



The Vibe
Nanami Haruta (Origin)
by Thomas Conrad

Hot new trombonists don't hit town nearly as often as bad-asses on trumpet or saxophone. That's why Nanami Haruta is news. *The Vibe*, her debut as a leader, reveals that she has it all: crisp articulation, pure intonation, fresh ideas and quick-on-quick reflexes. She also sounds enthusiastic and supremely confident (her level of chops instills poise).

These days serious jazz talent can come from anywhere on the planet. Haruta is from Sapporo, Japan. She traveled to the U.S. in 2023 and entered the jazz program at Michigan State University, studying under Michael Dease who, 20 years ago, was the hot new trombonist in town himself. For *The Vibe*, Haruta surrounds herself with high-level players a generation older: Dease (trombone, baritone on two tracks), Xavier Davis (piano), Rodney Whitaker (bass), Ulysses Owens Jr. (drums), plus guest Chris Minami (guitar on one track). The two-trombone front line inevitably invites comparisons to the paradigm of J. J. Johnson and Kai Winding. Haruta and Dease are comparably joined at the hip when they choose to be, but their interactions often sound bolder and freer

than Johnson and Winding.

"Girlie's World" (Renee Rosnes), "Easy Money" (Gregg Hill) and "Woodpecker" (Haruta) are the kind of fast, tricky, snappy tunes that this band eats alive. Haruta and Dease excel at tight unison announcements, intense calls and clever responses, intricate counterpoint and the sudden changing of roles between killing soloist and provocative accompanist. But *The Vibe* contains more vibes than one. The strength of this album is in ballads. On her own "Heartstrings", Haruta draws out the yearning melody with the timing of a true storyteller. Dease's "How It Goes" and Whitaker's "Jamerson's Lullaby" are immersions in two distinct, alluring trombone sounds: his tone is rich but with an edge, while hers is warmer, with more breath in it. The album ends with a lovely rapt moment, a duet between Haruta and Minami, on Alex North's "Unchained Melody". "I've loved this song since I was a child," Haruta says. Her version will make many listeners remember that they love it too. Haruta lingers over that timeless tune, marking it out carefully, yet fervently, allowing it time to sink in.

For more info visit originarts.com. The album release concert is at *Silvana* Apr. 22. See Calendar.



Portrait of Right Now
Jocelyn Gould (s/r)
by Anna Steegmann

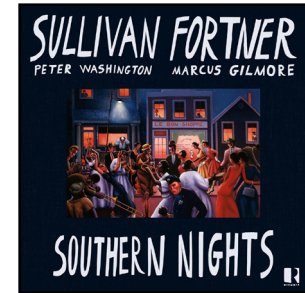
Jocelyn Gould, the Canadian jazz guitarist, composer and 2021 Juno Award winner for "Best Jazz Album of the Year," once again proves her mastery of jazz styles in her fourth album, *Portrait of Right Now*. She composed eight of the ten tracks (and sings on four of them). The themes expressed in the album are of personal and artistic evolution, regret for having failed at love and the challenges of a touring musician. Gould's band showcases the exceptional talents of Will Bonness (piano), Jared Beckstead-Craan (bass) and Curtis Nowosad (drums). The quartet's remarkable synergy is key to the album's success and the bandmates are also each given room to shine in solos on most tracks. A virtuoso on her Benedetto 16-B guitar, she draws inspiration from Wes Montgomery, Grant Green, Joe Pass and Kenny Burrell. Gould confidently weaves these influences into her distinct style, which is warm, inviting and characterized by intricate melodies, swinging bop and notable improvisational skill.

