



By

Brick

Violist and composer
Jessica Pavone
rebuilds from injury with
a new take on the
higher registers of the
string quartet. By
Philip Clark

Brick

In 2012, after an existing condition became aggravated by what she describes as a severe injury, violist/composer (and occasional violinist and bassist) Jessica Pavone had little choice but to step away from active music making. “I was going to the doctor once a week and physical therapist twice a week,” she recalls, “and when you are in a physical place like that, everything around you gets stripped down, back to the basics.”

Prior to her illness, Pavone had played a vital part in New York’s creative music scene. Her duo with guitarist Mary Halvorson was both slow talking and quick-witted, as disarmingly direct melodic lines got dragged across complex structural grids – whimsy that would have made Erik Satie beam from ear to ear. Anthony Braxton and William Parker were eager to draw on Pavone’s creative spirit and she played on the final flowering of Braxton’s *Ghost Trance Music* compositions – recorded live in 2006 and released as *9 Compositions (Iridium)* – and, a year later, on Parker’s *Double Sunrise Over Neptune*. Throughout this period, Pavone kept working on her own music, which included a sequence of pieces for unusually configured string ensembles. *Songs Of Synastry And Solitude* (its title riffing off Leonard Cohen’s *Songs Of Love And Hate*) was string quartet music that took one violin away and added a double bass to the traditional two violins, viola, cello format; *Hope Dawson Is Missing*, recorded just before Pavone’s health problems, supplemented that same ensemble with guitar, voice and drums.

Her latest release *Brick And Mortar* offers a further perspective on the idea of the string quartet. Where her earlier projects bolstered the bass register of the ensemble, this new project, scored for two violins and two violas, strips away the lower octaves altogether.

“In April 2017, I was on the last leg of a rock tour as the bass player,” Pavone explains. “For five weeks I had schlepped around a lot of gear and endured very long soundchecks. Driving home, a violin came on the radio and, wow, it was the most beautiful sound in the universe and I knew it was time to start writing string music again. Violins and violas only, because all I could think about was a group that was lightweight and compatible – a compact ensemble that could potentially play spaces where music is not traditionally heard like gardens and hospitals. Like a dam that’s been broken I was flooded with ideas, and wrote the entire album the following month.”

Typically for Pavone, wasted notes or gestures are held in disdain, and the five compositions of *Brick And Mortar* run to little over 30 minutes. Intricately organised, easy to negotiate, interlocking patterns that begin the opening piece “Hurtle And Hurdle” are gently nudged out of alignment – and then plunged into complex overlays. Pavone designed her title track around floating harmonic overtones, which are notoriously problematic to notate, and her record is defined by a tension between composerly patterns and moments when she cuts her musicians different sorts of slack – precisely what someone immersed in both composition and improvisation ought to be writing.

““Hurtle And Hurdle” is completely notated, apart from near the end when the violists, who have been playing harmonics, get to choose the order to play them until the end,” says Pavone. ““Brick And Mortar” was composed in block form and musicians are instructed to sustain a pitch or alternate between pitches. A digital clock acts as the conductor and times are indicated on the score for when to move to the next cell. There is a window of time when the performers can choose to move on, enabling an overlap

where the ensemble does not proceed to the next sonic landscape simultaneously. In the opening part of another piece, “Sooner Or Later”, the musicians are also given cells to move through as instructed by a clock, however they are instructed to play the same figure over and over again, but at their own tempo and independently of one another. The particular figure was composed to feel good to play, something I had devised for myself for my solo playing. The passage sits on a comfortable spot on the neck of the instrument and, with the trance-like repetition of the bow, physically affects the people playing – I want the musicians to get lost in what they are playing.”

After nursing herself back to health, Pavone rekindled her relationship with the viola through a trilogy of unaccompanied albums using the instrument: *Knuckle Under*, *Silent Spills* and *In The Action*. Removing herself from the responsibilities of administering large-scale projects, and not depending upon others to realise her creative ideas, felt necessary. “I wanted to play music that felt good for me in my body,” she says. And that process became the bricks and mortar of *Brick And Mortar*. “During the years spent composing solo music, notation wasn’t always necessary,” she concludes. “I could jot down a quick note in a way that I understood. Eventually I began using a clock during performances to pace myself, or sit in certain sections of the music for specific lengths. I had a tendency to rush, when I needed to give certain sections space, and that directly influenced writing block form time-based compositions. Composing music, leaving sections for improvisation never really worked for me. So while there are elements of choice in this new album, I intend the result to sound organic.” □ J Pavone String Ensemble’s *Brick And Mortar* is released by Birdwatcher

Logan White

BEST OF 2019

The Best Contemporary Classical Albums of 2019

By [Peter Margasak](#) · December 17, 2019

The taxonomy of contemporary classical music—new music, contemporary music, whatever you want to call it—is a thorny issue. That ambiguity makes rating the year’s best offerings difficult, if not impossible, but embracing the big picture of musical diversity that these 10 albums have delivered all year long has provided excitement, asked questions, and delivered disparate sorts of beauty. These are the best contemporary classical albums of 2019 in alphabetical order.

uncomplicated yet strangely compelling 22 minute piece. The title refers to the sport, in which granite stones are propelled across an icy surface while players sweep vigorously with brooms. In addition to all that sliding and brushing we hear moves being planned, plus wild reactions to outcomes from participants and spectators. Beneath the action an electronic drone rumbles and swells, a plane of continuity beyond the game’s contingencies. *Reflex* is very different: 13 tracks performed on a vintage modular synthesizer, recorded at intervals across several years. They range in character from bristling, shrill and glistening to menacing and grainy, but all involve adept patterning and inflection of electronic timbres and textures.

Erik Hammarström

Glödhet Rytmisk Svärta

AMS CD/DL/LP

Aficionados of Swedish progressive rock will know Erik Hammarström as the drummer of Ånglagård. This excursion into chamber music is by no means a radical departure – the centrality of his drums and cymbals in the mix on these two pieces leaves no doubt that this is an ambitious but self-assured rock drummer’s project. The lengthy composition *Glödhet Rytmisk Svärta* and more compact *Iskalt Mörkt Vatten* are essentially studies in rhythmic development and transition. The ensemble arrangements are embroidered around his own crisp designs, which remain pivotal. Variegated coloration is introduced through voicings for flute, celeste, harp, clarinet, bassoon, brass and synthetic strings, but the figure at the kit is still running the show.

Mica Levi

Monos

Invada CD/DL/LP

Peter Raeburn, who worked with Mica Levi as music supervisor for the science fiction film *Under The Skin* (2013), has remarked that “a lot of her music has an incredible sense of otherness about it”. *Monos*, Levi’s score for the latest film from Latin American director Alejandro Landes, certainly matches that description through its lean combination of eerie piping, fuzzed synth, sparse yet tenacious strings and threateningly emphatic percussion. Levi clearly has a gift for evoking states of psychological unease and emotional disquiet and that equips her exceptionally well for soundtrack writing. The setting on this occasion is a jungle, and the action involves a hostage being held on a mountain top. Levi generates palpable tension but her music is sufficiently bold and surprising enough to stand alone and fire the imagination.

