



Let X=X (Live)
Laurie Anderson with Sexmob (Nonesuch)
ResoNation Trio/Ultra Resonance
Steven Bernstein (Royal Potato Family)
 by Kurt Gottschalk

A collaboration between trumpeter, composer and arranger Steven Bernstein, and performance artist Laurie Anderson, is as much a surprise as either of their individual careers by a factor of two. They've been individually enigmatic and unpredictable for decades: Anderson the quizzical observer and Bernstein the fun-loving jazzman. They wouldn't seem to share a lot of common ground, but Bernstein loves an orchestration challenge, which might have been all the overlap they needed for his four-piece Sexmob to back her on a greatest hits tour in 2023. About a quarter of *Let X=X (Live)*'s 23 tracks (available as two CDs, three LPs or download) come from Anderson's debut album, 1982's *Big Science* (plus the "O Superman" B-side, "Walk the Dog"), and they're consistently the most exciting tracks on the collection. Bernstein's arrangements for songs originally dominated by keyboards, violin and accordion add a punch that makes them sound new again. Subsequent albums used larger ensembles and smoother arrangements. The new versions of those songs are strong but less surprising.

Monologues are interspersed throughout, as are a few surprises. Bernstein accentuates the calypso on the

little-known 1977 single "It's not the bullet that kills you — it's the hole", dedicated to the controversial artist Chris Burden. An arrangement of Lou Reed's "Junior Dad" (originally recorded with the band Metallica for Reed's ill-begotten final album) uses Reed's isolated vocal track against a gentler accompaniment, and condenses the song considerably. Laurie and the Mob do the catalogue of her late husband a kindness in reworking the song. The album concludes with a Buddhist lesson (related by Anderson) that "the reason we're here is to have a really, really, really good time." This belief might point to the true Anderson-Bernstein overlap.

Bernstein called on bassist Scott Colley and drummer Nasheet Waits for *ResoNation Trio*, a laid back and fully enjoyable set that highlights what a superb instrumentalist Bernstein is. The uncommon trumpet trio leaves no room to hide, and Bernstein sets aside his usual slide in favor of the more common valve trumpet with a sharp balance of precision and soulfulness. The album commences with a wonderfully rumbling take on the blues standard "Sitting on Top of the World". But that's only half the story. For the second LP of the set, or the second half of the CD, Bernstein handed the *ResoNation* cuts over to Scotty Hard (who produced and possessed the last Sexmob album, 2023's *The Hard Way*) to remix, repurpose and restructure it into a heavy, low-key jam. Hard isn't beholden to the original recordings, making *Ultra Resonance* a very opposite side of a very same coin. It's got processed beats and up-front synths, but the sound of breathing instruments is very much in the mix. Like the first half of the project, it doesn't push for speed where it very much might have, instead gravitating toward midtempo grooves full of spirit. Unsurprisingly, even for a straight-up acoustic session, Bernstein has surprises up his sleeve, and good ones at that.

For more info visit nonesuch.com and royalpotatofamily.com. The *Let X=X* album release concert is at Central Park Summerstage Jun. 26. The *Ultra Resonance* album release concert is at National Sawdust Jun. 27 and Solar Myth (Philadelphia, PA) Jun. 30. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



Live in the Listening Room
Isaiiah Collier/Tim Regis (The Vinyl Factory)
 by Marc Medwin

If the John Coltrane/Elvin Jones or Sonny Fortune/Rashied Ali duos received an update, they might sound something like the vinyl-only release of *Live in the Listening Room*. Saxophonist Isaiiah Collier and drummer-percussionist Tim Regis recorded this EP (three tracks totaling 26 minutes), direct-to-tape, in January 2025 at Devon Turnbull's Hi-Fi Listening Room Dream No. 1, at 180 Studios in London; but enter a third member of the group: sound artist Sonny Daze, who transformed that already fertile space into a malleable, multi-traditional Xanadu of possibility.

Like poet Samuel Coleridge's "Kubla Khan, Or, A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment", describing a fantastical pleasure dome, album opener, "Pacing Devon's Room" is an extended fragment, its impact cavernously measureless even as Collier and Regis carve

out its instantaneously multihued areas. Coltrane-like *Interstellar Space* vibes morph as Daze's first influence is felt at 1:28, advancing and retreating in glacially concentric waves of glass and iron, transforming Regis' already Protean swing into polyrhythmic torrents screeching their fed-back freedom narratives, while Collier's high-energy ascent is a constant companion. With the seamless transition into "2nd Genesis", Daze turns Collier's tenor into something like a bass clarinet, whose fragmentary melodic motive unravels even as it emerges, restoring the tenor's sonic signature only to enhance the space with multi-dimensional echo and contrapuntal delay.

