of the time on this tune, which also has excellent spots for pianist Bienvenido Dinzey (often recalling early 1960s McCoy Tyner), tenor saxophonist David Sánchez (in mellow form) and Vicéns. Paoli Mejias’ congas are a major asset, adding to the rhythmic excitement behind the horns, and bassist Dan Martinez and drummer Leonardo Osuna keep a complex but catchy rhythm going throughout much of “Morph,” inspiring strong solos by Sipiagin, Vicéns and saxophonist Jonathan Suazo.

With its mood variations, stirring rhythmic interplay and fine solos, *Days* is an impressive early effort by a talented guitarist. —Scott Yanow

Days: El Teatro; Days; Morph; Prelude To Amintiri; Amintiri; Doing Circles; Comprehend; Breaking Through Shadows; Justice. (72:33)

Personnel: Gabriel Vicéns, guitar; Jonathan Suazo, alto saxophone; David Sánchez, tenor saxophone; Alex Sipiagin, trumpet, flugelhorn; Bienvenido Dinzey, piano; Dan Martinez, bass; Leonardo Osuna, drums; Paoli Mejias, congas, shaker (2, 8).

Ordering info: innercirclemusic.com



Aruán Ortiz Trio

Hidden Voices

INTAKT RECORDS 258

★★★★★

It would be misleading to characterize this impressive outing as free-jazz. While it’s fair to describe much of *Hidden Voices* as atonal, the harmonic and conceptual elements of this album are in equal parts sophisticated and accessible.

The piano motif that opens “Fractal Sketches,” for example, feels at first like it’s rooted in a particular key, but when pianist Aruán Ortiz adds a second voice, the connection starts to evaporate. This impression escalates as bassist Eric Revis and drummer Gerald Cleaver enter, only to resurrect a tonal center that marks the end of what we might call the chorus.

How to critique this dance in and out of abstraction? Viscerally, that’s how. After all, Ortiz gives us plenty to savor. Playing unaccompanied, he doesn’t make it obvious whether “Arabesques Of A Geometrical Rose (Spring)” is written out or improvised. Whichever is true, he plays it with very expressive rubato and dynamics, pedaling delicately. The point seems not to figure this out but rather to let the music speak unhampered by analysis. To the open mind, *Hidden Voices* testifies to Ortiz’s eloquence and originality. —Bob Doerschuk

Hidden Voices: Fractal Sketches; Open & Close/The Sphinx; Caribbean Vortex/Hidden Voices; Analytical Symmetry; Arabesques Of A Geometrical Rose (Spring); Arabesques Of A Geometrical Rose (Summer); 17 Moments Of Liam’s Moments; Joyful Noises; Skippy; Uno, Dos Y Tres, Que Paso Más Chévere. (48:50)

Personnel: Aruán Ortiz, piano; Eric Revis, bass; Gerald Cleaver, drums.

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch



Robert Landfermann

Night Will Fall

PIROUET 3088

★★★★★

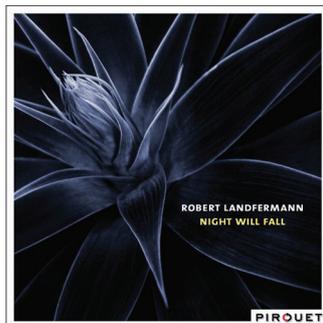
Robert Landfermann is one of Berlin’s most in-demand bassists, a highly versatile player that can fit easily into mainstream and avant-garde contexts with impressive élan. Leading an agile, resourceful quintet, Landfermann explores a variety of sturdy notions on *Night Will Fall*, producing one of the most interesting albums I’ve heard this year. He brings a loose but clear leadership, both in terms of concept and composition, but affords his excellent band plenty of space.

The effort opens with “Motettu De Tristura,” a collective improvisation built on a Sardinian folk melody that highlights the band’s refined elasticity. Saxophonists Christian Weidner (alto) and Sebastian Gille (tenor) push and pull over a loose, harrumphing groove, with pianist Elias Stemeseder working inside his instrument as much as upon its keys. “Berg” features a jagged, propulsive rhythm expertly shaped by drummer Jim Black, and elsewhere the quintet evokes the classic Miles Davis Quintet with Wayne Shorter on the wonderfully moody “Randnotiz” and tackles the Paul Motian ballad “Arabesque” with an irresistible sense of rhythmic drag. Landfermann traffics in exquisite tension, and that friction has never sounded more rewarding. —Peter Margasak

Night Will Fall: Motettu De Tristura; Berg; Katarrh; Night Will Fall; Rot; Randnotiz; Zehn Und Acht; Arabesque. (49:06)

Personnel: Robert Landfermann, bass; Christian Weidner, alto saxophone; Sebastian Gille, tenor saxophone; Elias Stemeseder, piano; Jim Black, drums.

Ordering info: prouet.com



GoGo Penguin

Man Made Object

BLUE NOTE 00602547648341

★★★★★

At the moment, there seems to be a plethora of U.K.-based acoustic piano trios sparked by the success of The Bad Plus in the U.S. and the Esbjörn Svensson Trio in Sweden. I’m thinking of the Neil Cowley Trio, Phronesis and now the break-

away GoGo Penguin (bassist Nick Blacka, drummer Rob Turner and pianist Chris Illingworth), recently signed to the hallowed Blue Note label. Sidestepping the prevalent trio ethos of, say, Keith Jarrett or Brad Mehldau, GoGo Penguin’s influences lean more toward underground Brit sound-gurus Aphex Twin and Squarepusher—purveyors of what is controversially termed Intelligent Dance Music (IDM)—who melded complex breakbeats with algorithmic or generative schemes.

The music resists chord sequences and songbook conceits in favor of insistent melodic mantras that chime in the brain. The trio is a collective that avoids listing individual names on promo materials, functioning as an entity. Individual members don’t solo as much as they interlock intricate drum-and-bass rhythms with diatonic, chaste melodic motifs. Acoustic electronica is the favored term for this fusion.

There’s much to relish if you’ll surrender to floating waves of ambience and itchy rhythm; not so much if you demand fierce abstraction or traditional cadence and resolution. —Michael Jackson

Man Made Object: All Res; Unspeakable World; Branches Break; Weird Cat; Quiet Mind; Smarra; Initiate; Gbfsysih; Surrender To Mountain; Protest. (45:05)

Personnel: Chris Illingworth, piano; Nick Blacka, bass; Rob Turner, drums.

Ordering info: bluenote.com