Winfried Mühlem-Pyrápheros

Musica Nova Contemplativa

Editions Blume LP

During the 1960s numerous artists in various fields embraced the vinyl record

as a physical artefact as well as a viable means of expression or communication. The LP became an adjunct to their exploratory work in other disciplines. In 1970 Winfried Mühlem-Pyrápheros, now based in Wiesbaden, released *Musica Nova Contemplativa*, which he describes unequivocally as “an acoustic extension of my art.” He had composed its graphic score in 1964. A few years later, in a Franciscan church, several interpretations of this piece were recorded, with Mühlem-Pyrápheros playing violin and Johann Georg Ickler on organ. Selected highlights are preserved here, sustained tones and mercurial figures that are sometimes brittle and edgy but are mostly cast in a suitably reflective glow.

Opening Performance Orchestra

The Noise Of Art

Sub Rosa CD/2xLP

More than a century after its publication Luigi Russolo’s manifesto *L’arte Dei Rumori* is still attracting rowdy support. On this recording members of Prague’s Opening Performance Orchestra abandon their habitual laptops and enthusiastically activate custom-built intonarumori. These roaring, screeching, growling machines were constructed initially by Russolo for his Futurist provocations. Guests Blixa Bargeld, Luciano Chessa and Fred Möpert have brought their own compositions and added their speaking voices to this celebration. The Italian Futurist taste for bombast and bellicose posturing is conveyed through the confrontational rawness of the performances. Cranked into action the intonarumori rage like First World War biplanes locked in combat. But as the machine age itself slips into our collective past Russolo’s expansion of music’s aspirations and resources receives due acknowledgement through *The Noise Of Art*.

J Pavone String Ensemble

Brick And Mortar

Birdwatcher CD/DL

“The peculiar grace of a Shaker chair,” poet and Trappist monk Thomas Merton once suggested, “is due to the fact that it was made by someone capable of believing that an angel might come and sit on it.” Jessica Pavone may not perhaps share Merton’s metaphysical vision, but her music on *Brick And Mortar* combines strength and simplicity, and its formal gracefulness transcends its functional clarity. In recent years Pavone has concentrated on solo work with her viola, immersed in a deeply personal relationship with that instrument, its physical properties and creative potential. Now she has convened a quartet of violas and violins to play five concise, closely focussed and beautifully poised compositions. Firm and clean contours, free from superfluous embellishment; four voices dovetailed and finished for durability. □

Noise, Industrial & Beyond by Emily Pothast

Avola

Consensual Abduction

Bandcamp CD/DL

In the midst of all the fuss directed at Area 51 – the top secret military installation at the heart of the US’s foremost UFO conspiracy theory – its sister site Area 52 remains in relative obscurity. On her latest self-released digital album, West Coast weirdmaker Veronica Avola imagines the experimental weapons facility as an intergalactic soirée where wide-eyed aliens shake their little grey booties while the stars dance over the desert and nuclear rockets shoot rainbow goo. Several years ago, former CIA pilot and conspiracy theorist John Lear claimed that Area 52 was covered with secret runways hidden in the desert floor that could only be accessed through portals that open and close like giant zippers. It would come as no shock to learn that these portals were somehow triggered by Avola’s synths.

Decimus

Decimus 6

Daksina DL/LP

Somewhere in a Brooklyn warehouse, sunlight streams through the last twitching remnants of a decades-long mechanical dream. A shimmering, incandescent burble of distorted strings, eroded synths and shuttling vocals trickles through a matrix of understated percussion, eventually finding its way into a disembodied riff. Decimus is a project of New York post-industrial improv-folk mainstay Pat Murano, also known for his work with No Neck Blues Band and Tom Carter. The first release on his new Daksina label, *Decimus 6* is the 11th instalment in the *Decimus* series, the latest since 2016’s *Decimus 7*. This numbering system suggests a nonlinear approach to chronology; loosening the bonds of narrative and bending past and future toward one another.

Jim O’Rourke & CM von Hausswolff

In Demons, In!

iDEAL Recordings LP

Inverting the meaning of Edgar Broughton Band’s 1971 peacemongering protest screed “Out Demons Out”, the title of Jim O’Rourke’s collaboration with Stockholm based sound artist CM von Hausswolff is both invitation and invocation, drawing forces of darkness into a space of holographic drone. This isn’t the first

time von Hausswolff has put out such a call: in the early 2000s, the Swedish artist mounted an exhibition in which he tried to make radio contact with the Devil. More recently, he claimed to have created a body of work using ashes he stole from the Majdanek concentration camp in Poland in 1989, eliciting cries of protestation from victims’ families. Such transgressive inquiries are purportedly fuelled by a clinical interest in the materiality of sound as well as a curiosity about whatever hauntological trace of a living body remains in post-living matter. But von Hausswolff is apparently oblivious to the long shadow that this near-astounding sense of entitlement casts over his work’s formal ambitions. In her notebooks, the Swedish mystic and artist Hilma af Klint spoke of the humility and mercy which are prerequisites for channelling. The spirit world reserves its deepest secrets for the reverent.

Mira Martin-Gray

Out Of Body, Out Of Work/Solos For Mixing Boards

Pan Y Rosas DL

Mira Martin-Gray’s first release for Chicago netlabel Pan Y Rosas is an idiosyncratic romp in which she coaxes unruly feedback squalls from a variety of mixing boards. The Toronto improviser’s interest in using these studio tools as instruments stems from a desire for something accessible that could be played expressively following a disability inducing injury. Through her interactions, these unassuming boxes of wires become interfaces with howling electronic spirits. Martin-Gray has an affinity for what she calls “undesirable sounds”. Her machine voices are abrasive, yet tender; squicky, squirry and even erotic, like a circuit-bent 8-bit video game console having loud, unrestrained orgasms. What’s especially compelling is that each one has its own eccentric character. The personality of “Solo Mixer 4” is shrill and determined, yet vulnerable. “Undesirable” is in the ear of the beholder.

