

JAZZ / ROCK / CLASSICAL / ALT

Dorothy Hindman ★★★★★

Tightly Wound: Music for Strings

Innova

Born in 1966, Floridian Dorothy Hindman is among the generation of classical composers that have been impacted by the European/American classical tradition and post-1960s rock (including punk and grunge). She composes for “regular” instrumentation (piano, strings, sax, choirs, etc.) and electronic media (soundfiles, mobile phones, etc.) This two-CD set presents a fascinating cross-section of her music written for stringed instruments (violin, acoustic bass, guitar, etc.) and piano. Her music is mostly tonal (as opposed to atonal, which drives some people to the exits) and she employs dissonance judiciously. Hindman employs the structures and dynamics of old-school composers—Brahms, Copeland, Barber—and employs them in the language(s) of this century. Much of “Jerusalem Windows” is just as rapturous as the chamber music of Brahms or Dvorak, while “Monumenti” (for violin and cello) has some of the cyclic, insistent minimalist tension of Glass and Adams dusted with East European folk flavors. “Time Management” could be subtitled “Voyage to the Bottom of the Bass,” as it shows just how much sound and emotion can be deeply, eerily coaxed from a single acoustic bass. Without any overt fusion moves, Hindman’s music weds technique and syntax of classical music with the directness and impudence of rock. Highly recommended for rockers wishing to get their proverbial feet wet in post-20th century classical music and classical fans who think much post-Leonard Bernstein music sounds like stuff falling down a stairwell. (15 tracks, 135 min.) innova.mu

H.C. McEntire ★★★★★

Lionheart

Merge

North Carolinian Heather “H.C.” McEntire established her presence in the world of music in the bands Bellafeia (punk rock) and Mount Moriah (Americana). *Lionheart* is her solo debut and it’s as fine a piece of country music this writer’s heard in the past year. That is, country music as *not* defined by the watered-down Nash Vegas product these days—*Lionheart* is closer to the un-glitzzy styles of Rosanne Cash, Gillian Welch, Emmylou Harris, and pre-“9-to-5”-era Dolly Parton. In point of fact, McEntire’s singing is like Parton’s, albeit slightly deeper, huskier. There are few rock overtones but there are a lot of Southern gospel influences in the background vocals and a bit of gospel fervor in HCM’s voice, too (without sacrificing restraint). Accompaniment is basically guitars, keys, drums, prominent pedal steel guitar,

and a Spartan, almost baroque-like string section. Moreover, HCM has a way with a melody—note “Yellow Roses,” a hook that won’t quit, and “Dress in the Dark” is regal and stately as a great Robbie Robertson song with a plaintive “Knockin’ On Heaven’s Door” feel. Excellent throughout. (9 songs, 35 min.) mergerecords.com

Gary Peacock Trio ★★★★★1/2

Tangents

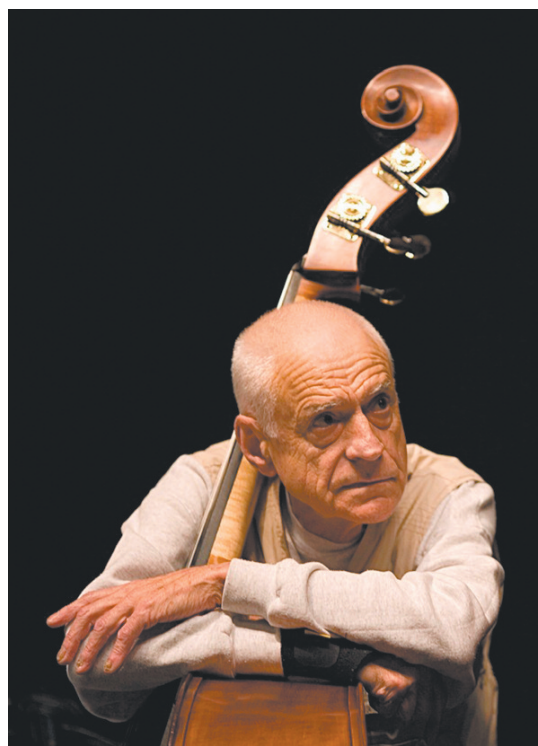
ECM

Sylvie Courvoisier Trio ★★★★★1/2

D’Agala

Intakt

While hardly the proverbial household name, acoustic bassist Gary Peacock (b. 1935) is indeed a jazz legend—how many can say they’ve recorded



Gary Peacock. Photo: Caterina di Perri / ECM Records

and/or performed with Miles Davis, Keith Jarrett, Ravi Shankar, Bill Evans, and Albert Ayler? Here Peacock takes the lead in a program of mostly originals with an ace combo of Marc Copeland, piano, and Joey Baron, drums. The spirit of Evans is felt here, in terms of understated, tensile lyricism, and to a degree the spirit of Ayler, in that this music has a restless, wide-open feel throughout. Peacock’s playing is pliant and poetic; Copeland combines the technique

of Evans with the sparseness—but not the style—of Thelonious Monk. Idyllic listening for late-night reverie/wind-down modes. (11 tracks, 53 min.) ecmrecords.com

