

GLOBE UNITY



Maracanós (featuring Flora Purim)
Airtó Moreira/Ricardo Bacelar (Jasmin Music)
Endless Dialogues 1977 & 2024
(The Complete Sessions)
Pierre Favre/Andrea Centazzo (Ictus)
40 Springs in Paris
Ramon Lopez (RogueArt)
 by Daniel A. Brown



And the beat goes on. Whether through tempo, rhythm, texture or combined dynamics, the role of percussion in the history and current scene of jazz cannot be underestimated. Played in parallel with a traditional drum kit, or the main focus of solo or ensemble performance, jazz percussion is arguably the terra firma of the music, ranging from indigenous tribal beats to outer-realm, timbral experimentations. This month, we focus on three releases that accent the state of contemporary, global percussion.

Grandeur-rich, yet never degrading into garishness, the eight tracks of *Maracanós* feature legendary percussionist Airtó Moreira (who turns

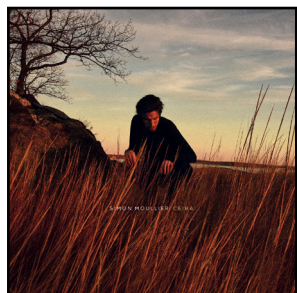
85 this month) and pianist Ricardo Bacelar forging epic-style Brazilian jazz in both performance and production. The album includes a sizable roster of guest players, as well as two tracks with the Kalimera String Quartet. “Voo da Tarde” features legendary jazz vocalist (and longtime Airtó spouse) Flora Purim offering emotional, lilting scatting over the lush, musical bedrock of propulsive beats and keyboard filigrees. “3 Minutos de Paz” is an Airtó/Bacelar duet performance, an otherworldly blend of voice, piano and synthesizer vortices. Joined by Stênio Gonçalves (slide resonator guitar, 12-string guitar) and Hoto Júnior (percussion), album closer “Pau Rolou” merges berimbau, hand drums and voices into a farewell chant.

For fans of purely rhythmic music, *Endless Dialogues 1977 & 2024 (The Complete Sessions)* is a double album of soon-to-be nonagenarian Pierre Favre and Andrea Centazzo, locked in a percussion and drum-kit conversation, recorded during two sessions nearly 50 years apart. Two stalwarts of the global improv scene, Swiss player Favre and Italy-born Centazzo boast impressive collective and respective jazz bona fides. Opener “Dialogue” exemplifies what’s in store, with its gradual build up from sonic abstraction into pure rolling thunder from the duo. “Wake Up!” is a study in pure spatial, sonic experience and “Wengen” is an unpredictable albeit captivating mix of rattles, washes of cymbal,

hand caps and come-and-go drum strikes. Boasting 31 tracks of pure percussion glory, *Endless Dialogues* might mainly target a specific audience, but adventurous listeners will surely be rewarded.

Finally, the percussion path narrows with the solo excursions by Spain-born, Paris-based drummer-percussionist Ramon Lopez on *40 Springs in Paris*. Known for his engaging work with Japanese pianist-accordionist Satoko Fujii and English bassist Barry Guy, with the ten pieces of *40 Springs in Paris*, Lopez (who turns 65 this month) cuts loose with evident technical skill, savvy restraint and unbridled glee. “The Son and Grandson” is a cymbal-heavy meditation propelled along by skittering, gradual beats that are discarded as soon as they arrive. “The Sun That Awakens the Mountains” focuses on the snare drum as fulcrum; Lopez uses the drum as a pivot, volleying kick and floor tom beats, peppered with vocal grunts that emphasize the free form action. At nearly nine minutes, the gurgling, percolating energy of “Climbing” also uses the snare, yet now without its wires, as a warm-toned foundation to catch and release a bitstream of rhythmic ideas and motifs. All in all, Lopez’ new album release is a worthy object listen of exploratory, even intimate, solo-drum work.

For more info visit jasminmus.com, ictusrecords.com and rogueart.com



Ceiba
Simon Moullier (s/r)
 by Tom Greenland

New York City seems to be experiencing a renaissance of young jazz vibraphonists with artists such as Sasha Berliner, Patricia Brennan, Joel Ross and Yuhan Su expanding and expounding on the instrument’s technical and expressive capabilities. France-born Simon Moullier is part and parcel of this rebirth, with a new release (his sixth as leader) and a deservedly growing buzz around his talent.