Tahnzz

Merchants Of Labor Part 1 & 2

Bandcamp DL

The Spanish word frontera and the English frontier share a Latin root, but while the former implies a limit, the latter suggests a horizon of opportunity. On *Merchants Of Labor Part 1 & 2*, New Mexico sound artist Tahnee Udero aka Tahnz works in a space defined by tension and uncertainty, arranging intimately textured field recordings into a durational concept album. Track titles like “Bracero Border Odyssey” anchor this sound world to a specific context – the journeys of workers travelling from Mexico to the US and the economic and social systems that compel them. Shuffling feet, grainy static and grumbling engines track quotidian aspects of the journey easily obscured by politicised rhetoric. □



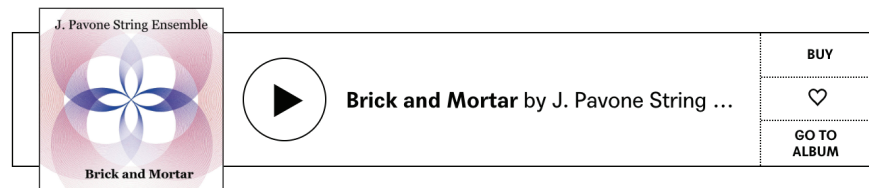
Jessica Pavone

Brooklyn, New York

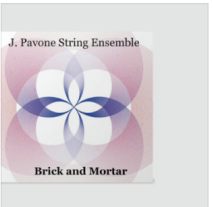
FOLLOW

Pavone String Ensemble

Brick and Mortar



Formats: Compact Disc (CD), Digital



Violist/violinist Jessica Pavone is well-known in improvised music circles, especially for her duo with guitarist [Mary Halvorson](#), but she’s been composing music for decades—and on *Brick and Mortar* she delivers the most assured, bracing work of her career. Following a sustained focus on solo performance, where she invested heavily in playing long tones and became interested in cymatics (the study of vibrations, and in her case, how they impact the human body), Pavone has translated that practice for a dazzling string quartet with two violinists (Erica Dicker and Angela Morris) and two violists (herself and Joanna Mattrey).

While some pieces are fully scored—such as the haunting, pulsing opener “Hurtle and Hurdle”—most of the music allows for performer input, where the players can alter tempo, transpose pitches, or jump ahead to different sections, which are often charted as blocks of time rather than written-out passages. Pavone and the ensemble dig deep into the friction emerging from the long tones, creating an electric sensation with the harmonically rich vibrations delivering a beautifully coarse weft of sound. At times the blend of the instruments recalls the sound of Norway’s Hardanger fiddle, with its sympathetic, resonating strings. Pavone’s writing is elegant in its crystalline simplicity, with movement that allows the listener to focus on the enveloping sound first and foremost.

Jessica Pavone gets back to business with a new album composed for string quartet, *Brick and Mortar*, out in October on Birdwatcher

by **DAVID NADELLE** · August 22, 2019

NEWS

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Photo: Hiroyuki Masuko

There are certain musicians that you can say, with confidence, could play a pair of shoes if it had strings. [Jessica Pavone](#) is certainly one. In fact, I'm pretty sure Pavone could get good tone out of Velcro'd clogs if she so desired. Thankfully, Pavone sticks to her viola rather than footwear, for she has gigantic composing and improvisational skills and a marvelously coruscating imagination to boot (NO pun intended!).

The superb violist has established herself quietly over the past two decades with her solo and ensemble recordings and LOTS of group and individual collaborations (*JOBS*, Mary Halvorson, Anthony Braxton). After making solo viola work her métier for the past several years, [Pavone](#) will release a new album composed specifically for a string quartet (two violas, two violins).

J. Pavone String Ensemble's *Brick and Mortar* is out October 4 on [Birdwatcher Records](#). Joining Pavone in her quartet are fellow violist Joanna Mattrey and Erica Dicker and Angela Morris on violins. The album can be pre-ordered [here](#).

Best of Bandcamp Contemporary Classical: October 2019

By [Peter Margasak](#) · October 29, 2019

Pavone String Ensemble
Brick and Mortar



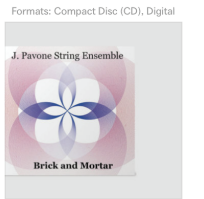
Jessica Pavone
Brooklyn, New York
FOLLOW

Brick and Mortar by J. Pavone String Ense...

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GO TO ALBUM



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Jessica Pavone String Ensemble, "Hurtle and Hurdle"

Cymatic vibrations from two violas and two violins, swept in and out of the eddies of the soul. Ever-moving string drone that [stirs river currents most tranquil](#).

Brick and Mortar

by J. Pavone String Ensemble

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Hurtle and Hurdle

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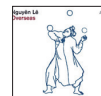


Jessica Pavone

Nguyễn Lê Overseas

ACT 9874-2 (CD) ★★

Nguyễn Lê (g, b, elec), Ngô Hồng Quang (v, dàn nhị fiddle, dàn môi jaws harp, dàn bầu monacorde, dàn tính lute), Ilyia Amar (vibraphone, MalletKAT, T'rung bamboo xylophone), Trung Bao (beatbox), Alex Tran (perc, d), Lê Thi Van Mai (dàn tranh zither), Nguyễn Hoàng Anh (bamboo sáo f), Minh Dân Mới (dàn đờ bamboo perc), Cuong Vu (t) and Chris Minh Doky (b).
Rec. March-November 2018



"I grew up knowing that I was a 'Việt Kiều' – an overseas Vietnamese, born on soil other than that of my parents' homeland, yet harbouring dreams of a country that was very distant," explains guitarist Nguyễn Lê. His new album, made 22 years after *Tales from Việt-Nam* and following what he terms "five other Vietnamese albums", "sets out to reflect upon how cultures migrate, develop and mutate throughout their journey". In fact, *Overseas* was conceived as the soundtrack for the stage show of the same name directed by Tuan Le, the lead choreographer for Cirque du Soleil, and brings together jazz, hip-hop, rock, reggae, electronica and traditional Vietnamese music. As that list of ingredients suggests, it's a remarkable piece of super-saturated global music. Lê is a guitarist of huge musical ambition and accomplishment; other projects include a fine Jimi Hendrix tribute (*Purple*, 2002). As Lê says: "Today I am Vietnamese and a citizen of the world, and my music wants to express this, and to bring out the creativity of the country as it is now. Which is why this album and this show

have been shaped by so many talents." Trung Bao's beatboxing adds another unexpected dimension, including on the centrepiece sequence, the seven-part 'Overseas Suite'.

Robert Shore

Joe McPhee & Paal Nilssen-Love Song For The Big Chief

PNL Records PNL046 (CD) ★★

Joe McPhee (ts, pkt-t) and Paal Nilssen-Love (d, perc), Rec. December 2017



When Joe McPhee and Paal Nilssen-Love played together on the evening of 9 December 2017 at Cafe OTO, the great drummer Sunny Murray, who had died two days earlier, was very much in their thoughts: *Song For The Big Chief*, its title a hat-tip towards Murray's formidable 1968 album *Big Chief*, is their mournful yet cathartic tribute to a free-jazz pioneer who clearly meant the world to them. The 23-minute long title-track is subtitled 'Old Man River', but this is no straight reading of Jerome Kern's song. McPhee, unaccompanied at first, hints at its melodic outline as he weaves around it a montage of references to other songs of remembrance: I hear 'Come Sunday', 'Going Home' and 'When The Saints Go Marching In', but perhaps there are others too. McPhee migrates from playing with an Ayler-like exaggerated, throbbing vibrato to something more innate; Nilssen-Love enters abruptly, felt-covered timpani sticks racing over tom-toms, and the two men build a slow-moving, heartfelt ritual that occasionally spills over into raw vocalisation. Two shorter tracks, 'Knox' and 'A Fantasy for Lester' – Bowie rather than Young – maintain this tautness of construct and depth of emotion in music dedicated to forefathers never to be forgotten.

