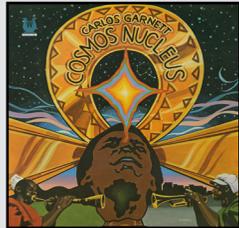


DROP THE NEEDLE



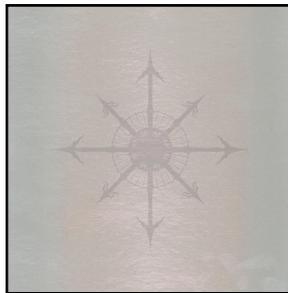
The Free Slave
Roy Brooks (Muse-Time Traveler)
Cosmos Nucleus
Carlos Garnett (Muse-Time Traveler)
 by Fred Bouchard

The reissued *The Free Slave* captures drummer Roy Brooks' quintet of star-bounded hard boppers in a raw but elegant 1970 jam at Baltimore's Left Bank Jazz Society. Fiery youngblood Woody Shaw (trumpet) and sturdy veteran George Coleman (tenor) pitch and yaw on a "live reckoning" front line. Ballast comes from Hugh Lawson (piano) and Cecil McBee (bass), who lift off the funk grooves with Captain Brooks (who would be 88 this month); the three arrived from two years' spurs-earning with reed guru Yusef Lateef. The frazzled tape belies the sassy set's smooth vamps, technical derring-do and cozy camaraderie as fans egg them on. The title track hypnotizes with 20-bar loops, snappy outbursts and down-dirty tags. Silver-mellow "Understanding" goes snakey-Latin as Coleman pleads, Shaw spits and polishes. On his "Will Pan's Walk", McBee fiddles strings dexterously, with sly wit. On "5/4 Max" (for mentor Max Roach), Brooks lashes, slashes—even gongs and breath-a-tones (!) with joyous power. Months later, Brooks had Panamanian saxophonist Carlos Garnett (both born in 1938) replace Coleman on *Understanding* (Reel to Reel).

In 1976, the headstrong Garnett (whose three-year deathiversary—he passed at age 84—is this month) corralled a herd of 25 bully-boys for an ebullient long-lost studio session, *Cosmos Nucleus*, to launch jazz-funk beyond the stratosphere, as a core octet tased by "Junior" McCleary's stinging wah-wah geetah and three drummers spark ten brazen brass and eight reeds. A son of Panamerica's Sea Silk Road, Garnett plays fast and loose with big band compositional traditions (as did Andrew Hill) as if to foster FDR's four freedoms (of speech and worship and from fear and want). An extended family affair features bassist McBee—Junior wailing fleet 'n fancy (electric bass), Wayne (bro of drummer Billy) Cobham (trumpet), Zack (son of composer Cal) Massey (tenor), Clifton Anderson (trombone, nephew of Sonny Rollins), Roy Campbell (trumpet), Neil Clarke (longtime Randy Weston percussionist) and a bevy of obscure cats: Akum Ra Amen-Ra and Yah Ya (tenor), Abdul Malik (trumpet), et al. Title track standouts are the leader's searing soprano and budding (just 20) Kenny Kirkland, pensive on electric piano. Philosophical vocals and chorals by Garnett and Cheryl Alexander are spiced up by gyrating salsa and merengue. Fifty years on, inquisitive yet carefree youths prevail.

These refreshing, 180gr vinyl reissues spearhead Zev Feldman's imaginative Time Traveler relaunch of select classics from Joe Fields' 500-strong Muse Records catalogue, packaged with twin liner notes: original back covers (Gary Giddins, Alan Goodman), colorful essays, plus historical perspective by Barney (son of Joe) Fields, and photos. More roads to travel, as Muse regulars McBee and Coleman hit life's 91 milestone.

For more info visit [instagram.com/timetravelerrecordings](https://www.instagram.com/timetravelerrecordings)



Through the Looking Glass
John Zorn (Tzadik)
 by David Cristol

After seven albums between 2015 and 2019 by the Simulacrum trio—John Medeski (organ) with avant-metal heads Matt Hollenberg (guitar) and Kenny Grohowski (drums)—John Zorn added keyboard prodigy Brian Marsella (Fender Rhodes, piano) to that lineup to form Chaos Magick in 2020. Borrowing its title from British author Lewis Carroll's novel, *Through the Looking Glass* is the quartet's sixth release, and also their best, which should come as no surprise.