Another fine, albeit dissimilar, piano trio set is Sylvie Courvoisier’s *D’Agala*. This Swiss miss (b. 1968) plays with a couple of Americans, bassist Drew Gress and drummer Kenny Wollesen, and this program consists of originals dedicated to such swells as Ornette Coleman and Geri Allen. This writer has found some of Courvoisier’s previous albums to be somber, but here her classical undertones are enlivened by an engaging, persuasive, ambiguously blues-tinged forcefulness, even when the proceedings get a bit abstract, free. Gress and Wollesen balance subtlety with *whomp*. (9 tracks, 54 min.) intaktrec.ch

J.S. Bach/Tøke Møldrup ★★★★★

The Six Cello Suites Revisited

Bridge

What can one say (or type) about this collection of solo cello pieces by J. S. Bach, who is to baroque and/or classical music what Chuck Berry is to rock & roll or Charlie Parker is to post-1945 jazz. Bach’s cello



sonatas are notoriously difficult to play—for one thing, some of the surviving sheet music has been a bit sketchy, technical demands for another—are some of the most beautiful music from the swingin’ 1717-1723 years, and can sound both complex and di-

rect, cerebral and engagingly heart-swelling. Danish young-fellow cellist Toke Møldrup (born 1980) does a swell job here—while some cellists (Pablo Casals or Yo-Yo Ma, to name two of the most famous cellists-interpretors) go for the poetic qualities in these suites, Toke M goes for drama and rhythmic gusto. Not to imply there isn't soulful and elegant playing here (there's plenty) but he gives these immortal cello works a gutsy, heavily rhythmic interpretation. It's easy to see/hear why lots of JSB's music is so accessible and appealing to rock-weened ears and *Revisited* gives both novices and longtime classical fans plenty to chew on. As a bonus there's a nifty Bach-inspired composition by fellow Dane Viggo Mangor. (42 tracks, 2 hrs. 17 min.) bridgerecords.com

Ed Palermo Big Band ★★★★★
The Adventures of Zodd Zundgren
 Cuneiform

Sometime in the late '60s, a seer postulated that "big bands are coming back." Technically, big bands



Ed Palermo. Photo: Chris Drukker.

never went away, but they stopped being a commercial force by 1950. Fortunately, that never stopped great big bands doing what they do—the Ed Palermo Big Band is one. Saxophonist/arranger Palermo grew up loving the music of rock icons Frank Zappa and Todd Rundgren and *The Adventures of Zodd Zundgren* is a tribute to both. While this might seem incongruous, Todd has a snarky, thorny side and Zappa could pen some sweet 'n' pretty melodies—note the cheer-personified "Peaches En Regalia" for the latter and "Kiddie Boy" (done up as a bluesy swinger) for the former. Todd's megahit "Hello It's Me" gets a yearningly pretty rendition that's got just a touch of Zappa's parody of Las Vegas squaresville song-craft. Ed Palermo's band turns the quirk factor up to 11 with sardonic vocals, busy, zigzagging arrangements, and abrupt rhythmic and melodic shifts, but hey, it's Zappa, am I right? Additionally, if you're a fan of creative, eclectic, and swinging big band jazz (Carla Bley, Gil Evans, etc.), these *Adventures* will likely hit the spot. (24 tracks, 74 min.) cuneiformrecords.com ■

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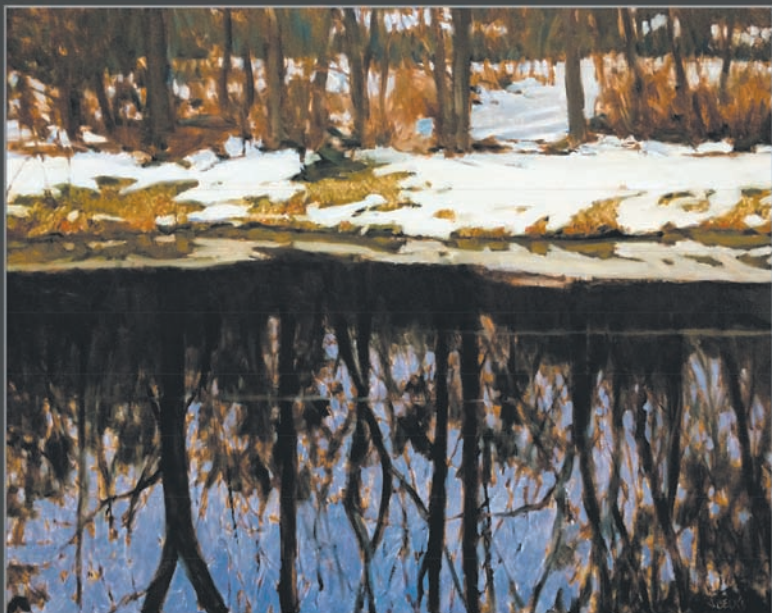
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