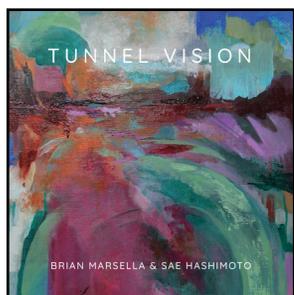


Cohen is a virtuoso. In her hands, a clarinet can unleash enough wild, wailing, keening music to shatter the air of a large auditorium. The commodity in which she specializes is ecstasy. It is therefore illuminating to hear her function as a measured, gently probing, freshly lyrical improviser. On Wind's "Standing at the Window Waving Goodbye" (written for his late grandmother), Cohen sounds like she is uncovering tender memories of her own. Her affinity for Brazilian music is well-established. On Edu Lobo's "Pra Dizer Adeus", her solo contains elements that, in another musical language, might feel incompatible, like spirituality and voluptuousness. As for Barron, his renown gives you faith that jazz truly is a meritocracy. He does not play a note on this record that sounds out of place or unnecessary or self-serving. On "Stars Fell on Alabama", which Cohen sings from the heart on clarinet, Barron prompts her with subtle, perfectly-timed pianistic enhancements. He too sounds at home in Brazilian music. He embraces, then reimagines, Lobo's seductive melody. On the Ellington songs, "Black Butterfly" and "The Feeling of Jazz", he proves that refinement and swing can improve one another. One of the magical things about Barron is his touch. Every clean, precise note is round and glowing, like a pearl. The leader threads poetic bass lines throughout these two selections, and Wilson, on brushes, sweeps the music ever forward. They also star on *Stars*.

For more info visit newvelle-records.com. The album release concerts are at Smalls Apr. 9, Puffin Cultural Forum (Teaneck, NJ) Apr. 10 and Deer Head Inn (Delaware Water Gap, PA) Apr. 11. Wind is also at Mezzrow Apr. 3-4 (with Bill Cunliffe), Provincetown Playhouse Apr. 20 and Emelin Theater (Mamaroneck, NY) Apr. 24 (with Ann Hampton Callaway). See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



Tunnel Vision
Brian Marsella & Sae Hashimoto (Red Palace)
by Kurt Gottschalk

It's not surprising that pianist Brian Marsella and percussionist Sae Hashimoto would make such an exacting album of duets, but even still, and again and again, *Tunnel Vision* is an album of surprises. Marsella leads the large ensemble Gatos do Sul, plays with a couple of piano trios, is a frequent interpreter of John Zorn's music and is the proprietor of Red Palace Records. Hashimoto is generally found in contemporary composition circles, as a member of both the Talea Ensemble and the piano-percussion quartet Yarn/Wire. The duo with Marsella is hardly Y/W halved. They liken themselves to Gary Burton and Chick Corea, which rings true at times, but there are also slow-drift, eerie explorations and fast-paced minimalist rigor in their music. The two also play together in Archipelago X (a trio with electronicist Ikue Mori), which is the most apt (aesthetically and factually) sonic marker to cite.

The opening, title track, composed by Hashimoto, steps off like rush-hour choreography, busy but orderly, with muted piano strings pulling the tension. Her "Sheep Water" is quite the opposite, gentle but ambiguous, with bowed vibraphone keys and stroked piano strings. In the final third, a piano ostinato offers a bit of reassurance, but lovely vibraphone counterpoint assures we're still adrift somewhere. The remaining six pieces are all Marsella's and lean a bit more into jazz vernacular. "The Brilliant Questions That Children

Ask" has all the poise and grace of a ballad by the late MJQ pianist John Lewis. "S.O.S. (Mayday! Mayday!)" keeps nicely off-kilter with Morse code patterns quickly hammered out and "The Centrifugal Force That Keeps Us Intact" crafts knotty problems and quick resolutions. On the other hand, "The Dangers of Curbs and What Could Be" and "Unseen Color Wheel" build from lovely, simple melodies in appealingly intuitive ways.

The pairing of piano and vibraphone remains magical, among the most elusive ethereal percussion music to be heard. Besides Burton and Corea, Futari—pianist Satoko Fujii and vibraphonist Taiko Saito—have made several fine records in the form. And composers John Luther Adams, Alvin Singleton, Charles Wuorinen have all explored that territory, but it's still something of a rarity. Marsella and Hashimoto chart a bit more of the ground on *Tunnel Vision*, to deeply satisfying results.

