

LOVELAND MUSIC

BRO'S SOMEHOW
BY JEFF CEBULSKI

The Danish guitarist, composer and arranger Jakob Bro basks in discovery and collaboration, so much so, that in 2003, when he was 25, he created his own label, Loveland Music (né Loveland Records)—just to have a reason to record and archive music he knew would not have broad appeal.

Bro's upbringing included the music of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday, as his father was a big jazz fan, but he also grew up with the Danish folk tradition and church music. Eventually he would play and record with legendary jazz drummer Paul Motian's band, which would open the door to collaborations with many American musicians, each of whom created a harmonic contrast to his distinct approach. The first dozen years of Loveland Music had as many releases within that time period, and represented Bro's evolving artistic vision, with all but one under his name and often including American players such as saxophonists Mark Turner, Chris

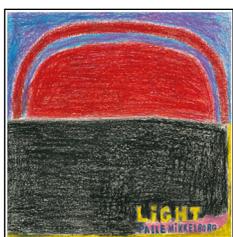
Cheek, Chris Speed, Andrew D'Angelo, George Garzone and Lee Konitz, pianist Craig Taborn and bassists Ben Street and Thomas Morgan. One ensemble, on *The Stars Are All New Songs* (2008), involved fellow guitarists Bill Frisell and Kurt Rosenwinkel and saxophonists Turner, Cheek and fellow Dane, Jesper Zeuthen, with Motian.

His major label breakthrough came in 2015 on ECM with *Gefion* (his debut for the label with a trio that includes Morgan and veteran Norwegian drummer Jon Christensen), and the subsequent release of ten more albums, a success which created an unplanned conundrum: he had reached a crossroads and desired to put music out at an even quicker clip. Says Bro, "I wanted to find a way to create and release music where the distance between the idea and the actual music was a bit shorter...I really enjoy the fact that I don't have to ask anybody anything anymore, I can just feel the freedom. That said, I'm not done collaborating with ECM. I love the label, I love Manfred [Eicher]. I've always been interested in connecting people and creating contrasts, putting musicians I really like into new settings." One notable example of the guitarist's creativity is Loveland Music's five-disc *Bro/Knak* (2012), featuring nine selections with varied

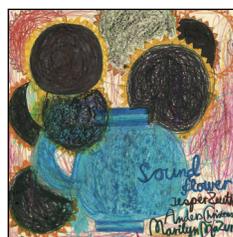
ensembles and solos performed by Frisell, Kenny Wheeler, Paul Bley, Morgan, David Virelles, Oscar Noriega and others, along with some fellow Danish musicians. Bro himself plays on five of those nine selections, which are then followed by "rebuilt" of each piece, produced by electronic musician Thomas Knak.

Zeuthen's *Sound Flower* (Loveland Music, 2024), with bassist Anders Christensen and percussionist Marilyn Mazur, originated from Bro's creative ethos. Says Zeuthen, "[The music] was meant to be part of Jørgen Leth's film about Jakob, *Music for Black Pigeons* (2022), but for some reason it was only used as intro and outro music." Zeuthen also relates that Bro didn't play on the session, but that he brought one or two melodies to play: "Apart from these, we were free to play whatever we wanted to play—all of it improvised." The scene of the recording was arranged by the film crew, who filled the room with theater smoke, but the entire session was left out of the film. "Jakob apparently thought it to be a waste of good initiative and of good music," he adds. "(And) that's how *Sound Flower* came about."

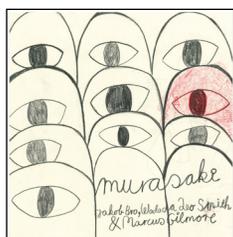
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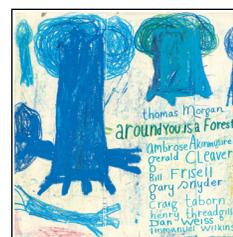
Light
Palle Mikkelborg



Sound Flower
Jesper Zeuthen



Murasaki
Jakob Bro, Wadada Leo Smith, Marcus Gilmore



Around You Is A Forest
Thomas Morgan



December Song
Jakob Bro

VOXNEWS

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

BY TESSA SOUTER

From intimate interpretations of the Great American Songbook to boundary-pushing fusions with soul, folk, spoken word and beyond, there is truly something for everyone this month. Lovers of "hot" jazz will relish three-time GRAMMY-nominated vocalist **Catherine Russell's** *Cat & the Hounds* (Turtle Bay), which unites Russell with jazz scholar and cornetist Colin Hancock and his Jazz Hounds in an album that recreates the sound of a lost 1920s Creole "territory" band, most of which were never recorded. Vocalist, songwriter, actor, pianist, lyricist and ice skater **Alicia Hall Moran** is a multidimensional, genre-defying artist who moves effortlessly between opera, art song, soul, theater and jazz. Her audacious new self-released album, *Coldblooded*, is a kaleidoscopic blend of spoken word, song, poetry, groove-driven experimentation, remix, folk and funk—shot through with sly wit. Moran's razor-sharp intelligence and fearless curiosity animate every moment. Vocalist and composer **Aubrey Johnson's** second album as a leader, *The Lively Air* (Greenleaf Music), marks her return to composing after several years focused on recording and interpreting other artists' music. The album features Johnson's original compositions alongside arrangements of works by Joni Mitchell, Kurt Elling, Lyle Mays (the late Pat Metheny keyboardist and Johnson's uncle), a collaborative piece with her brother Gentry Johnson,

plus a newly commissioned piece. Catch her album release show at Soapbox Gallery (Apr. 19).

