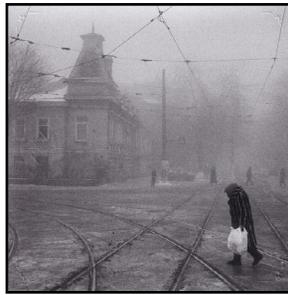


with quiet conviction. Jimmy Van Heusen's "Darn That Dream" becomes a study in subtle misdirection. Versace's piano reharmonizations flow beneath the melody as Royston subtly shifts the pulse, creating a gentle asymmetry within the ballad. One of the pianist's earliest compositions, "Homeland", unfolds with folk-like clarity; its straightforward structure encourages patience, while the trio avoids unnecessary embellishments, allowing the mood to develop naturally. Victor Young's ballad "Stella by Starlight" adopts an understated, unadorned swing. The tempo breathes, and the solos by piano, bass, then drums are delivered gracefully, with the harmonic foundation of the standard laid out simply and without fuss. The following tracks are both contrafacts: "All Our Things" (based on the chord changes for "All the Things You Are") and "In The Footsteps of Giants" (based on John Coltrane's iconic "Giant Steps"). On the former, Versace establishes the piece's kinetic musings, propelled by Royston's energetic drumming. The latter eschews the original piece's frantic pace for a warm, searching ballad. The complexity exists, but it glows rather than blazes. The trio revisits "Autumn Leaves" with playful resolve; in this version, Versace opens with lighter voicings, bluesy right-hand inflections surfacing as Moutin responds with buoyant counter melodies. The drummer, ever alert, teases double-time suggestions before settling into a relaxed lope. The closing "Walter Theodore" is an energetic yet meticulously crafted theme. Versace interacts with subtle rhythmic accents, Moutin moves confidently with a spring in his step, and Royston covers his kit with enthusiasm. The trio departs as they began, united, focused and swinging.

For more info visit sunnysiderecords.com. The album release concert is at Mezzrow Apr. 17-18. Versace is also at Nublu

151 Apr. 4 (with John Ellis) and Apr. 6 (with Ingrid Jensen), and Smalls Apr. 7 (with Mike Lee). See Calendar.



Perseverantia
Vadim Neselovskyi (Tzadik)
by Anna Steegmann

In *Perseverantia*, Ukraine-born pianist-composer Vadim Neselovskyi turns personal and national anguish into an extraordinary meditation on endurance. Executive produced by John Zorn and released on the fourth anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, this 11-movement suite unites Neselovskyi's piano with the Dutch Ysaÿe String Trio—Rada Ovcharova (violin), Emily Stam (viola) and Willem Stam (cello)—bridging jazz and classical idioms with striking emotional force. From the outset, the recording makes the piano's physical presence part of its drama. The hammer noise and pedal creaks become expressive elements, while the strings shadow, prod and sometimes resist, creating a tension that mirrors a nation and artist suspended between devastation and hope.

Structured as a journey through time, the album begins with "Before 24", a fragile prelude of high piano tones and folk-tinged string lyricism depicting

the hush before crisis. "Tanks Near Kyiv" shatters the serenity. Neselovskyi describes it as born from the "brutal chords" he played after weeks of silence at the war's start. The track's staccato violence and percussive strings mimic advancing armies, while frantic piano improvisations mirror a mind in flight. In "Refugees", the tone shifts from terror to profound empathy. The melody here is unmoored, searching for a resolution that never quite arrives. Neselovskyi subtly weaves in a quote from Mozart's *Requiem*. The interplay between his fluid, jazz-inflected phrasing and the somber string chorale creates an atmosphere of weary, collective mourning. The title track moves away from military imagery toward a focused, rhythmic grid. The "metal-influenced grooves" mentioned in the album's notes are most evident here, providing a structural backbone that feels unbreakable. The album also features stunning black and white photography and extensive notes, not necessarily something characteristic of most Tzadik releases.

At the release concert last month (Mar. 5) at Brooklyn's Roulette, with Pauline Kim Harris (violin), Celia Hatton (viola) and Andrew Janss (cello), Neselovskyi told the audience about the inspiration for each suite. Shaken by the often dismounting and disturbing parts of his compositions, the audience was also deeply moved by the introspective pieces, which transformed pain into sound. His piano, left alone to mourn in the solo "Lviv Funeral", moved many to tears. A difficult, beautiful and essential performance and recording, Neselovskyi's *Perseverantia* proves that when words fail to capture the scale of a catastrophe, music still speaks with luminous, unflinching truth.

For more info visit tzadik.com

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