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NEXT GEN JAZZ MONDAYS
7:30pm & 10:30pm Shows Every Week!

SAT 3/1	Joe Farnsworth Quartet JC Hopkins Biggish Band	7:30PM 10:30PM
SUN 3/2	Michael Wolff Trio Michael Kanan Trio	6:30PM 9:30PM
MON 3/3	April Varner Quartet Max Besesen Quartet	7:30PM 10:30PM
TUE 3/4	Dan Pugach Nonet	7:30PM 9:30PM
WED 3/5	Ben Stivers Elektrik Band Fima Ephron Band	7:30PM 10:30PM
THU 3/6	Joe Alterman Trio Rick Germanson Trio	7:30PM 9:30PM
FRI 3/7	David Gibson Quartet Pasquale Grasso Quartet	7:30PM 10:30PM
SAT 3/8	Eric Person Quartet Vivian Sessoms	7:30PM 10:30PM
SUN 3/9	Hector Martignon Quartet Ray Gallon Trio	6:30PM 9:30PM
MON 3/10	Raphael Silverman Quartet Ricardo Grilli Quartet	7:30PM 10:30PM
TUE 3/11	Dan Pugach Nonet	7:30PM 9:30PM
WED 3/12	Rale Micic Quartet Michael Blake's Tartare	7:30PM 10:30PM
THU 3/13	John Sneider Quintet Mark Whitfield	7:30PM 9:30PM
FRI 3/14	Ron Jackson Quartet T.K. Blue Quartet	7:30PM 10:30PM
SAT 3/15	Jeff Rupert Quartet Freddy Deboe Band	7:30PM 10:30PM
SUN 3/16	Antonio Ciacca Quartet Matt Chertkoff Trio	6:30PM 9:30PM
MON 3/17	Anna Siciliano Quartet Rico Jones Quintet	7:30PM 10:30PM
TUE 3/18	Dan Pugach Nonet	7:30PM 9:30PM

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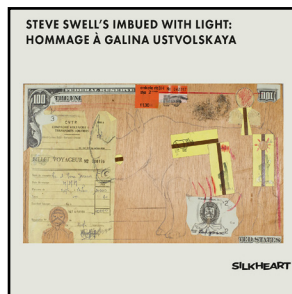
Live at Scholes Street Studio
Stephen Gauci/Patrick Golden (Gaucimusic)
by Elijah Shiffer

Though his schedule has lightened in the past year with the closing of his weekly series at Main Drag Music, woodwind player and promoter Stephen Gauci maintains a consistent, eminent presence on New York's avant garde jazz scene, including his monthly series of concerts since at Downtown Music Gallery. His commitment to documenting his every single set continues to pay off, with a steady output of new releases on his Gaucimusic label.

This particular entry in the *Live at Scholes Street Studio* series (recorded December 2023) presents Gauci in a unique setting: a duo improv with drummer Patrick Golden. Best known as a tenor saxophonist, Gauci instead plays clarinet on four of the album's six untitled tracks; for the remaining two he switches to flute and tenor respectively: his rugged sound and gnarly lines are instantly recognizable on each instrument. He blows up a storm on clarinet, with the same visceral intensity he displays on tenor; his airy, haunting flute tone is no less wild.

Through most of the album, Golden provides a continuous stream of activity, whether clicking and ping in quieter moments or rising to relentless rattles and rolls. He lays down a solid foundation for the woodwinds to interact with, though never once settling into a groove. The two players have different roles in shaping the music: Golden supplies the overall texture, while the shifts of volume and intensity are typically dictated by Gauci. Each of these improvisations has a well-defined contour of peaks and valleys. Though the duo explores a variety of beginnings and endings, many of the tracks build up dramatically in the first few minutes, especially the album closer, which keeps up a constant crescendo from start to finish. The fifth track is the longest. His signature repertoire of multiphonics and high overtones on tenor is particularly powerful in this exposed sonic environment without a chord instrument or bass.

For more info visit gaucimusic.bandcamp.com. Gauci is at Downtown Music Gallery Mar. 8. Golden is at Downtown Music Gallery Mar. 25. See Calendar.