Philip Clark

The Ed Palermo Big Band The Adventures of Zodd Zundgren

Cuneiform Records Rune 440 (CD)

★★★★

Ed Palermo (as, g), Cliff Lyons, Phil Chester, Bill Straub, Ben Kono, Barbara Cifelli (reeds), Ronnie Buttacavoli, John Bailey, Steve Jankowski (t), Charley Gordon, Mike Boschen, Matt Ingman (tb), Bob Quaranta (p), Ted Kooshian (syn, sampler), Paul Adamy (b), Ray Marchica (d), Katie Jacoby (vn, v), Bruce McDaniel (g, v) and Napoleon Murphy Brock (v).
Rec. 17 July 2016-2 June 2017

A Lousy Day in Harlem

Sky Cat SC181202 (CD) ★★

Ed Palermo (as), Cliff Lyons (as, ss, cl), Phil Chester (as, ss, f, picc), Bill Straub (ts, cl, f), Ben Kono (ts, f, ob), Barbara Cifelli (bs, bcl, cl), Ronnie Buttacavoli, John Bailey, Steve Jankowski (t), Charley Gordon, Mike Boschen (tb), Matt Ingman (btb), Bob Quaranta (p), Ted Kooshian (keys), Paul Adamy (b) and Ray Marchica (d). Rec. 17 July 2016-2 June 2017



"The thing about this record is, I wanted it to be jazzier," says Ed Palermo of his new disc, *A Lousy Day in Harlem*, which features tunes by Ellington, Monk and

Trane in addition to a slew of originals. Palermo leads one of the best big bands in contemporary music so you would think that jazz – authentic jazz, jazzier's jazz, shall we say – would be his stock-in-trade. But no: more typical of his recorded output is last year's *The Adventures of Zodd Zundgren*, a mash-up of the catalogues of Frank Zappa (a constant reference point for Palermo) and Todd Rundgren. Both albums are great examples of the arranger's art, united if not by their compositional sources then by their penchant for

humour. *Zodd Zundgren* is more gag-filled – Zappa liked a musical laugh, so that goes without saying, really – but there's wit and pathos in the cover image to *A Lousy Day*, which has Palermo sitting alone in front of the very same brownstone apartment building on East 126th Street in New York where Art Kane assembled 57 musicians on 12 August 1958 for his famous image *A Great Day in Harlem*. Happily, Palermo's regular band turned up to accompany him on the musical contents within, and it's hard not to warm to the tap-dance solo on 'The One with the Balloon'.

Robert Shore

J. Pavone String Ensemble Brick and Mortar

Birdwatcher Records CDBW012 (CD)

★★★★

Erica Dicker, Angela Morris (vln), Jessica Pavone and Joanna Mattrey (vla).
Rec. May 2018



New York-based violist, composer and improviser Jessica Pavone has made a speciality of writing for string quartet, though Pavone string quartets usually aim to reconfigure the conventional two violin/viola/cello instrumentation. Her 2009 album *Songs of Synastry and Solitude* took away one violin and added a double-bass, while this latest project looks the other way by scoring for two violins and two violas, which strips out the lower octaves. From the duo she shares with guitarist Mary Halvorson to her other composition projects, Pavone has long been fascinated by the tension caused by riding disarmingly direct melodic lines over structural obstacle courses. The five pieces of *Brick and Mortar* run to little over 30 minutes, and not a note is wasted. Her opening piece, 'Hurtle and Hurdle', establishes a chain of simple triadic patterns that gradually fall out of synch – then get reworked into an ornate overlay of lines and curves. Although all



REVIEW: J. PAVONE STRING ENSEMBLE – BRICK AND MORTAR

BY JACK CHUTER / 18 SEP 2019 / RECORD

PHOTO BY YUAN LIU

BANDCAMP.

We open on the ocean. The entire sensory field is richly smacked by rippling blue. Just as the mood of the water can be reinterpreted if the observer simply adjusts the point of focus – locking upon the menace of a rolling wave, then shifting to the placidity of tiny undulations – Jessica Pavone's ensemble (two violins, two violas) is immediately set rippling with a multitude of contradictory time-speeds and rhythmic collisions, dancing between ballroom waltzes and spritely 4/4s, stretching single chords into majestic crescents of drones, always harbouring cross-rhythms as one violin/viola pair engage in their own private dialogue, passing notes under the desk, twirling in treacherous mis-step with the primary agenda.

Whether giddy with the somersaults of opening "Hurtle And Hurdle" or woven into the thick quilt of the title track, these players are constantly exploring unity and its deliberate undoing. They converge upon a single note to form a thin vertical line. They mimic each other like birds in dialogue, with flurrying motifs summoning their own uncanny echo. They wander away from one another until the picture starts to smear, the definition gradually undermined, as they slide into a dazzling scramble of polyrhythmic interplay, still radiant in kinetic telepathy, each player never *once* breaking crystalline awareness of the exact placement and posture of the other three.

All the while, I'm imagining this performance to take place in a gigantic concert hall, cradled in the aroma of unsettled dust and sweet wood varnish. The echo splays and mingles above their head, pressing the strings even closer together, dissolving the boundary between individual instruments and performers, like the hovering nimbus depiction of the quartet's immaculately assimilated hive mind. I don't picture an audience – just rows of folded velvet seats wafting the sound back at them – but would the players break their spell of insular concentration and even notice? Doubtful. A luxurious, endlessly intricate piece of work.



Ed Palermo

Women Composers Unbound: Four New Recordings

BY ALLAN KOZINN , November 19, 2019



The classical-music world has been making an effort — in some cases a real one, in others little more than a sclerotic attempt to create the appearance of making an effort while actually doing very little — to redress its neglect of female composers over the last eight centuries or so. For the mainstream repertory, this is going to be a tough but by no means impossible job: from Hildegard of Bingen through Barbara Strozzi, Clara Wieck Schumann, Amy Cheney Beach, and Ruth Crawford Seeger, there have always been women who commanded the respect of their male colleagues, and whose work has been preserved, even as most women were actively discouraged from pursuing composition.

