

which goes by the names *Tambourinen Session* or *Marijuana Summit*. Legend suggests they were too stoned to get it together, so it was never released. It's unknown whether Caldwell and Yeck-Stauffer were also baked when they made these relaxed jams but they're in similar territory. Caldwell lays down throbbing synth textures, organ curlicues, rippling electric piano and unhurried bass lines, while Yeck-Stauffer's multitracked and muted pocket trumpet buzzes like a pair of lazy flies around a box of doughnuts.

#### **Don Cherry** *Cherry Jam*

Gearbox CD/DL/12"

Recorded for radio in Copenhagen in 1965, this curio finds Cherry between key moments – touring in Albert Ayler's band in autumn 1964, and recording his debut as a leader, *Complete Communion*, at the end of 65 – but the music here is considerably less progressive than those engagements. Backed by lesser known Danish musicians, he tackles the standard "You Took Advantage Of Me" as a sleepy ballad, saving his energy for three previously unheard hard bop originals. Never a virtuoso soloist, his blowing is a little ragged when playing cool, and more gripping when he tips over into rapid-fire explosions. Still, it's hip as hell.

#### **Rodrigo Faina & Change Ensemble** *Different Roots*

Red Piano CD/DL

Argentinian composer Faina here leads a 23-piece Dutch ensemble through an ambitious suite that straddles jazz and contemporary classical moods and methods. Underpinned by loose and softly played drums and bass, Faina's grand themes float by like huge, tottering banks of cumulus, while spoken passages from books by Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortázar, narrated in a voice reminiscent of Laurie Anderson, lend a curiously dreamlike feel. The calm is broken by a thudding rock beat with stadium-sized drums and a stinging fusion guitar solo played by Guillermo Celano, eventually drowned out by ominously gathering orchestral shapes. It's like the end of the world scored by George Russell.

#### **Futari** *Beyond*

Libra CD/DL

This debut by the duo of pianist Satoko Fujii and vibraphonist Taiko Saito captures them just off the back of their first short tour together in 2019 – and zings with spontaneous energy and the joy of exploration across nine succinct pieces. There are plenty of episodes highlighting just how compatible the two instruments are when played straight, as Fujii and Saito play scampering cat and mouse or bathe in pools of moonlit reflection. But it's when they explore the further reaches that things become really interesting: vibes emanating a ghostly harmonic feedback

while prepared piano clangs like dull temple bells; or a distant rumble of thunder rattling brittle, black branches.

#### **Timo Lassy & Teppo Mäkynen** *Live Recordings 2019–2020*

We Jazz CD/DL/2×LP

Proof here, from two leading lights of the Finnish scene, that the tenor sax and drums duo remains one of the most enduring and endlessly renewing configurations in jazz. One might rightly expect some genuflection towards past masters, and "Liberty" channels John Coltrane and Elvin Jones in full flight – the moments in live versions of "Impressions" where the piano and bass drop out come to mind – with Mäkynen inhabiting a murderous power swing and Lassy seesawing between guttural growls and altissimo abandon. But there are unexpected departures too. "Zomp" is a gutbucket funk honk with in the pocket drums; "Aero" is a mirage of echo-delayed whale song and glistening cymbal shimmer; while the click-boom rhythm of "Kobi" could almost be some kind of mutant minimal techno.

#### **Craig Scott's Lobotomy** *I Am Revolting*

Lobotomy Laboratory DL/LP/USB

As part of Leeds based unit Shatner's Bassoon, guitarist Craig Scott has already clearly signalled a love for a particularly British brand of absurdity. On this, his second solo album, he takes it to another level. Using snippets of found sound and samples of acoustic instruments, he's constructed a suite of creaking, fragmented, insanely detailed tunes that suggest a frazzled alter-reality. Tiny dabs of piano, subliminal orchestral bursts and flash-frame snickers suggest the barest hint of rhythm. A glorious burst of strings suggests the deck band of a hallucinatory South Seas cruise under radioactive purple skies. Rhythmic slurping segues into a raspberyring brass band on the hoof. There's something in the tea, I think.

