

smokiness of his tenor, alto and soprano, in contrast to his aerial flute and moody, muted trumpet—a realism rarely associated with a bassless piano trio. The pulsations of Mela’s tenacious drumming, his martial snare, hollow bass drum, morbid tom-toms and dark, spare cymbals evoke colors well beyond the spectrum; plus his slightly off-mic vocals carry the complete work to new imaginings. “Free to Be Free”, with the drummer’s Spanish-language shouts, well represent the pains of Latino peoples in Trump’s America. The message is made even more powerful in “Dream”, with the symbolism of freedom itself releasing the most relevant statement.

For more info visit [577records.bandcamp.com](http://577records.bandcamp.com). *Novoa* is at Chinatown Soup Mar. 19 and Ibeam Brooklyn Mar. 21. See Calendar.



*La femme aux yeux de sel*  
Gabi Hartmann (Sony France)  
by Anna Steegmann

Parisian singer, songwriter and composer Gabi Hartmann is celebrated for her elegant fusion of chanson, jazz, folk, soul and world music. Her 2023 debut album was a breakout success, topping French jazz and world charts, amassing over 20 million streams and earning Japan’s Gold Disc Award for Best New International Artist. With her latest release, *La femme aux yeux de sel* (The Woman with the Eyes of Salt), Hartmann unveils an enchanting song cycle following Salinda, a woman who leaves her island to uncover her origins and the meaning of her tears. Salinda’s journey explores love, exile and resilience, lending the album a profound literary dimension.

Hartmann’s voice—warm, melancholic, slightly husky—recalls Norah Jones and Melody Gardot in its controlled, unhurried phrasing. Whether singing in French, English or Portuguese, her delivery feels effortless and organic. The arrangements transition seamlessly from intimate ballads to mid-tempo grooves, enriched by Brazilian and Afro-Latin inflections. Produced with guitarist Jesse Harris and multi-instrumentalist Oan Kim, the album was recorded in Paris, New York and Buenos Aires with a core group of musicians consisting of Laurent Bardainne (saxophone), Arnaud Roulin and Florian Robin (piano), Sylvain Daniel (bass), David Aknin (drums) and Abdoulaye Kouyaté and Harris (guitars). Additionally, various guest artists and string quartet arrangements occasionally appear.

Spanning 14 tracks, the album moves from the joyful, danceable Guinean traditional “Sikkolaiko” to the harmonically rich “Mélancolie”, which features lyrics by Inès Desorages and Hartmann and was co-written with jazz pianist Baptiste Trotignon. The title track, “Salinda, la fille aux yeux de sel” (co-written by Hartmann and Kim) opens with Kim’s eerie, wavering theremin and a whisper of rumba. Here, Hartmann’s phrasing owes as much to Mercedes Sosa and Miriam Makeba as to French chanson. The emotionally-charged “Fools Paradise” (Harris), sung in English, gains a cinematic edge from the vocalist’s spoken French monologue. The standout track, “Take a Swing at the Moon” (Harris, Hartmann) nods to the golden age of jazz while remaining grounded in the present. Brazilian composer Maycon Ananias provides lush string arrangements that make this song truly shine.

*La femme aux yeux de sel*, an album to live with, firmly establishes Gabi Hartmann as one of the most distinctive voices on the international jazz scene today.

For more info visit [sonymusic.fr](http://sonymusic.fr). The album release concert is at Le Poisson Rouge Mar. 9. See Calendar.



*Echoes of Breakage*  
NOMON (Otherly Love)  
by Brad Cohan

The kinship of the Tokyo-born, New York-based sisters Shayna and Nava Dunkelman is not only rooted in human DNA but is a deeply musical one as well. Both Dunkelmans are virtuosi of percussion, electronics wunderkinds and topflight improvisers who are in demand in NYC’s experimental and avant garde scenes: myriad performances around town feature either or both on the bill. Recently, for example, Nava provided percussion to saxophonist Michael Foster with Strings at Roulette, while a few days earlier Shayna joined forces with electronics musician Chuck Bettis at Threes Brewing.

Together as the duo, NOMON, the siblings bring sprawling and multicolored sound spectrums, category-defying aesthetics and ecstatic vocabularies that coalesce to produce a singular organism that can best be described as inherently full of life. NOMON gave a glimpse of that rhythmic-intensive energy on *Card II* (its 2021 debut EP) and on *Echoes of Breakage* their blissed-out beats-fueled precision attain a glorious summit. Fitting under an electronic pop umbrella sprinkled with improvisatory flourishes rather than a suggestion of the jazz idiom, the compositions that make up this album wouldn’t be out of place blaring from a dystopian dance floor. The melodious fusion the Dunkelmans create—of futuristic pop, synthpop and industrial and percussive music—pack a wallop, thumping and thwacking with body-moving, inducing momentum. The music here is loaded with cerebral bangers bathed in a radiant sheen and it’s apparent that each glittering synthesizer swoosh, blip and streak, percussive pirouette and polyrhythmic pulsation was meticulously constructed. That ostensible scientific-level piecing together doesn’t negate the high level of catchiness that bounce off each of the set’s eight hypnotic tracks. The hurdling that the octopi-armed Shayna and Nava accomplish is wizard-like. They delve into intricately-woven, percussive gymnastics and electronics knob twiddling and button pushing on the hooks-laden “Amaranth” and the title track; “Uncover” raises the danceable experimental pop bar; “Red & Blue” pits the sisters against each other in a percussive duel that needs to be heard on headphones.

*Echoes of Breakage* is an otherworldly clinic in percussion and electronics as well as an homage to family and their Japanese upbringing. The sisters’ mother (Celia Dunkelman) guests on one track (“Amaranth”) and the traditional Asian melodies throughout it are sublime.

For more info visit [otherlylove.net](http://otherlylove.net). *Nava Dunkelman* is at Zankel Hall Mar. 11 (with American Composers Orchestra) and *The Stone* at The New School Mar. 26 (with Theresa Wong). See Calendar.

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