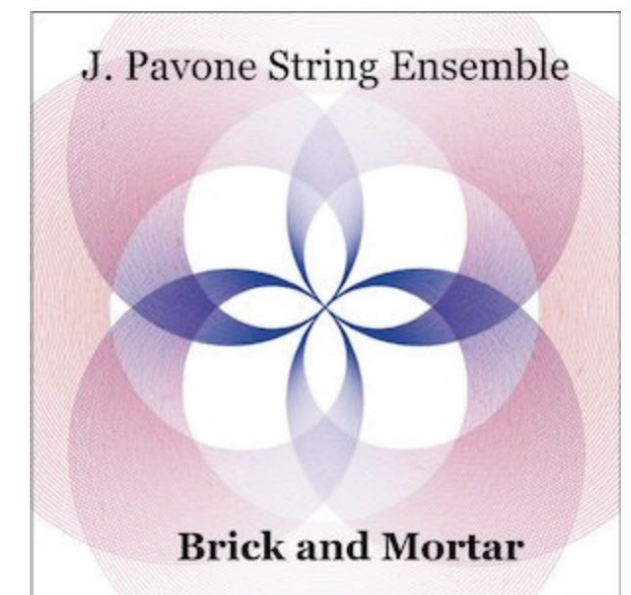
Preservation is an issue in this endeavor: works that weren't valued in their time are often lost, and it's hard to build an alternative history or repertory if the materials can no longer be found. Works by men whose music was not regarded as top drawer in their day but who, like Mahler, believed that their time would come, are often preserved in libraries, at universities or publishers' archives, and they stand a chance of being rediscovered and championed.



Jessica Pavone | Credit: Ryuhei Shindo

Jessica Pavone, like Jessica Meyer, is a violist, although Pavone also performs on the violin and electric bass, and has worked over the last two decades with ensembles of all sorts: a duo with the jazz guitarist Mary Halvorson, experimental art-rock band JOBS (formerly killer BOB), the jazz pianist Anthony Braxton's Tri-Centric Orchestra, and various new-music ensembles. The Jessica Pavone String Ensemble, with which she recorded her new *Brick and Mortar* (Birdwatcher Records), was founded in 2017, and includes Pavone and Joanna Mattrey on violas and Erica Dicker and Angela Morris on violins.

Brick and Mortar follows quickly on the heels of *In the Action* (Relative Pitch Records), a fascinating collection of four works for solo viola, including a couple of works in which the viola's sound is processed to create a distorted, crackling drone. On the new set, her ensemble's timbres are unprocessed, but her compositional accent — variations on classic Minimalism (consonant, overall, with repeated tones and short figures morphing over time, both gradually and with occasional sudden pivot points where rhythms, tempos, or even repeating cells suddenly change) — is similar. And though it's not clear whether the album's five works are independent, or intended to be heard in sequence, as a set they build in complexity.





Lullaby and Goodnight begins even more simply, with a steady, repeated viola tone, but becomes a slow-moving but rich contrapuntal texture. The viola opens the title track as well, this time with a sustained tone that shifts gradually in timbre, before the violins and other viola join with pitches that transform the original tone into an uneasy chord. That chord shimmers as the newly added lines become independently undulating minor thirds. In the end, those lines fall away, leaving a steady, sustained tone and, in a quaintly old-fashioned touch, a single, mezzo-piano final chord.

Sooner or Later is a bit thornier: instead of building the work around an unadorned repeated tone or chord, Pavone has the violins play a brisk figure that sounds like it would be at home in a track by a Celtic band, underpinned by a viola figure built around a major second. After a few moments repetition, this group of lines takes on a bagpipe quality — but then stops suddenly, as if in mid-breath, giving way to an involved viola line that becomes the central pillar of an attractive contrapuntal structure (the counterpoint, however, taking the form of short repeated figures in each of the ensemble's lines).

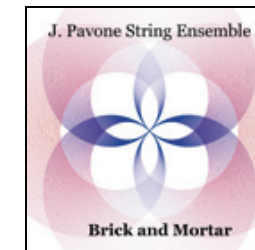
The repeating two-chord figure that opens *By and Large* is more dissonant than anything heard in the first four pieces (although it mirrors some of the music on *In the Action*, in that regard). But that dissonant cell evaporates as a melancholy theme in sustained tones takes over. That theme is played in unison, at first, but is gradually harmonized before Pavone pushes it toward an oddly Coplandesque episode, then a rich (if brief) patch of Dvorák-like Romanticism and, in the final bars, a return to a dissonant chord that leaves the work dangling without a sense of clear resolution.

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J. Pavone String Ensemble: *Brick and Mortar*
Birdwatcher Records

Brick and Mortar is the premiere recording from Jessica Pavone's J. Pavone String Ensemble, which features two violins (Erica Dicker, Angela Morris) and two violas (Pavone, Joanna Mattrey). Recorded at Brooklyn's Issue Project Room in May 2018, the recording follows three solo viola releases by the Astoria-based composer: *Knuckle Under*, *Silent Spills*, and *In the Action*. Formed in 2017, the quartet format enables Pavone to further develop ideas examined in the solo project, things such as repetition, long tones, block forms, and the sheer physicality of sound.

One of the more salient aspects of the material on *Brick and Mortar* (the title deliberately chosen, obviously) is its tactile dimension, the material fact of four string instruments sounding together; it's also a strongly visceral music that's enhanced by the performances' live feel (according to Pavone, the recording includes a single, tiny edit). Architecture is also paramount, specifically the way pieces are structured so that certain sections last for set times and cells of different lengths result in gradual shifts in the sound. Though Pavone gravitates towards a set compositional form, she allowed a modest amount of indeterminacy to enter into certain tracks; a given piece might have a predetermined beginning and end, for example, with the middle part allowing for some degree of variation.

Brick and Mortar is music of significant power; though a modest number of players performs, the sound generated is large and imposing. In using the word block to speak of her music, Pavone identifies one its key aspects, its thickness, a quality that asserts itself especially vividly when the players assemble into mass formation and generate long tones. Individual soloing is eschewed, the emphasis on group expression and through-composition.

Bowed strings saw furiously through the opening *Hurtle and Hurdle*, their keening expressions like wails; although the violin and viola are both upper-register instruments, contrast is present between the upswinging figure of the violins and the churning undertow of the violas, and while bowed tones dominate, pizzicato playing emerges at the end to close the circle. In *Lullaby and Goodnight*, unison lines gradually separate into individual expressions, the violins producing whistling, high-pitched tones while the violas see-saw underneath. The rocking rhythm is consistent with the lullaby form, but in this case the strings' droning lends it a haunting, even macabre edge.

The hypnotic title track unspools a thick drone of overlapping tones for nine electrically charged minutes. With the material unfolding at the pitch of a controlled howl, a rustic quality in the strings brings the music's plaintive dimension to the fore. *Sooner or Later* proves as hypnotic when the players execute their phrases at different tempos and pitches, the result a swirling colossus of sound; Pavone's capacity for surprise is evident here also in the shift that occurs midway through the piece, the sound mass stopping abruptly to be replaced by a stabbing melodic figure that leads into another dense cycle of staggered patterns.

