

# 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."

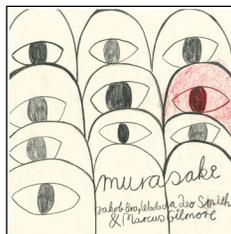
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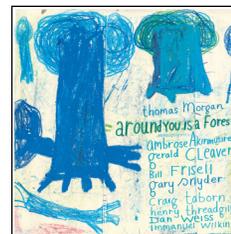
Light  
Palle Mikkelborg



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 **Sofia 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).

(INTERVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

singing is the most astounding vocal stuff you've ever heard in your life.

**NYCJR:** Hopefully one of the labels you work with will be interested. It sounds like something that needs to come out.

**HARVIE S:** It's pretty astounding. I've only listened to one reel, I haven't even listened to the second one yet. The first reel has just got so much in it. It's really a high-quality recording, because it was only two microphones, one on me and one on her.

**NYCJR:** Speak about your work with (pianist) Alan Broadbent, which has been just as memorable.

**HARVIE S:** Alan is one of the greatest musicians I have ever known and one of the nicest people, too. He's so brilliant. When I play with him, I can play a solo and if I make a mistake, he'll cover it, because he's got perfect pitch. He knows exactly what to do. He's amazing, his arranging and everything. I'm really honored and have gotten to do more than a half-dozen recordings with him.

**NYCJR:** Let's talk about *Bright Dawn*, your new album. I'm familiar with guitarist Peter Bernstein. I've seen drummer Matt Wilson a number of times over the years, with both Denny Zeitlin and Bill Mays. But pianist Miki Hayama may be a new name for many.

**HARVIE S:** Miki is becoming one of the hottest players on the scene right now. She just recorded with Dee Dee Bridgewater. She's on the GRAMMY-winning Nnenna Freelon record. She's been touring with saxophonist Don Braden. I discovered her when I made a record (*Homage*) with Sheryl Bailey. Miki played Fender Rhodes on it because she's also a keyboardist. She's got to be one of the most swinging piano players, but she can do all the out stuff too.

I did a record with Don Friedman and Bernstein (*Remembering Attila Zoller*). We had also done some gigs together over the years. For me, he's like the heir to Jim Hall, even though he has his own style. A lot of people don't know I worked with Hall for a year and a half. It was when he wasn't recording. What ended my time with Hall was working with Sheila in the duo. I loved playing with Jim, but Jim was insistent that I make all the gigs and I had duo gigs, which I couldn't sub out for. So I lost the gig with him. I played with Peter and I felt that he would be really good for this project. Matt and I have played together on and off on records over a long period of time. The thing about Matt is wherever you go, he's right there. If you want to play really simple and straight ahead, he's there. You want to play more creative, he's there. He doesn't play the drums, he plays the music. So I handpicked this band. A lot of thought went into what I thought would be the best combination and I'm really happy with the results.

**NYCJR:** One of Matt's expressions is, "What does the music need?"

**HARVIE S:** Well, that's exactly how he is. I've made over 20 records as a leader. All the records I made were more conceptual. They weren't featuring the bass at all. I took some solos and I played a little bit of melody. But this record, *Bright Dawn*, I decided I'm going to really step out. I'm really playing a lot of melodies. I'm bowing on it. I really took the lead in this record.

For more info visit [harvies.com](http://harvies.com). Harvie S' album release concerts are at Saint Peter's Church Apr. 26 and An Beal Bocht Café Apr. 29. See Calendar.

**Recommended Listening:**

- Double Image (David Friedman, David Samuels, Harvie Swartz, Michael DiPasqua) – *Double Image* (Enja-Inner City, 1977)
- Harvie Swartz – *Underneath It All* (Gramavision, 1980)
- Sheila Jordan/Harvie S – *Yesterdays* (HighNote, 1990)
- Harvie S & Kenny Barron – *Witchcraft* (Savant, 2012)
- Sheryl Bailey & Harvie S – *Plucky Strum: Departure* (Whaling City Sound, 2017)
- Harvie S – *Bright Dawn* (Origin, 2025)

(LABEL SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

Bro's artistic conception goes beyond music and into the entire release package. Beginning with *Bro/Knak*, many of the label's album covers have been etched—also improvised—by Danish artist Tal Rozenzweig (a.k.a. Tal R). The artist and the musician have collaborated on other projects as well, and this partnership promises to continue on upcoming albums. With his freedom unleashed, Bro has been busy with releases—eight in the last two years (including two albums with veteran trumpeter-composer Wadada Leo Smith and one with saxophonist Joe Lovano, *Live at the Village Vanguard*)—and plans for more: "It's gonna be a mix of old stuff and new recordings...I have a fairly big library of stuff that I can release," he says. "And I have found a really good collaborator in Simon Christensen. He's been helping me on the logistical aspects of having a label. Now I am at a point where I can focus on creating music as all of the business stuff is handled." Included in this year's plans are the recently released *Light*, by trumpeter Palle Mikkelborg, and a duet album from bassists Morgan and Larry Grenadier. According to Morgan, whose album *Around You Is A Forest* was released on Loveland last year, "The history and shared sensibility and trust that Jakob and I have were important to me in deciding to release my music on Loveland...From our earliest conversations about *Around You*, Jakob suggested releasing the underlying computer tracks as a follow-up. I think these tracks have a hypnotic quality in themselves, and releasing both the duet and solo versions feels like the best of both worlds. I'm grateful for the idea—it reflects Jakob's expansiveness and his vision."

Yet, there are pragmatic challenges to this artistic vision. The current tariff situation between the US and Europe has created significant marketing difficulties. Bro explains: "When I released Thomas' album, it was very tricky to get the LPs shipped. I hope that's gonna get easier at some point." And then there's the always thorny issue of getting other labels' permission to release live recordings of their artists. One upcoming album will feature notable musicians who played at the 2025 Loveland Music Festival in Copenhagen last November; a series of performances were dedicated to the memory of Motian, who played on *Balladeering* (2009) with Bro, the late Lee Konitz, Frisell and Street.

One of his favorite expressions is "somehow," a word that to him represents serendipity: "It seems surreal, somehow. I guess my reason for [feeling] so lucky is that I'm not looking for the same thing as other people are looking for in music [such as] being great at your instrument." He reveals that he's writing more and more music where he's not even playing guitar anymore. Bro cites the example of a piece written for the Brussels Philharmonic, wherein he played guitar only in the third movement. He adds, for emphasis, "I had a commission to compose for the Polish Cello Quartet. I featured Wadada Leo Smith, and I only played for five minutes out of an hour."

For Bro, the Loveland Music trip, in concordance with his career, has been a fascination.

For more info visit [jakobbro.com](http://jakobbro.com). Loveland Music artists performing this month include: Jakob Bro Septet with Mark Turner, Larry Grenadier, Marcus Gilmore, et al. at Village Vanguard thru Apr. 5; Thomas Morgan and Marcus Gilmore at Village Vanguard Apr. 14-19 (with Gilad Hekselman); Larry Grenadier and Marcus Gilmore at Village Vanguard Apr. 21-26 (with Brad Mehldau); Joe Lovano Quartet with Marilyn Crispell, Ben Street and Andrew Cyrille at Village Vanguard Apr. 28-May 3; Lovano at McCarter Theatre (Princeton, NJ) Apr. 8 and NJPAC (Newark, NJ) Apr. 18 (both part of "Coltrane 100"); Crispell solo at National Jazz Museum in Harlem Apr. 16. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.

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