Hommage à Galina Ustvolskaya
Steve Swell's Imbued with Light (Silkheart)
by Stuart Broomer

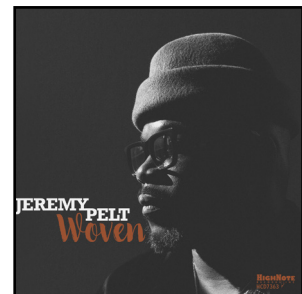
Since 2015, trombonist-composer Steve Swell has been recording homages to composers who have inspired and influenced his work. Previous subjects, such as Bartók, Messiaen and Berio, were all mainstays of 20th century music. This time, he's deviated from the pattern with a much more personal choice: the often darkly obsessive, dissonant and percussive music of Russian Galina

Ustvolskaya (1919-2006). A student of Shostakovich, she was described by one critic as "the lady with the hammer." Her music went largely unperformed during her most active years as a composer. Her sixth, and last, piano sonata, ranging from violent dissonant clusters to a sparse delicacy, has been particularly influential, while contrasts between somber bombast and restraint similarly define her *Octet* (1949-50) written for two oboes, four cellos, timpani and piano.

Swell's homage to Ustvolskaya consists of four pieces he composed for septet, along with five brief interspersed improvisations by sub-groups of two to four musicians. As with his previous homages, Swell creates a distinct ensemble, including Herb Robertson (trumpet), performing brilliantly in what was the year of his passing, Ben Stapp (tuba), Sara Schoenbeck (bassoon), Chris Hoffman (cello), Robert Boston (piano) and Harris Eisenstadt (drums, percussion). Each brings a special quality to the music, including Boston's hard-edged precision, here invoking much 20th century Russian piano music. It's a group made for somber emotions, bassoon, with trombone and tuba, emphasizing a spectrum of lower overtones—but Swell's fondness for the liberating effect of collective improvisation arises regularly.

The extended opening "Hammer" shifts between textures and moods, including a sparkling improvised duet between Swell and Robertson, an abstraction of New Orleans jazz. Another passage has Schoenbeck's vigorous bassoon bass burble, shadowed by Stapp's more restrained obbligato. The similarly extended "Rocks" has an insistently repeated ensemble pedal tone against which Swell improvises with contrasting ebullience. Throughout, insistent contrasts develop, whether it's moments of Robertson's bright, Harmon-muted trumpet contrasting with the dark-hued timbres of Swell's orchestration or the miniature "Ear Hygiene" with Schoenbeck's pitch-bending virtuosity accompanied by Eisenstadt's empathetic support. Ultimately, Swell's shifting textures and moods—combining creative composition and collective improvisation—summon up and liberate Ustvolskaya's special power.

For more info visit silkheart.bandcamp.com. Trombonafide (featuring Steve Swell, Dave Taylor and Dick Griffin) is at Nublu Mar. 3 (presented by Composers Concordance). Swell is also at Downtown Music Gallery Mar. 4 (with Patrick Brennan) and Ibeam Brooklyn Mar. 6 (with Michel Gentile). See Calendar.



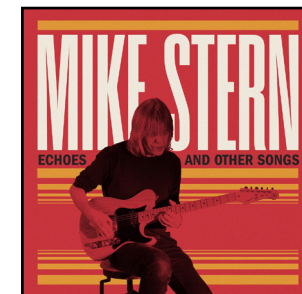
Woven
Jeremy Pelt (HighNote)
by Scott Yanow

Ever since he made his first recordings in 2000, Jeremy Pelt has gained fame for being one of the more exciting hard bop-oriented trumpeters of this century. He can always be relied upon to play consistently inventive solos that balance fire with lyricism. His core group on his latest album release, *Woven*, features Jalen Baker (vibraphone), Misha Mendelenko (guitar), Leighton Harrell (bass) and Jared Spears (drums), plus Mar Vilaseca (vocals) and Marie-Ann Hedonia (synthesizer). Parts of this release may be a bit different than one might expect, with Pelt occasionally utilizing electronics through his trumpet, as well as the addition of Hedonia's synthesizer work on four of the nine selections.

Album opener, "Prologue: Invention #1", finds Baker setting a drone in the background as the trumpeter plays some eerie notes, distorting his sound. "Rhapsody", the most successful of the electronic pieces, features a Hedonia synthesizer-created rhythmic figure, which is taken up by the other musicians. Vilaseca's voice is utilized as part of the ensemble and creates an ominous background, particularly during Pelt's solo. The music switches to the perhaps more familiar ground of acoustic post-bop with "Afrofuturism" and the relatively straight-ahead "13/14". In addition to the leader, Baker and Mendelenko prove to be inventive and colorful soloists within the tradition. The atmospheric "Dreamcatcher" creates a waltz pattern that is played in spots by vibraphone, guitar and synthesizer, Spears soloing over the ensemble and Pelt inventing melodies that fit well within the vamp. "Michelle" (no relation to The Beatles tune) is a medium-tempo ballad with a complex melody that sets a haunting mood. The trumpeter displays a particularly attractive tone on this piece, as well as the warm ballad feature "Fair Weather".