The plaintive quality present in the title track emerges even more forcefully in the closing *By and Large*, with Pavone and company ending the set with affecting expressions that while forceful exude longing and tenderness. At thirty-five minutes, the release might be a tad short by CD standards, yet feels perfectly timed as a musical expression and registers as a complete statement.

October 2019

J. Pavone String Ensemble

Brick and Mortar

By [Kevin Press](#)

Published Oct 04, 2019

7 **Jessica Pavone** was desperate to learn the violin, but at only age three, it took some convincing for her to win parental support — two years of it in fact. The Brooklyn-based composer and performer has since earned an international reputation for producing advanced work in multiple genres.

This new from her string ensemble, featuring Pavone and Abby Swidler on viola, and violinists Erica Dicker and Angela Morris, includes five new works.

These pieces are fairly compact, at least in comparison to lengthy works she's produced for solo viola. But while nothing lasts longer than about nine minutes, there is a kind of grandiosity to each composition that distinguishes the album from other string-quartet recordings.

A particular highlight comes on the album's second piece, "Lullaby and Goodnight." After a luxurious *détaché* opening, the quartet employs a phased shift to increasingly lengthy legato strokes and then back again, all inside seven-and-a-half minutes. Next, we're presented the album's title piece, with richly detailed drones.

Early in her career, Pavone developed an interest in improvisation, as well as long-tone, repetitive works. She felt constrained by the formal training she so eagerly signed up for, which helps explain her impressive discography and touring schedule. ([Birdwatcher](#))

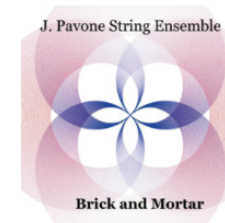
salt peanuts*

På skive

J. PAVONE STRING ENSEMBLE

«Brick and Mortar»

BIRDWATCHER RECORDS



American viola player Jessica Pavone loves to play long notes «because they feel good and they relax me». Pavone studied in recent years the work of Hans Jenny, a follower of the anthroposophical doctrine of Rudolf Steiner who published books entitled «Kymatic», investigating the subtle power of vibrations, on water bodies.

Pavone transformed these lessons to her newly founded J. Pavone String Ensemble, a quartet featuring two viola players – her and Joanna Mattrey and two violinists – Erica Dicker and Angela Morris. This ensemble attempts to explore the effects vibrating sounds have on our own bodies, than can be considered as water bodies, including the healing effects. The ensemble allows Pavone to expand her interest in long and repetitive tone practice, sympathetic vibration and the sheer physicality of playing, already explored on her recent solo viola albums «Knuckle Under» (Taiga, 2014), «Silent Spills and In the Action» (Relative Pitch, 2016, 2019) to her chamber, acoustic string quartet that she founded in 2017.

Pavone's new compositions for this string ensemble highlight the physicality of the playing, almost tangible with its immediate power, and the perfect interplay of the ensemble. The opening piece «Hurt and Hurdle» brings to mind the strict, minimalist power of the early compositions of Philip Glass, still with no healing tones. The repetitive, long notes of «Lullaby and Goodnight» suggest an untimely resonant drone, patiently letting a more delicate, vibrating melody to surface from its rough shell. The highly vibrating title-piece deepens even further the out-of-time and in-deep-space atmosphere until you may feel embraced and even massaged by the tones and overtones of the strings instruments. «Sooner or Later» focuses on the tangible, physical aspects of a conflictual setting, eventually concluding with more peaceful interplay. The last «By and Large» emphasizes again the effects of long, vibrating notes, and letting these notes sketch a fragile melody.

I can not guarantee any lasting healing effects but Pavone knows how to re-calibrate our listening experiences to her challenging, and often quite gratifying, sonic aesthetics.

Eyal Hareuveni



The Free Jazz Collective

Reviews of Free Jazz and Improvised Music

J. Pavone String Ensemble - Brick and Mortar (Birdwatcher Records) ****1/2

Monday, September 30, 2019 | [No comments](#)

By [David Menestres](#)

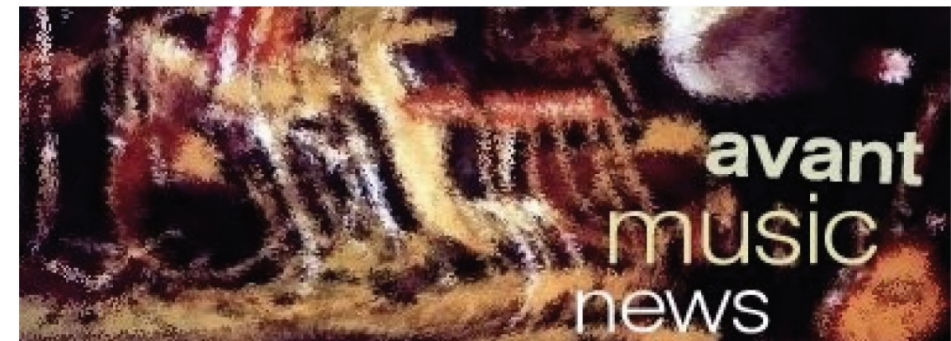
Musicians: Joanna Mattrey, Erica Dicker, Angela Morris, Jessica Pavone

Jessica Pavone has been an integral part of the improvised music scene for the better part of this century. From her long running duo with Mary Halvorson (still can't believe I missed them when they were in town 15 years ago, why didn't I cancel my own gig to see their's?), to appearances with legends like Anthony Braxton and William Parker, to her current role in the band Jobs and a recent string of excellent solo viola albums, Pavone has developed a unique voice both as a composer and violist.

The new album *Brick and Mortar*, credited to the J. Pavone String Ensemble, sees Pavone helming a string quartet of two violins and two violas. The music shimmers and twists around bends, recalling the rhythms of a subway train hurtling across the city, hinting at the quiet force of a shallow river slowly eroding the earth beneath it. The music builds on similar techniques that Pavone has been exploring on solo albums like [Knuckle Under](#) (2014) and [In The Action](#) (2019).

Much of the album is constructed from small thoughts expanded through repetition and subtle variation. The first track "Hurt and Hurdle" hits with the shifting rhythm of sunlight filtered by the trees on an Appalachian mountainside. The second cut "Lullaby and Goodnight" percolates up through the layers of your memory like a forgotten piece of your childhood. The illuminating drones of the title track dance like the charge of a 9v battery gingerly placed against your tongue slowed to glacial speeds. The album ends with the achingly beautiful "By and Large," which mostly feels like you're eavesdropping on an intimate ritual.

Special mention to Bob Bellerue for his excellent recording, done at ISSUE Project Room, and to Weasel Water for the mastering. The album sounds excellent, a wonderful thing given how the music is so deeply focused on the actual physicality of the sounds and the tones of these acoustic instruments and their performers. The recording sounds like you're eavesdropping on a most intimate ritual.