For more info visit redpalacerecords.bandcamp.com. Marsella is at The Stone at The New School Apr. 22-25. See Calendar.



Sketching for Les Liaisons Dangereuses
Duke Jordan (SteepleChase)
by Andrew Schinder

It's always fascinating to dive into an artist's process. Getting a glimpse into artistic genesis can help form an even stronger relationship with the creator than with the finished product alone. While drafts and outlines are not always as easily consumable as the final outcome, when they come from an artist as brilliant as pianist Duke Jordan (born 104 years ago this month), they are certainly valuable. In 1959, filmmaker-provocateur Roger Vadim adapted the notorious 1781 epistolary novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, by modernizing its setting to then-contemporary Paris. In keeping with the French fascination with jazz, Vadim enlisted Jordan, along with Thelonious Monk and Art Blakey, to provide musical motifs and themes that are used throughout the film (including a brilliantly tense climactic party scene). *Sketching for Les Liaisons Dangereuses* is a document of Jordan's audition for the film.

The story behind Jordan's contributions and this album's unfinished versions is somewhat convoluted. In the film itself, Monk is credited as the main musical composer, but Monk only provided half of the film's music. Credit for the remainder goes to Blakey and his Jazz Messengers, but the drummer's music was written by Jordan, who is initially credited under the pseudonym "Jack Marray" due to a contractual dispute. Jordan is only credited under his real name as having provided "special sequences" with drummer Kenny Clarke. Blakey released an "official" film soundtrack (playing Jordan's compositions), while Jordan formed his own quintet and released his *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* album in 1962. Both records feature Jordan's classic standard "No Problem", which is used throughout the film.

SteepleChase received the recordings that comprise this album in 1979, but they sat unreleased until only recently. Consisting of twenty-one demos for seven titled pieces, the titles for these pieces can differ: "No Problem"'s origins, for example, can be traced to the title "Flip-Top". The multiple versions of each track

might seem at times repetitive, but it is nonetheless fascinating to witness a musician of Jordan's stature experiment and tweak since each demo consists of the pianist playing solo, but with variances in key, tempo and tone. This is music not necessarily to consume, but to study—and whether or not the music is "good" is irrelevant. It was certainly good enough; Jordan got the job.

Paired with a viewing of the film, and Jordan's amazing, finished soundtrack, *Sketching for Les Liaisons Dangereuses* is a wonderful look into a brilliant jazz mind.

For more info visit arkivmusic.com

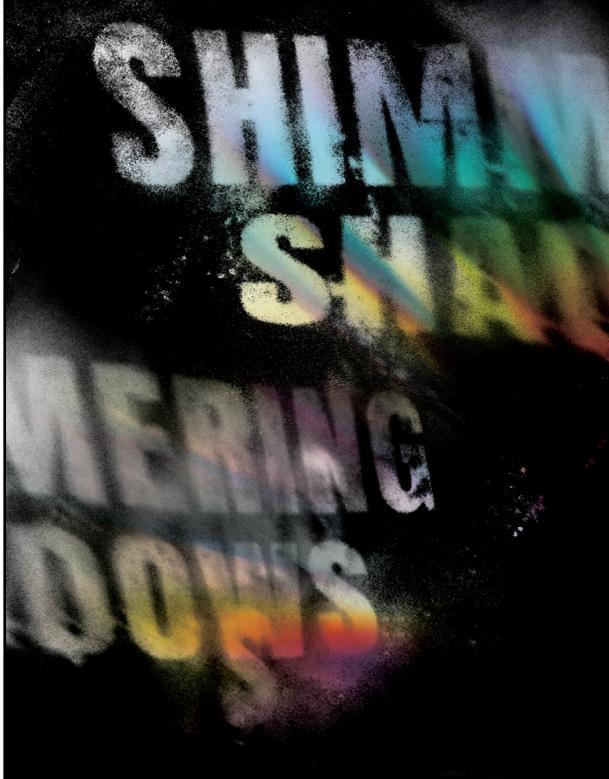

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featuring
Bassist, Mimi Jones
Vocalist & Poet Monique Ngozi Nri
Multi-Percussionist, Brandon Saunders

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