Congratulations to **Vicki Burns**, who, along with pianist Joe Alterman, was presented with the second annual MAC/NiteLifeExchange Barry Levitt Jazz Award at Symphony Space last month. Burns, known for her fresh takes on singers deserving of wider recognition, will be at Pangea (Apr. 29), a belated centennial tribute to singer June Christy. At Carnegie Hall (Apr. 1), *The Sistering*—a collaboration between North Carolina-based vocalists **Lois Deloatch**, **Nnenna Freelon**, **Lenora Zenzalai Helm** and **Kate McGarry**—celebrates its eponymous, debut album. In construction, "sistering" refers to the practice of reinforcing a beam by fastening a stronger one alongside it. In much the same way, this vocal supergroup—boasting a combined ten GRAMMY nominations—celebrates strength through song and sisterhood. The always imaginative **Kyoko Kitamura** has a new solo work, *Artifacts from the Labyrinth*, an imaginary audio-capsule recovered post-apocalypse. Kitamura's singular voice, aided by a collection of tactile relics (a hand-cranked music box, glass bottles, cans, stones, buttons, a semi-modular analog synth and piano—all played by Kitamura herself) captures fleeting moments of humanity, along with hints of what might have happened to us. Catch her live with William Parker's Pocket Watch Orchestra at Looove Labs Annex (Apr. 8, 15, 22, 29).

SEE YOU THERE...On the jazz revivalist front, don't miss the Hot Sardines, co-led by **Elizabeth Bougerol** at Birdland (Apr. 14-18). Also at Birdland, the **Billy Stritch** Trio (Apr. 17). And don't pass on this chance to catch one of the most iconic figures in *música popular brasileira*, legendary singer-songwriter-guitarist, and Latin GRAMMY Lifetime Achievement Awardee, **João Bosco** (Apr. 28-30) celebrating his 80th birthday with special guest, clarinetist-saxophonist

Anat Cohen. Tony-nominated **Ann Hampton Callaway** at the Emelin Theater (Apr. 24) presents the music that shaped her songwriting voice with classics by Carole King, Joni Mitchell, James Taylor and Paul Simon, as well as songs from her acclaimed album *Finding Beauty: Originals Vol. 1*. **Verena McBee** returns to Pangea (Apr. 22) celebrating her third album, *Bird(S)wing* featuring her originals as well as songs by Kurt Weill, Chick Corea, Tom Jobim, Cole Porter and husband-bassist Cecil McBee. Also at Pangea, a birthday celebration for **Ben Cassara** (Apr. 10). At Joe's Pub, the irrepressible vocalist-saxophonist **Grace Kelly** (Apr. 19) and **Betty Buckley** (Apr. 24-26) with a new collection of "story songs." At Mezzrow, vocalist-guitarist **Dida Pelled** (Apr. 1) in support of her new blues-drenched album, *I Wish You Would* (La Reserve), **Gabrielle Stravelli** (Apr. 21) and **Lucy Wijnands** (Apr. 26). At Soapbox Gallery, **Vanessa Rubin** (Apr. 12). At Roulette (Apr. 14) a double bill of improvisational Black diasporic music, featuring saxophonist-vocalist **Maria Grand**, followed by **Nite Bjuti**—a Brooklyn-based, woman-led improvised experimental trio featuring vocalist **Candice Hoyes**, GRAMMY-winning percussionist-electronicist Val Jeanty and bassist-vocalist **Mimi Jones**. At National Sawdust, GRAMMY-nominated vocalist Argentinian **Sofía Rei** celebrates the release of her new album *Antónima* (GroundUP Music) with an amazing array of special guests (Apr. 2). At Bar Lunático, don't miss **Kavita Shah** in duo with Leo Genovese (Apr. 9). Ghanaian-American vocalist **BLCK Madonna** (Ana Hoffman) celebrates the release of her debut album, *Between the Lines*, with a show at Barreto (Apr. 11). At Aman Jazz Club, **Naama Gheber** (Apr. 2), **Frank Senior** (Apr. 4), **Richard Cortez** (Apr. 17), **Kate Baker** (Apr. 21), **Emily King** (Apr. 11), **Michelle Walker** (Apr. 28), **Emily Braden** (Apr. 28), **Louise Rogers** (Apr. 30).