Woven concludes with a funky groove and more intentionally distorted trumpet on "Invention #2/Black Conscience" and the up-tempo "Labyrinth", which gives Pelt, Mendelenko and Baker their final heated solos. The sum of the album is a bit of a mixed bag, and while the trumpet distortions can be a bit disconcerting, *Woven's* bright moments make it worth more than a listen.

For more info visit jazzdepot.com. Pelt is at Smoke Mar. 27-30. See Calendar.



Echoes and Other Songs
Mike Stern (Mack Avenue)
by Tom Greenland

Guitarist Mike Stern's latest recording, *Echoes and Other Songs* (his first on Mack Avenue) is arguably one of his best: tuneful, tasteful, diverse, shredding. His all-star supporting cast includes Chris Potter and Bob Franceschini (saxophones), Randy Brecker (trumpet), the late Jim Beard (keyboards) who also produced, Christian McBride and Richard Bona (bass), Antonio Sanchez and Dennis Chambers (drums), Arto Tunçboyacıyan (percussion) and Leni Stern (ngoni).

The leader's new compositions are one factor elevating the project. "Connections" is a catchy ditty with a funky world-beat vibe, qualities shared with "I Hope So" and "Curtis", the latter two featuring Bona's wordless vocals with overdubbed vocal harmonies. "Echoes", "Space Bar" and "Crumbles" portray a spookier, Goth-rock ethos; "Gospel Song" and "Climate" are comparatively pastoral, while the long-limbed Phrygian melody of "Where's Leo?" could be a Middle Eastern update of Stern's "Chromazone". The brilliantly byzantine "Could Be" is a contrafact based on "It Could Happen to You" with an opening motif reminiscent of Thelonious Monk's "Epistrophy".

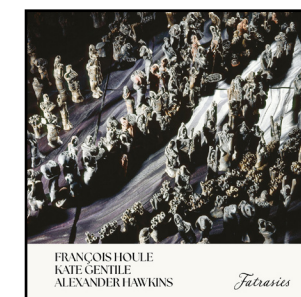
An additional elevating factor in this release is its impeccable musicianship. Stern's playing is both fiery and graceful throughout, often toggling between thorny chromatic sequences and lyrical blues phraseology with supple ornaments, always preserving a melodic through-line, as exemplified by his solos on "Connections" and "Echoes" (particularly

the second half), while his more delicate side emerges on "I Hope So", "Climate" and "Could Be". Some of the album's most memorable moments come at the end of "Where's Leo?", "Climate" and "Could Be", where Stern and Potter trade short, scintillating passages, Potter delivering an especially fine solo on the latter track.

For his recent five-night stand at Birdland last month, Stern assembled a similar, more condensed A-team of accompanists from the record: Brecker (trumpet), Leni Stern (ngoni, guitar) and Dennis Chambers (drums), plus Darryl Jones (electric bass). The second set of the fourth night (Feb. 7) confirmed that the album's elevating factors were no fluke. Watching Stern play using a new arm posture—right wrist arched, fingers crooked back at the large knuckle, forearm dangling, pick glued to thumb and index finger—confirmed that he's been forced to adapt since suffering severe nerve damage to his arms in a 2016 falling injury; one was struck by the speed, accuracy and finesse he achieves in spite of the obstacles.

The set opened with Leni Stern singing her song "Like a Thief", setting the mood on ngoni, later on switching to electric Stratocaster guitar, contributing rhythm parts and spikey solos with a fat, clean tone. Mike Stern came on strong during the second selection, "Connections", stepping to the edge of the stage and playing a mind-blowing solo that was equally cerebral and visceral, his dangling right arm somehow hitting all the right notes with the right rhythmic drive, returning for a second, equally burning solo at the end. On "Echoes" and elsewhere, he displayed fine rhythm chops, strumming funky chicken scratches or comping in smooth chains of ethereal chords, holding the pulse against Chambers' complex cross-rhythms. Brecker served as his melodic foil, running his trumpet through a series of signal processors to add variety, accomplishing a flamboyant climax on "Wishing Well". Stern's beautiful chord passages on "Gospel Song" were followed by quicksilver runs, fingers barely touching the strings as his flights took off. On "Tipitina's", the finale, Chambers unleashed his full powers, playing uncanny 7-beat phrases over the band's 4/4 groove, following these with a series of sonic earthquakes and their aftershocks.

