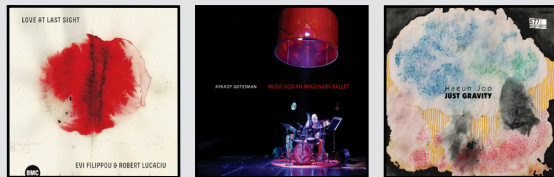


GLOBE UNITY



Love at Last Sight
Evi Filippou/Robert Lucaciu (BMC)
Music for an Imaginary Ballet
Arkady Gotesman (NoBusiness)
Just Gravity
Haeun Joo (577 Records)
by Daniel A. Brown

When musicians step out from the backline to leadership, they must bring their accumulated experience as empathic accompanists and soloists to front and center. With some exceptions, few bandleaders forgo being the fundamental roots that add crucial cohesion to a jazz ensemble. This month we check out three releases featuring contemporary, international players—vibraphonist, percussionist, vocalist Evi Filippou (Greece) and innovative bassist Robert Lucaciu (Germany); drummer-percussionist Arkady Gotesman (Ukraine-born, Lithuania-based) and pianist Haeun Joo (NYC-via-South Korea)—who make their debut as leaders, ready and able for their closeups in fronting the helm through originals and interpretations of select compositions, and even traditional folk-form pieces.

The recent 13-track collection, *Love at Last Sight*, finds Evi Filippou (voice) and Robert Lucaciu

(bass) exploring a diverse set of originals from each musician, plus Geri Allen and five other composers, even an interpretation of a traditional Irish ballad. An otherwise duo affair, on the vocalist's elegiac ballad, "Your own, für Jone und Martí", the pair are joined by New Zealander saxophonist Hayden Chisholm for a languid composition that rises and falls like the wind. Chisholm's understated soloing adds supple sheen to the song's overall chime-like quality. Lucaciu's "Melodie" finds the vocal/bass duo exploring unison, syncopated melodies via vibraphone and bass that cohere and then part in refreshingly unpredictable ways. Similar album highlights include Leo Rapis' "New Life" and Uli Kempendorff's "A Boldly Delicious Slice of Watermelon".

Percussionist-interdisciplinary artist Arkady Gotesman pays a poignant and comprehensive homage to past and present collaborators with *Music for an Imaginary Ballet*. Built upon a twelve-movement suite that was recorded mostly-live over the span of 25 years, the album boasts a diverse cast of featured players, including Charles Gayle (tenor), Nate Wooley (trumpet) and Ned Rothenberg (woodwinds). Following album opener "Stiklo Gabaliukai", featuring Gotesman solo performing on pieces of stained glass, he is joined on the 11-minute "It's Coming" by Lithuania reeds player Liudas Mockūnas (on baritone) for a horn-and-drum conversation that chatters, pauses, reflects and streams melodic and rhythmic ideas at the listener. The dark-hued "Quartet" finds Gotesman joined by alto and soprano saxophonists

(plus piano) Petras Vyšniauskas and Vytautas Labutis, as well as bassist Eugenijus Kanevičius. The tentative, postmodernist-feeling theme soon unravels into parallel soloing from Vyšniauskas and Labutis, coiled around Kanevičius' relentless, climbing ostinato, with unpredictable rhythmic punctuation from the percussionist. The variety of each piece's emotional tonality and assembled players sustains throughout, making *Imaginary Ballet* a worthy sonic dance.

For her debut release, pianist Haeun Joo explains that *Just Gravity* is grounded in "a raw, spontaneous exploration of sound." Joined by Chris Tordini (bass) and Steven Crammer (drums), over the course of the album's ten tracks, Joo and cohorts offer up a palette of soft-hued pieces combined with spikier, technicolor offerings. The expansive piano chords of "Salt and Silence", combined with Crammer's hissing cymbal swells and Tordini's unhurried, phantom bass accompaniment, captures the ebb and flow of rolling, dense reverie. Conversely, the solo piano piece "Authentic Taste", with its volatile mixture of avant-flourishes and bluesy filigrees, and the funhouse groove of "Meandering", where the three players assemble and dismantle a rubbery, impressionistic funk vibe, clearly show that Joo and company can effortlessly go from light to loose. A promising and winning debut all around.

For more info visit bmcrecords.grtest.hu/en, nobusinessrecords.com and 577records.com. Haeun Joo is at Red Pavilion May 21 (with Seoyeon Im). See Calendar.

new jersey performing arts center
njpac



**spoken word
salsa**

fri, jul 10 @ 7PM

Performances by salsa artist Frankie Negrón and poets Caridad de la Luz, Elisabet Velasquez and Isabel Cruz.



**HERBIE
HANCOCK**

fri, jul 31 @ 8PM

The pioneering jazz legend returns to NJPAC! It's a night of fun and funky jazz with the 14-time GRAMMY® winner and his band.



get your tickets today! njpac.org or 1.888.MY.NJPAC · One Center Street, Newark, NJ