Both players receive the Daze treatment: dig the "vocalizations" imbuing drum and cymbal at 8:53. A similar mechanical scream leads to the brief, poignant and aptly named "Den of Iniquity (Orange Satan) Beelzebub", where saxophone becomes winds-and-brass ensemble, even if the abiding riff slides right out of the blues. However opulent, and no matter how high the energy, each piece from this magical collaboration is built of the simplest melodic materials. In that, Coltrane is certainly a guiding light, and it is fitting that Collier will perform Coltrane's music at the Blue Note Jazz Festival this month, in preview of his next album release. Yet, "Den of Iniquity" also prefigures the R&B and soul influences pervading *Joy*, his highly arranged, song-based EP, also soon-to-be released (on Brownwood Recordings in July).

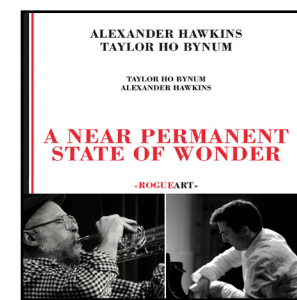
If *Live in the Listening Room* demonstrates anything, it is that Collier is as at home in these traditions, even as he is unwilling to be stultified by them.

For more info visit thevinylfactory.com. Collier is at Blue Note Jun. 16-17 (part of Blue Note Jazz Festival). See Calendar.

by Peter Brainin, and Benjamin Lapidus' tres cadenzas, along with group vocalizations, call up the spirit of the Palladium Ballroom of yore. But modernism is at the fore with an orchestration by Takao Heisho for Rodriguez' "No Quiero" and his own "La Fruta", bookended by trumpet solos by Rodriguez-Peña (opening) and Darché (closing). The number taps into ritualistic West African spirituality with a hip jazz bent. Romantic old Havana nights are evoked in Rodriguez' "La Vida Es un Sueño", with multiple vocalists and a trim bass trombone feature for Chris Washburne.

Rodriguez was to Afro-Cuban music as Louis Armstrong was in jazz. By 1952 he was living in the South Bronx, performing regularly in Manhattan and The Bronx, influencing, inspiring and mentoring the likes of Ray Barretto, Johnny Pacheco, Orlando Marin, Charlie and Eddie Palmieri, Willie Colón, Larry Harlow and the entire genre. *Arsenio and Beyond* is a hip, energetic homage and window into a genre and world of music worthy of exploration.

For more info visit jazzheads.com/Sanabria. *Sanabria* is at Bronx Music Hall Jun. 18 (with Sam Baum Allstars featuring David Amram, Dan Block). See Calendar.



A Near Permanent State of Wonder
Alexander Hawkins/Taylor Ho Bynum (RogueArt)
 by Ken Waxman

Perhaps the state of wonder suggested here is why UK pianist Alexander Hawkins and American cornetist/flugelhornist Taylor Ho Bynum have never before recorded as a duo. Both lead their own bands and have affiliations with the likes of Tomeka Reid and Joe McPhee (Hawkins) and Anthony Braxton and Mary Halvorson (Bynum) and were even part of a quartet with Canadian drummer Harris Eisenstadt and British bassist Dominic Lash more than a decade ago. But this new opportunity begs the question of how the two can operate alone. Very well is the answer, since both have played solo sets as well as gone one-on-one with a variety of other instrumentalists.

Hawkins may seem to be at the advantage with the multiple rhythms, colors and pitches available from a piano. Yet Bynum easily holds his own, separating his two horns for distinctive sound definition. Smokey flugelhorn textures are perfect for lyrical interpretations as grace notes and muted snuffles meet rich keyboard chording for comforting vibrations as on "Song of Clarity". Elsewhere, lowing purrs extend Hawkins' echoing kalimba-like inner string plinks to attain full emotional purity on "Catalogue (Part 2)". In contrast, the biting ripples and brassy shakes from the cornet operate as foils to those times when the pianist's connective chording moves from straight ahead to emphasize unexpected stops, starts and percussive detours. This is most prominent on "Aria Far Away" as Hawkins' linear theme is punctuated with galloping keyboard cascades and thickened projections. Cornet plunger tones, vibrating smears and half-valve undulations also reach prestissimo quivers before finally uniting with the piano narrative for a unison, ascending conclusion.