For more info visit mackavenue.com. Stern is at Drom Mar. 1. See Calendar.



Fratrasies
François Houle, Kate Gentile, Alexander Hawkins
(Les Disques VICTO)
by Bill Meyer

The *fratrasie* is a poetic form first devised in the 13th century. The syllables per line, number of lines and rhyming structure are all rigorously prescribed, but the words are illogical. While each of this album's five tracks takes its title from such a poem, it's a counter-intuitive title for the trio's music, which is open in form, but is unfailingly cohesive.

Fratrasies documents Canadian François Houle (clarinet), Englishman Alexander Hawkins (piano) and American Kate Gentile (drums) in concert at the 2023 International Festival of Musique Actuelle in Victoriaville, Quebec. It was not their first encounter: Hawkins and Houle have worked together in various ensembles for over a decade, and Gentile joined them

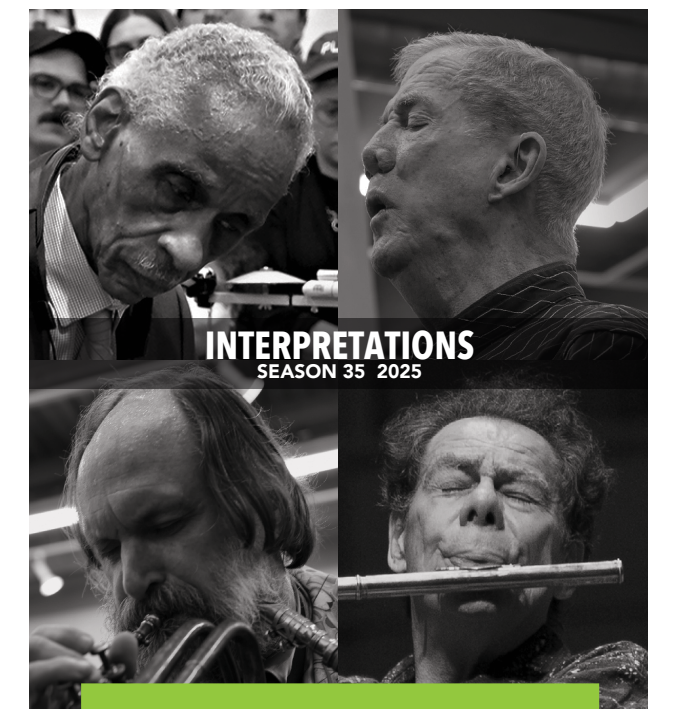
for a couple of different concerts at another Canadian festival in Vancouver in 2022, including this trio's first-ever concert. That encounter must have satisfied someone enough to plan a return engagement, and if it was anything like the music heard on this recording, one can understand why—because they sound absolutely great together.

All three musicians are composers as well as improvisers, and structural priorities as well as moment-to-moment attunement shape their contributions. The music is scrupulously balanced, even when the changes come quickly and unpredictably. And the performance shows a lot of range, opening with a spare and pensive introduction, with Gentile's sparse cymbal and woodblock accents and Hawkins' prepared piano subdividing Houle's winding lines, and closing on a note of airy complexity, with each player contributing parts that seem to simultaneously complete the music and jostle its course.

While Gentile and Hawkins haven't played together much, they're well-matched in their ability to pack a lot of action into tight spaces, particularly during the high-energy passages in the second piece, "Bel Homme Sans Tête" ("Handsome Headless Man"). Houle's harsher, sometimes electronically distorted blowing makes sense in those moments, but he also contributes via contrast, particularly when he blows slower lines using both a Bb and a bass clarinet simultaneously. So, perhaps the titles are a playful way to discharge an obligation, not some signal of artistic intent.

The music, which combines chamber music attunement with continuous, instant invention, says all that really needs to be said.

For more info visit victo.qc.ca. Kate Gentile is at The Stone at The New School Mar. 26-29. See Calendar.



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**SPACE (ROSCOE MITCHELL,
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WITH SPECIAL GUEST ROBERT DICK

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