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**Itai Doshin
Mike Clark (Wide Hive)**
by George Kanzler

Drummer Mike Clark propelled the fusion rhythms of Herbie Hancock and The Headhunters in the '70s, creating intricate rhythmic patterns in a band where pulse was the purview of the bass player, while the drummer ranged far and wide. Here on his *Itai Doshin*, Clark convenes a quintet of veteran hard bop players who emerged on the jazz scene in the same mid-20th century milieu: Eddie Henderson (trumpet), Patrice Rushen (keyboards) and Henry Franklin (bass), plus "youngster" of the group, tenor saxophonist Craig Handy (63).

As a leader, Clark has used Thelonious Monk's "Epistrophy" as his theme song for decades (it was also the composer's set closer) and this album is bookended by it, with the opener fairly straight and the closer further out, including the drummer stating the theme to begin. Towner Galaher (also a drummer) arranged the tunes here, including a bossa shaded "Midori" by Clark, and a driving "Mganga" (a reference to Henderson's moniker with Hancock's Mwandishi). The veteran trumpeter's range has compacted since his early days, but he still brings fire, if not high notes, to his solos here. Handy is the closest to torrid in his solos, while Rushen stokes fires when in the spotlight.

Two covers of standards, one jazz, the other reggae, elevate this album above being just another hard bop redux. The first is "Cherokee", long a stalwart of jam sessions at a bebop tempo. Here it is presented as a ballad, in a slow, deliberate tempo, Henderson creating a richly textured, sensuous solo on the melody. The other is "I Shot the Sheriff", the iconic Bob Marley and the Wailers reggae pop tune, reimagined here in a scintillating jazz version, with Rushen's Fender Rhodes, Clark chattering with sticks, while hardly referencing the 1-3 reggae beat. The fervid spirit he invokes is picked up by the horn players in perfervid solos. Another surprising take on hard bop is the drummer's "Yakini's Dance", bookended by *sui generis* trumpet and tenor solos, but with Rushen's barrelhouse piano solo in the middle. Surprises like that, "Cherokee" and "I Shot the Sheriff" elevate this album from mere hard bop nostalgia to something more distinctly and idiosyncratically intriguing.

For more info visit widehive.com. Clark is at Le Cheile Nov. 8 (part of Washington Heights Jazz Fest). See Calendar.



**Of the Near and Far
Patricia Brennan (Pyroclastic)**
by Ken Waxman

Patricia Brennan knows what to do with stardom and it's not what you expect. Instead of the widely-praised vibraphonist taking on star trappings, her interest in

constellations is strictly astronomical. An amateur astronomer, *Of the Near and Far's* seven compositions were created after Brennan developed a process that allowed her to translate night sky observation into musical symmetry so that this mapping became her compositions' raw material. Not that you need an interest in astronomy to appreciate the results.

Besides her expertise on vibraphone and marimba, Brennan is aided by Sylvie Courvoisier (piano), Miles Okazaki (guitar), Kim Cass (bass), John Hollenbeck (percussion), Arktureye (electronics), Modney and Pala Garcia (violins), Kyle Armbrust (viola) and Michael Nicolas (cello), with sequences conducted by Eli Greenhoe. Mostly an ensemble effort, themes are usually expressed by Brennan or sometimes by Courvoisier, amplified or doubled by guitar licks, underlined by bass and drum accents and occasionally programmed drones, with the strings either adding harmonic accompaniment or intense connections. While the ensemble can produce warmer and more intimate expressions that touch on straightforward swing and Latin tinctures, referencing Brennan's Mexican roots, more of the sounds may not be as far out as some stars, but are more buoyant than down to earth. Still, varied tempos on a tune such as "Aquila", which contrasts measured metal bar pops with string squeaks and pressure, may quicken the exposition but not prevent linear movement. More generally, sonically mapping these constellations involves careful balance among most of the instruments. Although electronics are rarely heard, while section cushioning is obvious, the results are more often expressive than elementary. Further, antiphony between Brennan's up-front plinks, and either keyboard clips or guitar sweeps on tunes such as "Aquarius" often leads to lyrical expositions.

Astrological interpretations have fascinated musicians for years, including Mary Lou Williams and Sun Ra. Though lacking a horn section may make *Of the Near and Far* less punchy, the music here, while not quite heavenly, successfully applies the solar system's star arrangement to create distinctive timbres.

For more info visit pyroclasticrecords.com. Brennan curates and plays *The Stone* at The New School Nov. 12-15 and is at *Close Up* Nov. 19 (with Dan Weiss) See Calendar.



**Memory
Paloma (Audiophile Society)**
by Anna Steegmann

Music runs deep in Paloma Dineli Chesky's family: her father, David Chesky, is a classical and jazz pianist-composer and her mother, Patricia Dineli, is a Brazilian-born actress and singer. Paloma made her New York Philharmonic stage debut at 10 and she has since emerged as a bold, expressive vocalist with a distinctive, instantly-recognizable timbre that evokes Nina Simone and Billie Holiday without imitation.

The recently-released *Memory* marks her third album (her first "jazz" album) and her debut as a songwriter. She presents a compelling journey through the emotional landscape of youth, while blending jazz, pop, blues and Brazilian influences with an intimate acoustic approach that showcases an expressive voice and storytelling prowess. Supported by Michael Hilgendorf (guitar, music direction), Maxwell Barnes (tenor), Chris Ramirez (bass) and Danno Peterson (drums), the album features six original compositions