Perhaps the most demonstrative example of the duo's kindred versatility is "Q (Index)". A multi-layered Bill Dixon line — Hawkins composed six of the remaining seven tunes — it evolves from a subdued section of muffled brass whines and soundboard strings and

hammer shakes to dynamic contrasts between echoing piano pedal point and masticated half-valve brass timbres. After antithetical open horn blasts and sped up but controlled piano chording is heard, Bynum repeats his cornet variations while Hawkins' concentrated key plinking preserves the original exposition.

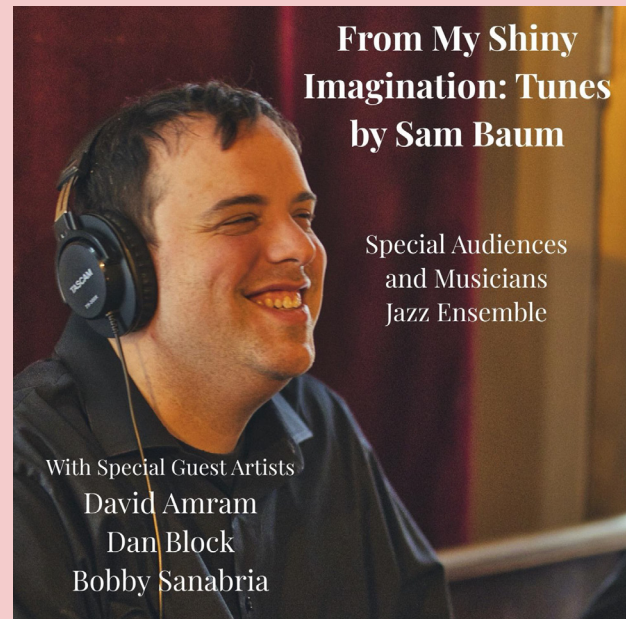
With myriad other commitments, Bynum and Hawkins likely can't often repeat this realized exercise in dual-perceptive musical admiration. But maybe a near permanent, if at least occasional set of similar meetings, could advantageously be arranged.

For more info visit roguart.com. Bynum is at Abrons Arts Center Jun. 27 (part of Vision Festival). See Calendar.

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Monday Night Jam National Jazz Museum in Harlem 58 West 129th St., 6PM 6/22 - Monday Night Jam <small>This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York Legislature and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the Howard Gilman Foundation.</small>	Hudson River Park Jazz at Pier 84 555 12th Ave, 7PM 6/17 - Bill Saxton and the Harlem All-Stars 6/24 - Dick Griffin Big Band

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Arsenio and Beyond
Bobby Sanabria Multiverse Big Band (Jazzheads)
 by Marilyn Lester

Of proud Puerto Rican heritage, and equally proud to be Bronx-born, drummer-percussionist Bobby Sanabria has also been a dedicated educator and a fierce activist of Latin music and its rightful place in the jazz canon. In his latest release, *Arsenio and Beyond*, with his 23-piece Multiverse Big Band, six of the nine tracks are by Cuba-born Arsenio Rodriguez (1911-1970), "El Ciego Maravilloso," master of the mandolin-like tres and the tumadora conga. Rodriguez, Sanabria says, is "The true Father of Mambo and Son Montuno; without Arsenio Rodriguez there is no salsa, Afro-Cuban jazz, and many would even argue, rock and funk." Played by the powerhouse Multiverse Big Band, the album, conceived and interpreted with progressive, jazz-oriented arrangements, was recorded live in the new Bronx Music Hall, which was brought to fruition by Sanabria and spouse, co-Artistic Director, Elena Martinez.

Opener, "Tumba y Bongó" (Rodriguez) begins with a Palo rhythm along with band chants, giving way to measured brass statements and vocals by Gerardo Contino, Jennifer Jade Ledesna and Sanabria. Trumpet soloists Kali Rodriguez-Peña and Max Darché, along with a saxophone soli section, bring a danceable classic son vitality to this foot tapper. A reconceived, updated arrangement of Tito Puente's "Mambo Diablo" was written as a hat-tip to Rodriguez. Multiple horn lines

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There are artists who arrive with a sound, and there are artists who arrive with a life. Katie Bull belongs to the latter - her music is not a performance layered on top of experience, but a direct extension of it...Katie's vocal language moves between swing and bebop, groove and R&B, and into experimental territories shaped by artists like Meredith Monk. It's a synthesis that resists easy placement. - Chryse Roney, Hothouse

Katie delivers a moving, exploratory jazz recording that blends improvisation, poetic lyricism and emotional depth...a project shaped by survival, reflection and profound artistic evolution in a post-pandemic world...for fans of modern jazz, avant-garde vocalists, women in jazz, New York jazz musicians and anyone interested in music born from resilience and transformation. - Joe Dimino, Neon Jazz.

www.katiebull.com