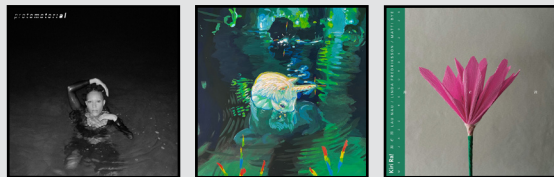


GLOBE UNITY



listen to the rain
anaïs maviel & the rhythm method (Protomaterial)
toso toso
toso toso (Leaving)
nen
Kira Ra! (We Jazz)
 by Daniel A. Brown

This month's releases from the jazz-improv LGBTQIA+ community, in celebration of Pride Month, seem tethered to divergent explorations of the tacitly genderless, indefinable and fluid realm of the depth of mystery, if not mysticism, of contemporary music. The albums of anaïs maviel & the rhythm method, toso toso and Kira Ra! run the gamut from the cerebral and laconic to the agitated and manic, united by fearless approaches to spontaneous creation, innovative compositions and, in a decidedly 21st-century trend, a shared love of lowercased preferences or branding.

French-Haitian composer and multi-instrumentalist anaïs maviel (voice, kamele n'goni, singing bowl) leads The Rhythm Method string quartet—Leah Asher and Marina Kifferstein (violins, voice), Carrie Frey (viola, voice) and Meaghan Burke (cello, voice)—through *listen to the rain*, a winning and alluring eight-song

mix of creolized Messiaen-tinged sound suites. Based on maviel's attuning of the cyclical nature of the earth and heaven, in total, the album can be listened to as a singular piece or as separate tracks with same rewards. Opener, "Water", boasts gliding and conversational arco and plucked, chiming strings interspersed with phantom vocals, evaporating into "Fire", featuring a deranged ostinato joined with a wordless vocal chorale. The ethereal "Rain" drips along with a watery canonical feel. By the time the album closes with the Zen-vibed tonalities of "Sky", this elemental celebration succeeds in its certain effect on open-hearted listeners.

A frantic counterpoint is served up on the eponymous release from NYC-based toso toso. No less grand, but driven by more electric and eclectic grit, the quartet—*isabel crespo pardo* (voice), Celia Hill (guitar, electronics), Rahul Carlberg (piano, keyboards, synthesizers), Kabir Adhiya-Kumar (drums, percussion)—percolates on the outer fringes of avant-pop, in a style the band rightfully describes as "genre-agnostic." Opener "cLAcLAcLA" is a winning mashup of desperate plaintive vocals from nominal leader pardo, the band's swirl dissolving into the kind of berserk mix that evokes Japanese genre-splicers, the Boredoms. The band pulls a bait-and-switch on "corre que corre", which arrives as primo '70s Agitation Free-style prog and departs in a stomping swirl of discordant sound that moves from melodic to menacing. The group hones in on their gentle, heartfelt side with "en la lengua" and the closing, icy anthem of "te sienta cerca", which honors the previous six tracks' uncertainty with

its own dissolve into a shimmering closure.

Inspired by the friendship and collaboration of members Lau Nau (Laura Naukkarinen—modular synth, vocals, cello, piano, balafon, glockenspiel, toys), Linda Fredriksson (alto and baritone saxophones, flutes, piano, wurlitzer, toys, balafon, mandolin, synth) and Matti Bye (piano, live electronics, synths, balafon, vibraphone, wurlitzer), the Finnish-Scandinavian Kira Ra! serves up an engaging eight-song collection with their second album, *nen*. The collective taps deep into the kind of pan-cosmic, other-worldly realms of peak-seeking Don Cherry and also the Art Ensemble of Chicago, a peripatetic looseness that pulls the listener directly into its center chakra. The Mixolydian motif of "ream" moves like a slow-motion riptide, stacking melodies on bubbling keyboard clusters. The title track features a dulcet kalimba-tinged melody intertwined with airy vocal swells, held together by an *audio-verité* production of clattering, random percussion effects. Penultimate track "eroplane" distills this unique trio's music into a minimal sketch, followed by album closer "ahiahi", a farewell etude composed in real time. Overall, *nen* plays like a successful merger of improv and ambient experiments, albeit with results that demand mindful listening in lieu of a kind of sonic background.

For more info visit protomaterial.org, leavingrecords.com and wejazzrecords.bandcamp.com. *isabel crespo pardo* is at *Le Poisson Rouge Jun. 10 (with Kalia Vandever)*, *LATINOISE Fest Brooklyn Jun. 13 (with iisa)* and *The Stone at The New School Jun. 26 (with Simon Hanes)*. See Calendar.



FEATURING:

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- Jenn Jade Ledesna
- Lavender Light, The Black and People of All Colors Lesbian and Gay Gospel Choir, Eric Williamson, Artistic Director
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