

solo journey of his own. Around three minutes in, the rest of the group sneak into position for a chamber music-like exchange of soft focus phrases.

### Kate Gentile

#### *Mannequins*

Skirl CD/DL

Six of the 13 compositions on drummer Kate Gentile's first album as a leader are under three minutes; four others last between eight and 13 minutes. The group – saxophonist Jeremy Viner, Matt Mitchell on piano and Prophet synth, Adam Hopkins on bass – are adept at the sort of tinkling, squawking post-Dolphy, post-Braxton, post-Berne chamber jazz that flows from every rehearsal studio in Brooklyn nowadays. But the synth, Gentile's haunting vibraphone and the short interludes make *Mannequins* more than a collection of wilfully unresolved melodies and impeccably off-kilter rhythms.

### Gordon Grdina/Francois Houle/Kenton Loewen/Benoît Delbecq

#### *Ghost Lights*

Songlines CD

This French-Canadian quartet – Gordon Grdina on guitar and electronics, Francois Houle on clarinet, electronics and loops, Kenton Loewen on drums and percussion, Benoît Delbecq on piano and synth bass – make gentle, occasionally unsettling music that, at its most active as on Houle's opening "Soro", weaves subtly Balkan clarinet into a sorta African groove to create something like a klezmer take on the quietest parts of Miles Davis's *Pangaea*. But the improvisations that make up most of the album are more ghostly. On the title track, Delbecq's piano has an almost threatening quality, as Grdina's guitar lurks in shadow.

### Nicolas Kummert

#### *La Diversité*

Edition CD/DL

This album contains two versions of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah". Still here? Tenor saxophonist Kummert and Lionel Loueke are well-matched dance partners; the guitarist's forceful plucking provides a solid foundation for Kummert to meander breathily atop. Bassist Nicolas Thys and drummer Karl Jannuska are a fluid and sympathetic support system. When Loueke steps on a pedal that makes his instrument sound like a whistling Moog, the saxophonist drops into the horn's lower range, without going all bar walker. "Lighthouse" features spoken passages in English and French that imply a narrative of emigration and war.

### LABtrio

#### *Nature City*

Outnote CD

During their first decade, Belgium's LABtrio – drummer Lander Gyselinck, bassist Anneleen Boehme and keyboardist Bram de Looze – have developed a modern collective voice without feeling the need to run from tradition. Seven of these nine pieces are originals; the other two are reworkings of Bach. But putting a skittery backbeat under a *Goldberg Variation* isn't as good an idea as it seemed on the day. Their own music,

which wades in the EST/ECM pool, perks up substantially when de Looze switches from piano to Fender Rhodes. Boehme's big, latterday Charlie Haden sound adds heart.

### Meridian Trio

#### *Triangulum*

Clean Feed CD

Meridian Trio is a meeting place for three Chicago players with solid reputations as leaders: alto saxophonist Nick Mazzarella, bassist Matt Ulery and drummer Jeremy Cunningham. Together, they create music that recalls Ornette Coleman's 1960s trio with David Izenzon and Charles Moffett without imitating it. Cunningham takes an epic, suspenseful solo on the title piece that sounds like Max Roach warming up for the main event; Mazzarella's playing on "Ringdown" has a Coltrane-ish cry, supported by Ulery's booming single notes.

### Aaron Parks/Ben Street/Billy Hart

#### *Find The Way*

ECM CD

Pianist Aaron Parks was a child prodigy but he recovered. A respected member of the New York scene, he's played with Kurt Rosenwinkel, Terence Blanchard and others. On his second ECM release, the throbbing, almost rock-like pulse of his 2008 Blue Note album *Invisible Cinema* returns; bassist Ben Street plays hard, and drummer Billy Hart can keep the beat simmering all day long, but his snare work is positively cruel and he likes a good explosion as much as anybody. But Parks is ultimately a romantic and a melodist; Manfred Eicher's reverb turns his notes into perfume sprayed through a fan.

### Matthew Shipp

#### *Invisible Touch At Taktlos Zurich*

hatOLOGY CD

Recorded in May 2016, Matthew Shipp's latest solo piano disc captures his mature style in full flower. The repertoire goes back to 1993's *Circular Temple* and 1996's *By The Law Of Music*, sweeping in material from 2005's *One* and 2015's *The Conduct Of Jazz* and a version of the standard "Tenderly". His usual booming chords are balanced by melodies so chiselled it's like he's got two left hands, or like someone removed the entire right half of the keyboard before he sat down. As good as his trio work is, ultimately Shipp may be best heard alone.

### Nate Wooley

#### *Knknighgh*

Clean Feed CD

Trumpeter Nate Wooley recruits alto saxophonist Chris Pitsiokos, bassist Brandon Lopez and drummer Dré Hočevár for a set of five pieces. Pitsiokos's solos are all post-Braxton/post-Zorn squawk and pop, while Wooley's palette has room for frantic squeals, staccato puffing and long drones. The rhythms, such as they are, are martial and sparse; Lopez treats his bass like a percussion instrument, when he's not bowing it with stark fury. This music prizes simultaneity over interaction, and inserts passages of silence any time momentum might accidentally build. Still, you can't help caring what happens next. □

**Julian Cowley on kissing time, crude vigour, and a chuntering escalator**

### Maria De Alvear

#### *Besando El Tiempo*

Edition Wandelweiser 2×CD

Madrid born composer, painter and sculptor Maria De Alvear wrote *Besando El Tiempo* in 1995. Public awareness of her music had grown a few years earlier with pianist Hildegard KleeB's excellent, intense and flinty interpretation of her spartan score *En Amor Duro* (hatART CD). Revisiting that encounter with tough love might be good preparation for the testing experience of listening to flautist Antoine Beuger on this stark and protracted new release. De Alvear's refusal to dress instrumental sound in anything more than rudimentary musical trappings is disarming. The flute player often seems to have become absorbed by some private ritual, meandering in quiet introspection, picking over simple phrases at considerable length, all the while grappling with the task of kissing time set out in the title.

### Les Espaces Électroacoustiques

#### Various

Col Legno 2×CD

As the impact of electronics grew steadily more pervasive across a wide range of musical cultures, composers working in various ways with the aesthetic legacy of modernism continued to ponder electroacoustic possibilities. Starting with the relatively crude vigour of Edgard Varèse's *Poème Électronique* (1958) and concluding with the fluttery refinement of Brian Ferneyhough's bass flute and tape piece *Mnemosyne* (1986), this collection in effect reconstructs a canon that exploded. In that sense *Les Espaces Électroacoustiques* fences off an artificial enclosure within the digital era's fluid musical landscape and vastly expanded horizons. Nonetheless this set of works by Ligeti, Boulez, Maderna, Berio, Lachenmann and Harvey does convey the rigorous spirit of that historical paradox: experimental orthodoxy. A team at Zurich's Institute for Computer Music and Sound Technology have applied their substantial expertise to the restoration, mixing, projection and performance of these classic compositions and have brought fresh life to them. More than half a century after it was recorded,

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