

GLOBE UNITY



miminari
Kioto Aoki, Haruhi Kobayashi, Mai Sugimoto
(Asian Improv)
A Far Within
Isidora Edwards, Biliana Voutchkova,
Zosha Warpeha (Relative Pitch)
Sound & Fury
Esthesis Quartet (Sunnyside)
by Daniel A. Brown

A trio of recent releases by all-female international jazz ensembles are more emblematic of the vastness of experimental temperaments and approaches than a mere gender roll call. If anything, a casual listen of this month's offerings provides a healthy assurance that contemporary jazz and all of its creators only continue to challenge music listeners.

Japan-born and Chicago-based, the trio of Kioto Aoki (taiko, shamisen, tsuzumi), Haruhi Kobayashi (voice, electronics) and Mai Sugimoto (saxophone, flute) bring their collective skills in visual-sonic arts into full bloom with *miminari*. Translated as "a ringing in the ears," the nine-track collection is a *de facto* lab result of this winning merger of traditional instrumentation and contemporary technology,

which plays well as an uninterrupted listen or randomized through-shuffle. Opening invocation "sonomama" features Aoki's clacking rhythms underpinning Kobayashi's ghostly, cooing chants, as Sugimoto interjects long tones and skittering saxophone commentary. Over the sequence of "teketeke", "aaaa" and "tree tree tree", the players build a type of group conscience and roadmap for the rest of the album, layering gurgling, unpredictable percussion, flutes, whistles and processed vocals. Album centerpiece "shinkansen ooo" is a 10-minute excursion into intergalactic improv, with Kobayashi's glimmering electronics guiding and goading sporadic beats and soft-tinged tonalities from her bandmates.

Over the course of its hour-long duration, *A Far Within* offers a mesmerizing audio travelog of a ghost world inhabited by ethereal drones, string-timbral investigations and textures both soothing and unsettling. London-based Isidora Edwards (cello), Bulgarian Biliana Voutchkova (violin) and US-born Zosha Warpeha (hardanger d'amore, a customized 10-string Norwegian fiddle), create four long-form pieces that bask in their unhurried glow. Opener "Chronologies of the Pale Hour" harkens back to the narco-languid '60s drones of La Monte Young and Angus MacLise, where the actual sounds of the bows dragging and scraping on string are encased in the resulting overtones that rise and fall through the air. "Seconds and After" is a study in microtonal tensions, the three players

rubbing minor-second tones through an exercise of emotional anxiety and release. "The Weather of Then" and the 18-minute title track are both exhaustive (and at times, exhausting) workouts of extended technique and eerie ambient moves. Overall, this album is a rewarding, albeit demanding sojourn into contemporary string music.

Sound & Fury, the third release from the Esthesis Quartet—Sweden-born, NYC-based Elsa Nilsson (flute) with Dawn Clement (piano), Emma Dayhuff (bass) and Tina Raymond (drums)—finds the US-based group joined by guitarist-guest dude Bill Frisell in a collection that honors the passing of the group's mentor (and a frequent Frisell collaborator), the late trumpeter Ron Miles (1963-2022). Frisell audibly enjoys the invitation on the airy stroll of "Just Come Play" and echo-rich drama of "Capricorn", where he offers understated ideas to the quartet's rich, group-improv conversation. "Where I Begin" uses unison piano and guitar notes to great effect, adding to the song's mix of playfulness and mystery. The back-to-back dose of freewheeling interplay of "Together" and "Fit of Fury" highlights Esthesis Quartet's collective wallop as complementary, attentive players, where they create a kind of chamber Americana using melodies and harmonies that blur many lines.

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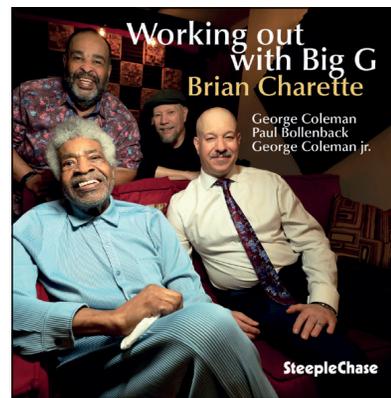
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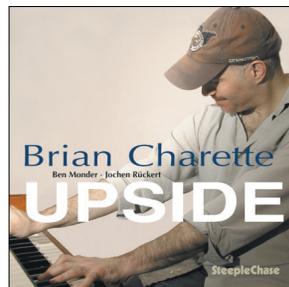
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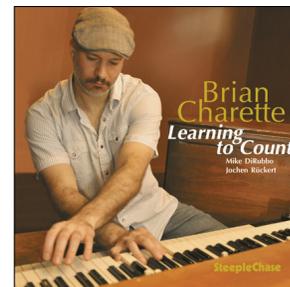
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with Big G

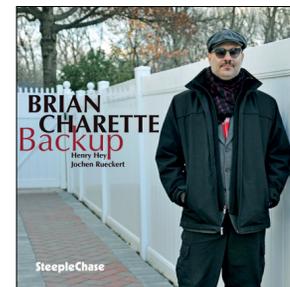
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