#### **Miguel Zenón & Luis Perdomo** *El Arte Del Bolero*

Miel DL

Puerto Rican alto saxophonist Zenón and Venezuelan born pianist Perdomo sound supremely comfortable playing songs from the bolero tradition – or the Great Latin American Songbook, if you like. Zenón's tone is unforced and mellow yet unafraid to make intricately ornamented diversions. Perdomo offers warm accompaniment, sending out deft ripples like scrunched velvet. As Zenón explains in the sleeve notes, the tunes chosen – written by the likes of Arsenio Rodríguez and Bobby Capó – are childhood favourites, deeply ingrained in the musicians' imaginations. It's no coincidence that the album was created in the midst of pandemic as a live-streamed gig. Right now, we all need a little soothing. □

## Modern Composition by Julian Cowley

#### **Dominique Bassal** *Axet Remperimos Te*

Empreintes DIGITales Blu-Ray/DL

Bassal's name appears on numerous releases from empreintes DIGITales. The Montreal based label, which specialises in electroacoustic music, values his expertise as a mastering engineer. Occasionally he features in their catalogue as composer too. *Axet Remperimos Te*, designed to evoke a repressive civilisation in ruins, steers listeners through seven mysterious rooms that reverberate with cryptic messages from the past. Bassal's resonant chambers have the appeal of a well-crafted film soundtrack, ranging across stylistic boundaries in order to achieve desired effects. His technical know-how produces a cavernous sense of space, enveloping enigmatic figures and actions. Atmosphere is granted priority over storytelling, overall, so when the resilient voice of a double bass brings rhythmic definition and a sense of narrative momentum to the final room, it comes as a welcome surprise.

#### **Øyvind Brandsteg** *Nancarrow Biotope*

Crónica DL/MC

Conlon Nancarrow's *Studies For Player Piano* are so self-contained that it takes a special kind of creative perversity to adapt them for other instruments. Brandsteg, a professor of music technology based in Trondheim, has done just that, orchestrating a dozen for pipe organ, Disklavier and electronics. Although they respect the rapidity and rhythmic vigour of those painstakingly realised originals, these adaptations pack less punch. Still, enhancement of timbre and colouration creates a pleasing effect, rather like a hand-tinted version of a familiar monochrome photograph. An advanced degree of digital literacy, as well as a sense of fun, has enabled Brandsteg to transcend the novelty value of this project. Substituting computer controlled acoustic instruments for Nancarrow's mechanical articulations, he generates music that is energetically entertaining and, in terms of its technological implications, robustly thought-provoking.

#### **Bruce Brubaker & Max Cooper** *Glassforms (Versions)*

Infiné DL/LP

Pianist Brubaker and producer Cooper return to the scene of their recent redundant attempt to breathe fresh life

into the music of Philip Glass. On this occasion their accomplices are techno DJ Donato Dozzy with percussionist Daniele di Gregorio, ambient musician Laurel Halo and Iranian sound artist Togh. Once again the results lack the immediacy and vitality of the Glass they are recycling.

#### **Chris Cundy** *Mountains*

Aural Terrains CD/DL

In 1977, Dutch composer Ton de Leeuw composed *Mountains* for bass clarinet player Harry Sparnaay. His score translates recollected traces of folk music and Hindustani song forms into a contemporary idiom that enables the reed instrument to converse volubly with electronic fluttering and warbles, prerecorded on tape. Chris Cundy has resuscitated this engaging piece along with another by Cornelius Cardew, also called *Mountains*, and also written for Sparnaay in the same year. Cardew opted to recast Bach in ways that test the soloist, while also reflecting his personal tussles with music's nature and potential significance. The contrast between John Cage's *Five* and Thanos Chrysakis's *Fryktorica* highlights radically different spatial relationships and modes of communication that can exist within a quintet of bass clarinets. An early, indeterminate score by Cardew rounds out this absorbing release.

#### **Clara De Asís & Mara Winter** *Repetitions Of The Same Dream*

Another Timbre CD/DL

Access to a vaulted medieval church in Basel, otherwise closed during quarantine, gave Spanish experimental musician Clara de Asís and American flute player Mara Winter a tranquil space apart, to explore and record. The bulk of compositional credits goes to de Asís, but Winter, whose background is in performance of medieval and Renaissance repertoire, brings attentive sensitivity and distinctive inflections to this music of intimate and intuitive collaboration. Hollow tones, breathy flows and ghostly melodies emanate from her bass transverse flute, while de Asís savours the spectral potential of bowed metal, basic electronics and assorted objects, from which she extracts sounds in a variety of unconventional ways. The outcome is delicately eloquent, tactful and singular. Beguiling music, driven by the inquisitiveness that forms a bond between these finely matched artists.

#### **Francisco López** *DSB*

Crónica DL/MC

Prolific Spanish sound explorer López offers another engrossing essay in acoustic phenomenology. *DSB* is a montage of raw material, sometimes identifiably tied to a specific source and carrying associations, at other times anonymous or generic. Juxtaposed without any form of commentary or overarching context, the