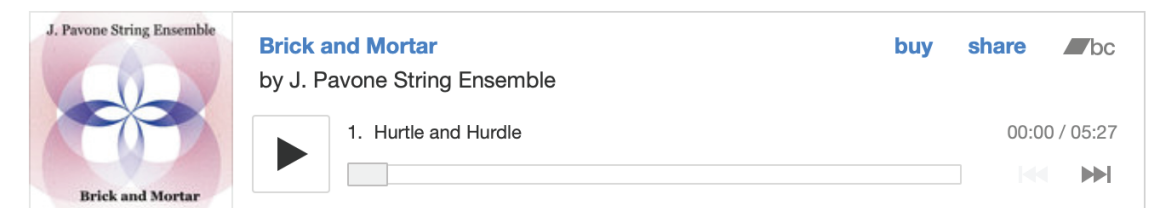


Avant Music News

A source for news on music that is challenging, interesting, different, progressive, introspective, or just plain weird

AMN Reviews: Jessica Pavone String Quartet - *Brick and Mortar* (2019; Birdwatcher Records)

SEPTEMBER 22, 2019 - MIKE



Jessica Pavone offers her second release of the year with these five pieces for a string quartet. Pavone, who is well-known as an experimental violinist, plays the viola on *Brick and Mortar*. She is joined by Joanna Mattrey also on viola, as well as Erica Dicker and Angela Morris on violin. Unlike some of Pavone's previous works, this album is more composed than improvised; it is played relatively "straight" with few extended techniques and no obvious effects or processing.

But that is not to say that *Brick and Mortar* is conventional in any sense. Each track has its own distinct and unusual character, from the pulsing of *Lullaby and Goodnight* to the rich, interlocked drones of the title track. Pavone leads the group through slowly-evolving melodies, not quite pastoral yet with an Eastern European feel. *Sooner or Later* explores contrapuntal patterns while *By and Large* centers around a lilting motif that accelerates upward in pitch.

Eschewing the overtly dissonant while remaining modern, Pavone has created a compelling and creative effort with broad appeal. The pace is deliberate and thoughtful with a detailed atmosphere. Well done.

NATIONAL SAWDUST LOG



Video Premiere: Jessica Pavone, 'and Maybe in the End'

Words: Steve Smith
Image: Eyal Hareuveni

Video Premiere: Jessica Pavone, 'and Maybe in the End'

Words: Steve Smith
Image: Eyal Hareuveni

Jessica Pavone, a multifarious violist, composer, and bandleader, has made a career of redefining the possibilities for her instrument. She does it once again on *In the Action*, her third album for unaccompanied viola, which comes out next Friday, February 15, on feisty NYC indie label [Relative Pitch](#).

To celebrate Pavone's newest effort, *National Sawdust Log* has the privilege of sharing the premiere of the album's first video, "and Maybe in the End." The clip was directed by [Neil Cloaca Young](#), an integral part of the New England experimental-music scene, and along with Jake Meginsky a co-director of the widely acclaimed documentary film *Milford Graves Full Mantis*.

After you watch and listen, keeping reading for comments from Pavone and Young. Now, with no further ado, the video...

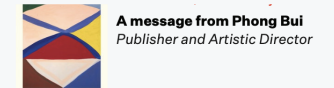
Talking about the music, Pavone says via email:

"and Maybe in the End" was produced by strumming a series of chords on the viola through a chain of effects which are slowly introduced after the initial acoustic vibrations sound. The chords outline a tonal progression and are followed by a distorted wave of electronic haze. The title highlights the simple fact that it seems like things always figure themselves out in the end... whenever that is.

Young, also via email, succinctly describes the video concept:

Loops and their resolutions are better understood by peering beyond the filter's blemishes and navigating a tightrope across the mundane movements of clouds. Offscreen patience can sometimes produce simply satisfying onscreen rewards.

Pavone will celebrate the release of *In the Action* with a series of East Coast solo performances, starting in Queens at Terraza 7 in Elmhurst on [Feb. 13](#), and including a Brooklyn date at HappyLucky no. 1 in Crown Heights on [Feb. 20](#)... for more dates and further details, visit [her website](#).



A message from Phong Bui
Publisher and Artistic Director

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by Dan Cameron

Joan Miró: Birth of the World
by Jessica Holmes

Eric N. Mack: Lemme walk across the room
by Sophie Kovel

Leonard Cohen: A Crack in Everything
by Steven Pestana

Odette England: The Outskirts, Exposed, and Punched
by tamara suarez porras

subsequent repetitions. At one point, holding down both a G# and an A, she slowly glides across that half-step, relishing all of the sounds along the way. This composition’s sonic counterpart is the title-track; both celebrate the tonal imprecision inherent in her instrument, as Pavone drones on microtones and gouges her bow into accidental harmonics. She stresses the fact that a note, on whatever instrument, can never sound exactly the same as any prior instance (hence diatonicism’s promise of tonal predictability is false).

Pavone’s trajectories towards dissonance are more immediate on “and Maybe in the End,” which is a cycle of slow-burning two-note figures. Two pizzicato notes swell amid distortion and subside after a moment. Perhaps the distortion has potential to crescendo further, but Pavone restrains the effect before it gets out of control. The accompanying music video for “and Maybe” builds on these qualities. Directed by experimental artist Neil Cloaca Young, it sees a dark string hang vertically down the screen against a backdrop of the sky. Although later revealed to be the hoist rope of a crane, it’s initially reminiscent of a string on an instrument, calling back to Pavone’s own viola—where the notes she plays lose their shape amid the expanding distortion; similarly the visibility of the string, when stared at for long enough, fades before the clouds.

She unleashes distortion and other effects on “Look Out - Look Out - look Out,” so much that the acousmatic source is almost entirely lost; we can only presume that the viola, in some vague capacity, factors into this noise composition. Harsh as it is, the piece is both dynamic and fluid. It gurgles, stutters, crackles; actual notes sometimes emerge but then fade away amid the undulating low and high-end frequencies. Pavone carefully whittles away at the behemoth of noise generated by her pedals, providing a loose structure to this sonic disarray.

While “Look Out” sounds the opposite of what she’s doing on the album’s three other compositions—that is, *deviating* from a sense of order—it’s nonetheless an acute expression of kinesthetic movement: the galvanizing yet disorienting effects that noise music is known to produce on the listener’s body. It aligns with the overall conceit of *In the Action*, which is that each musical detail sparks an urge to be plunged into.

