



In 2
Roscoe Mitchell/Michele Rabbia (RogueArt)
by Kurt Gottschalk

At 85, Roscoe Mitchell remains seemingly tireless in his quest for new collaborations and new explorations of the saxophone. His playing is, as ever, utterly distinctive, in overblowing and underblowing, multiphonics and spaciousness, recognizable phrases and discrete syllables. He's a patient player capable of explosive outbursts. His fine 2021 album *Dots / Pieces for Percussion and Woodwinds* was far from his first unaccompanied recording, but it was a revelatory one. Recording at home, Mitchell had the luxury of time and the benefit of multi-tracking, crafting 19 miniatures of percussion and saxophone in a bright mix of happenstance and intentionality, like the interplay of birds and windchimes. He doesn't work with themes so much as shapes and little events.

The new *In 2* seems a logical progression from *Dots*, bringing the structures into a twosome. His partner for the 2024 studio session is Michele Rabbia, whose discography includes work with pianist Stefano Battaglia, bassist Bruno Chevillon and fellow percussionist Ingar Zach. Rabbia is a fine partner for Mitchell, a sensitive and inventive player, but the two

only seem so much like a duo. Mitchell again makes use of multi-tracking (or some truly remarkable double-horning, but that seems unlikely) and with his own percussion in tow, the seven tracks (which range from 90 seconds to eleven minutes in length) often sound more like a trio, but even more so like another series of events. There's rarely much to hang on to for listeners wanting themes and repetition, but it's a stunning and dynamic album waiting for those willing to let it unfold. As remarkable a soloist as Mitchell is (and he is), he thrives on collaboration. In Rabbia, he has a partner every bit as given to spontaneity and discovery as he is.

For more info visit roguart.com. Mitchell is with The Jazz Legacies Fellows All-Stars (featuring George Coleman, Julian Priester, Bertha Hope, Tom Harrell, Reggie Workman, Billy Hart and others) at Rose Theater Jan. 8 (part of Unity Jazz Festival). See Calendar.



Dacha
Sonya Belyaeva (Ropeadope)
by Brad Cohan

Russian-American artist and polymath Sonya Belyaeva, a composer, pianist, vocalist and multi-

instrumentalist, works in wildly eclectic fields, from a residency at Roulette to the Broadway pit for *Illinoise* to work as an improviser in Alaara and a collaborator of rock-oriented acts Half Waif and Algiers. Those experiences—and crucially, family upbringing, personal trauma, tragic loss, childhood recollections and resilience—is at the heart of the sprawling *Dacha*. Its six-song cycle is a therapeutic exercise in gut-wrenching emotion and naked vulnerability: a document and diary of life-changing events.

Belyaeva is not only a gifted storyteller, but *Dacha* proves to also be a testament to their prowess as a bandleader. The topnotch ensemble of Ledah Finck (violin), Wesley Hornpetrie (cello), DoYeon Kim (gayageum), Kalia Vandever (trombone), Chris Williams (trumpet), Nick Dunston (bass) and Stephen Boegehold (drums), helps bring ambient chamber music and classical contemporary compositions to sonic heights where color, density and melodicism form its foundation. The wealth of unfolding layers in Belyaeva's textural vocabulary demands repeated listens. Despite the heavy themes that underline the album (written in the wake of the Ukraine/Russia war and the losses of Belyaeva's grandparents and their mother's disappearance), the six nuanced pieces, accentuated by the leader's dreamlike voice, unfurl with a patience that feels weightless and deeply meditative. That synthesis is evidenced in the lush "Deda" and "In The Garden", in which slow-building drone and psychedelic abstraction ultimately morph into passages of folk-tinged beauty courtesy of Kim's plucking. Belyaeva also proves virtuosic in shifting course into melodic piano refrains as heard on "Future Living"; the quiet/loud aesthetic and odd time signatures it utilizes contains multitudes, yet flows freely as patterns mutate, form and take shape over eleven-plus minutes.

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