With each new album Zorn ups the ante, giving the players challenging material to grapple with and the opportunity to surpass themselves. Simultaneously, with each consecutive gig and session they grow more familiar with their leader's compositional strategies. Album opener "Nine Secret Crossings" displays a variety of moods, from gently worrisome introductory music box-like arpeggios, to deep-groove morsels and further rhythm and harmonic shifts. The track accommodates roaring solos, thematic jolts, angelic forays and abstract interludes, and feels shorter than its 18-minute duration. Composer Zorn won't stay on a good groove when he taps into one, delighting in jump cuts and quick juxtapositions instead. "The Pentacle of Albucius" appears more unified by comparison, Medeski working textural wonders. "A Tear in Time" starts with a fast and curious funk meter, before veering into rock territory, again an ideal vehicle for Medeski to exert his inexhaustible chops; his first appearance in the Zorniverse goes back thirty years, to 1996's *Bar Kokhba*, although he only became an integral part of Zorn's close circle from 2010's *Interzone*, playing organ and piano in many projects, live and on record.

For all the switches in tempi and temper in *Through the Looking Glass*, the listening experience is made seamless by the performers. Chaos Magick sometimes evokes a compact version of Electric Masada, while the u-turns and clashes revert to the tradition of '90s *Naked City*. Unmitigated enjoyment.

For more info visit [tzadik.com](https://www.tzadik.com). John Medeski is at Brooklyn Bowl Mar. 12-14. See Calendar.



Handmade
Emilio Solla & La Inestable de Brooklyn
(Club del Disco)
 by Marilyn Lester

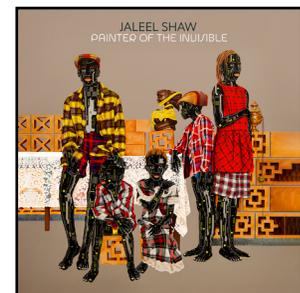
Latin GRAMMY winner and six-time GRAMMY nominee, Argentina-born, NYC-based pianist, composer and bandleader Emilio Solla is disturbed by an increasingly techno world. His 15th album, *Handmade*, with a nine-piece ensemble, La Inestable de Brooklyn, is staunchly about the power of human connection, the enduring value of music made by hand

and the value of craftsmanship in the arts and beyond, blending Latin American traditions, jazz and classical influences and, of course, tango. Among the nine tracks (all composed and arranged by Solla), there is one unabashed and delightfully quirky tango, "Miles Tango". Imagine a collaboration between Miles Davis and the legendary tangomeister, Astor Piazzolla and there you have it, with Rodolfo Zanetti's bandoneon providing the Argentine flavor among the trumpet-forward playing of David Smith.

Album opener, "Suite de los Abrazos (A Hugging Suite)", is a reflection on the pandemic, when, ironically, giving hugs could be life-threatening. It is presented as a three-movement suite: "Milonga Mutante" (evoking the chaos of emergency rooms and featuring Mike Fahie's trombone and Rogério Boccato's relentless drumming), the haunting "The Loss" (with a moving Edward Perez bass solo) and the light-hearted rejoicing of "Bodegón Caníbal" (featuring a notable tenor solo by Tim Armacost). The violin artistry of Sara Caswell emulates the subject of "Bird Song" in sound and joyous flight, with lilting pianism by Solla and the group offering a chacarera (Argentine folk dance) in praise of avian friends. Caswell is also featured on "Para el Agua", originally recorded for solo piano, featuring a skillful, extended improvisation by the leader, the sum effect of the song capturing the fluidity of water as it dances and flows. The slow milonga, "De Viento y de Sal (Of Wind and Salt)" also carries the spirit of Piazzolla; with lyrics by Solla and Roxana Amed, vocals by Sofia Tosello and Zanetti's bandoneon, the classic story-song form of Latin America is rendered with the bluesy evocation of a torch song. Piano and bandoneon begin a fanciful dance of a tune, "Joni Mitchell", an homage to one of Solla's favorite songwriters. The central theme is augmented by violin and brass interludes, woven together in a bright, saucy musical ode. Throughout, the opening piano "montuno" is present, and two Mitchell tunes are cleverly quoted in the mix.

Handmade is lively, joyous and warm, a real antidote to doomscrolling and a shot of happy for whatever ails you.

For more info visit [clubdeldisco.net/en](https://www.clubdeldisco.net/en). The album release concert is at Dizzy's Club Mar. 12. See Calendar.



Painter of the Invisible
Jaleel Shaw (Changu)
 by Rachel Smith

Painter of the Invisible is a testament to alto saxophonist Jaleel Shaw's sensitivity to stories—those he has heard and those he tells. Shaw brought into the studio a cast of similarly evocative musicians: Lawrence Fields (piano, Fender Rhodes), Ben Street (bass) and Joe Dyson (drums), as well as Lage Lund (guitar) and Sasha Berliner (vibraphone), the latter two joining on two tunes apiece. While each make their mark, the album's true focus is on the leader—as composer, instrumentalist, and as an individual. His melodies are easy to follow without being cliché, and though most of the compositions are inspired by loss, the album offers a varied, engaging listening experience.

Having been on the scene for more than 25 years, Shaw's musical maturity is well-served: each selection features an economy of notes, with no part outstaying its welcome and thus allowing for the significance of