Titled *Ceiba*, the album is the third recorded with his working quartet: Lex Korten (piano), Rick Rosato (bass) and Jongkuk “JK” Kim (drums). Inspired by the giant pantropical Ceiba trees, known for prominent buttress roots and towering canopies, and often associated with spiritual powers, Moullier’s music embodies the same: revealing its roots even as it indicates where new growth is occurring. On “Mr. Hutch”, inspired by Bobby Hutcherson’s “Herzog”, we recognize the fast, light swing of its namesake; on “Iron Giant”, the syncopations of a jazz waltz; on “Low Blues”, an extended, pan-tonal blues form—all of these exposing prominent roots. Yet the sound is fresh, free of cliché, showing new growth in its unique rhythms, harmonies and melodic phrasing. Moullier’s compositions often toggle between familiar resting chords and less familiar, often curious, tension chords.

Ceiba’s floating canopy is represented almost everywhere else in the urgent yet ethereal quality of the playing. The leader’s vibraphone, recorded with

a wet, echoey tone panned across the stereo field, becomes an integral part of the soundscape. Korten is right in there with him, covering the same range, the two spliced together and synchronized like a four-armed Hindu deity. Both bring an ecstatic quality to their performances, especially on the title cut, “Baïão”, “Low Blues” and “Apollo”, where at times notes stream out so fast and fluent they lose their individual character and are instead heard as grand gestures, recognizable only at the peaks or valleys of their contour lines. On “Fuji” and “Baïão”, the considerable rhythmic drive of the quartet is amped up at least another notch by the presence of guest percussionist Keita Ogawa (congas, frame drums and other implements). To leaven all this intensity, “Lotus Pt. 2”, “Ancient Ones”, “Intro” (a solo piano interlude) and “Voices of the Wind”, offer moments of respite and relaxation.

Moullier and company offer exciting and inspired music—a worthy constituent of and addition to the current resurgence of jazz vibraphone.

For more info visit simonmoullier.com. Moullier is at *The Jazz Gallery Aug. 8 (with The Jazz Gallery All-Stars)* and *Bar Aida (Larchmont, NY) Aug. 20 (with Jakob Dreyer)*. See *Calendar* and *100 Miles Out*.



Tether
Alden Hellmuth (Leiter)
 by Kurt Gottschalk

No one becomes an overnight sensation overnight, but saxophonist Alden Hellmuth hit hard in 2024,

receiving a Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award and winning the German Jazz Prize for Debut Album of the Year International for her well-titled album *Good Intentions*. Alongside those intentions, Hellmuth has big ambitions. For *Tether*, her second release as a leader, she cites influences from jazz icons Anthony Braxton and John Coltrane and the hard-edged trio Punkt.Vrt.Plastik (Kaja Draksler, Petter Eldh and Christian Lillinger), eclectic rockers Deerhoof and manic Japanese punks Otoboke Beaver. Those are a lot of directions to travel, but *Tether* is a wide-ranging record.

Two things quickly stand out across this album’s eight tracks: the presence of the playing and the cohesion of the whole. Released on LP or download by the Berlin-based Leiter (the label co-founded by keyboardist-producer Nils Frahm) the set features Hellmuth’s alto against drummer Justin Brown (who has worked with Ambrose Akinmusire, Terence Blanchard and the exploratory R&B singer Bilal) and a pair of bassists—Logan Kane and Miller Wrenn—who occupy very different places in the stereo field and in register, never muddying the mix. Pianist Paul Cornish and trumpeter Yakiv Tsvietinskyi flesh out a few tracks and haana lee’s sound design, effects and processing provide occasional psychedelic swirls and ghost dimensions—elevating without obstructing.

The album opens with the sweet, melody-driven “Microfictions” but quickly morphs with the wonderfully geometric “Fake(rs)”. “Supply Chain” works in fluid layers of unison and counterpoint through Brown’s tight propulsion, and “Witness” is dreamily discordant. Even at its furthest reaches—like the punk-informed closer “Face the Wall”—Hellmuth works her quartet like a jazz band. It’s a simple theme and simpler rhythm, but approached as head and solos. Elsewhere, she shows a keen, post-bop sensibility, as on “Satellite (K)”, based on Coltrane’s “Satellite”, which itself is a reworking of the standard “How High the Moon”.

Tether trades on multiple directions brought into cohesion: multiple inspirations tethered into a single