The title track, representing the musical reflection of her journey as a jazz musician, is playful, upbeat and swinging. Gould's tone is gorgeous. The languid, slow-paced, full version of the often truncated "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered" (Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart) is a clear standout, thanks to Gould's exquisite vocals and measured phrasing. The tender and ethereal "You're in There Somewhere" features her wordless vocals, augmenting the guitar melody over a captivating groove. "Can I Tell You a Secret?" unfolds in an intimate, inviting manner, featuring interactive rhythmic sections and swinging solos by Gould and Bonness. The song fades out beautifully. She pays homage to her guitar hero Montgomery in her interpretation of his composition "Jingles", which showcases her exceptional talent, seamlessly blending quirky charm with a fast-paced

energy. The melancholy "I Haven't Managed to Forget You", a song about being unable to get a former lover off one's mind, will pull at your heartstrings. Gould's masterful guitar playing and lyrics convincingly convey regret and longing.

Watch her popular YouTube series, "The Jocelyn Gould Show" and you'll see her perform, answer questions from her fans and chat with bandmates. Or catch her live. You too will be drawn into her orbit.

For more info visit jocelyngould.com. Gould is at *Birdland* Apr. 11-13. See Calendar.



Southern Nights
Sullivan Fortner (Artwork)
by Ken Dryden

Sullivan Fortner is one of the most accomplished jazz pianists of his generation, blending strong improvising skills with great technique and an expansive grasp of numerous styles. The New Orleans native has several albums to his credit, in addition to recordings with bassist Rufus Reid and vocalist Kurt Elling. This trio date, *Southern Nights*, with Peter Washington (bass) and Marcus Gilmore (drums), provides ample evidence of the pianist's chops and vast repertoire, mixing standards, works by jazz greats and his own inventive originals. The group is also an interactive band that sounds like it has played together often, not just a record date by a leader and sidemen.

Starting with Allen Toussaint's "Southern Nights", Fortner captures the New Orleans flavor of the late composer's song with a strong rhythmic pulse and solid groove that would get any party started effortlessly. His abstract solo introduction to Cole Porter's "I Love You" takes the standard into unfamiliar territory, progressing into a lively bop arrangement with the entrance of his fiery rhythm section. The leader's "9 Bar Tune" has a Thelonious Monk-infused playfulness, though the trio engages in free-spirited interplay in a much looser setting. The vibe cools down a bit with the ballad "Tres Palabras" by master Cuban songwriter-composer Osvaldo Farrés, a sauntering, low-key arrangement with Washington's tasty bass solo as its centerpiece. Veteran pianist-jazz educator Donald Brown penned "Waltz for Monk", and Fortner brings out its nuances in a rollicking rendition that builds upon its singable theme. Bill Lee's somber ballad "Again, Never" is not widely known (it was featured on Branford Marsalis' *Mo' Better Blues*) and this interpretation puts the spotlight on one of today's busiest bassists, yet an underrated soloist. Fortner's moving, spacious playing conveys the song's feeling of loneliness. Likewise, Consuela Lee (Bill's sister) penned the overlooked gem "Discovery". The pianist gives this upbeat work a Latin vibe. Clifford Brown's "Daahoud" has long been a jazz standard and this version opens with Gilmore's tantalizing drum solo before his bandmates join him, playing around the edges of its theme, taking their time getting to it.

The only issue with *Southern Nights* is the brevity of it, at just over 49 minutes, a consequence that has Sullivan Fortner and his trio leaving his listeners wanting more.

For more info visit artwork.ochre.store. Fortner is at *Village Vanguard* Apr. 1-6. See Calendar.



BOOMSLANG RECORDS



**PLACEBO DOMINGO:
FIRST CRASH**

Philip Zoubek:
synthesizer
David Helm:
guitar, voice, effects
Dominik Mahnig:
drums, recorder

RELEASE MAR 21, 2025

"With influences from genres as diverse as noise, contemporary avant-garde, rock and ambient, a sonic spectrum emerges, full of hypnotic beats, quiet beauty and surreal twists."



**THE DORF:
GLAM**

RELEASE MAR 28, 2025

"Straight forward with many years of preparation, GLAM is touching – worthwhile buying and storing for future days, where you might need some close harmony and resilience."

WWW.BOOMSLANG-RECORDS.COM
WWW.BOOMSLANGRECORDS.BANDCAMP.COM