Avant Music News

A source for news on music that is challenging, interesting, different, progressive, introspective, or just plain weird

AMN Reviews: Jessica Pavone – In the Action (2019; Relative Pitch Records)

JANUARY 27, 2019 JANUARY 27, 2019 ~ MIKE

(<https://avantmusicnews.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/in-the-action.jpg>) Jessica Pavone has built up quite the resume over the last 20 or so years, from solo works to duos with Mary Halvorson to contributing on pieces by Anthony Braxton, Henry Threadgill, and Wadada Leo Smith. *In the Action* is her third solo viola release and clocks in at only 27 minutes. But she packs a lot of ideas into its short duration, and re-thinks the role of her instrument along the way.

Oscillatory Salt Transport begins this offering with a plaintive folk melody that evolves into discordant wails and jagged bowed sawing. *and Maybe in the End* is an even more experimental piece that combines plucked chords with heavily distorted processed waves of sound. *Look Out – Look Out – look Out* takes it one step further, with rapidly oscillating and crackling walls of noise that reach down into low frequencies. Without liner notes, it would likely be impossible to identify the instrument from which these sounds originate. The title track rounds things out with something of a return to normalcy. Pavone again invokes a rustic playing style, albeit with an intervening fuzzy loop underlying minimalistic patterns and some overdriven amplified playing toward the end.

As far as I can tell, *In the Action* is just Pavone, her viola, and a bunch of effects. Regardless, combining a smattering of conventional playing with a large amount of unconventional exploration, the album remains engaging throughout.

In the Action is out February 15 on [Relative Pitch Records](http://www.relativepitchrecords.com/) (<http://www.relativepitchrecords.com/>).



Three More New Ones from RELATIVE PITCH:

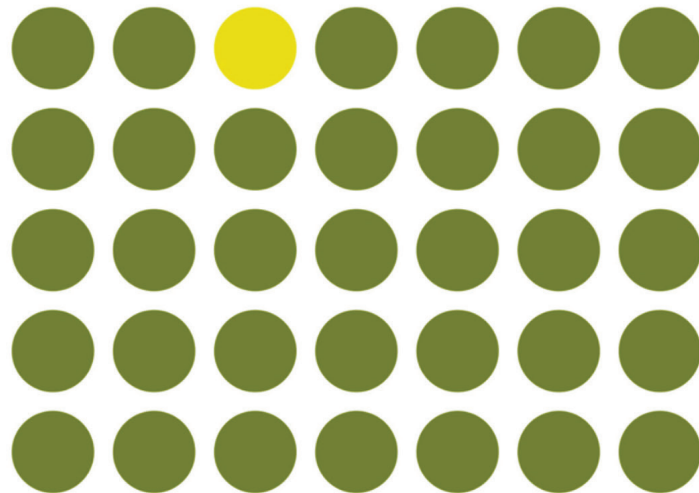
JESSICA PAVONE - In the Action (Relative Pitch 1082; USA) Jessica Pavone’s fourth solo effort is a technically masterful yet highly musical and loving study of the physical properties of her viola. On the first track, “Oscillatory Salt Transport” she channels her best Henry Flynt, exercising playful control over cross-string longtones, beat frequencies, and fiddler-born bow chopping to produce a serious material study that lacks for nothing in terms of melody and listenability. Track 2 “and Maybe in the End” has been stuck in my head all week as I’ve played this is the store. Plucked chords swell into pedal (or computer?) processed patches of swelling distortion that create a tuneful, choral effect. Throughout the disc, Pavone presents compositions that embody the duality of aggressive sound experiment and highly listenable result. At times, the viola is masked as a controller of electronics, at times, it is at the forefront, flirting with Appalachian-inspired melody and pitch bend. In places, the electronics are expansively melodic overtone studies and elsewhere provide noise pulses for the viola to float on top of. This is a performer who has embraced her instruments, and their most intuitively satisfying tendencies completely. - Frank Meadows for DMG

Raised by Gypsies ::

Friday, February 15, 2019

Music Review //
Jessica Pavone
"In the Action"

Jessica Pavone
In the Action



<https://jessicapavone.bandcamp.com/album/in-the-action> //

"In the Action" begins with strings, which sound like they could be coming through in drones but they are in this pattern where they sort of repeat- they start over- often enough that it doesn't fully become drone but it's close. They grow louder and sharper, then quieter and darker. This music makes me wish I had a background in animation so I could create something to go with this song. It'd be in black and white and feel like the old cartoons that existed before I was born but it'd be so much fun.

The back and forth of the strings can sound either like it's singing or bring about the emergency feelings of an ambulance or some other such vehicle. It gets faster paced and I can't help but think of it as being like something out of a country song, like a fiddle, even though I know it's leaning more towards the classical side of things. The way this seemingly feels like a classical music showcase but for some reason also feels like that little bit of country is what makes it unique because that might be simply because of my (somewhat country-like) upbringing.

On the second song there are strings delicately plucked while these darker synth sounds fade in and out. It's the balance between something lighter and heavier, the light and darkness, and just the idea that these notes are being hit up top and then they resonate down lower creating some kind of cause and effect is one of those grand musical ventures I feel we all need to explore. It's also not something I feel like I hear enough but perhaps not everyone can accomplish it in such a way as Jessica Pavone does here.

"Look Out - Look Out - look Out" begins like the sound of a motor revving up, a car starting perhaps. It begins to sound as if it will fade, crackling in and out. This turns into a more sonic drive and it feels like the car is finally on the track and racing, or I don't know, maybe we're doing something else with this power like cutting the lawn or fighting space monsters. Eventually it goes back to that original motor sound and then just sort of buzzes its way out until the end.

The titular track is what closes out this EP and it begins with strings like the way we started, which remind me of something a little country. Is anyone else hearing that fiddle in here or is it just because my grandpa was a farmer? There is a little bit of static behind this, but it just continues that rhythm which may or may not provide you with fond memories of the farm. It can begin to feel sad by the end, but it also has that feeling where the strings, the distortion and everything just come together as one. All those feelings at the conclusion just makes me want to start this one again.

Jessica Pavone - *In the Action* (Relative Pitch, 2019) ****

Tuesday, February 26, 2019

[No comments](#)



By [Eyal Hareuveni](#)

In the Action is the third solo viola album of New York-based experimental composer-improviser Jessica Pavone following *Knuckle Under* (Taiga records, 2014) and *Silent Spills* (Relative Pitch, 2016). She is also known from her singer-songwriter duo with guitarist Mary Halvorson, her work with Anthony Braxton's Tri-Centric Orchestra, the art-rock group JOBS, and her own String Ensemble.

Pavone describes her intimate relationship with the viola as "larger-than comfortable", and indeed, this short album (only 27-minutes long) emphasizes her idiosyncratic aesthetics. You may find yourself drawn into a minimalist universe characterized by its very own senses of time, space - the tangible, physical space between Pavone and the viola - and her belief that cultivating a strong physical body is a core part of her creative process - as well as the space of the recording studio, and the strange but engaging sounds and noises.

Pavone composed four distinct pieces for *In the Action*, all employing extended bowing techniques, and focusing on in repetition, song form, and sympathetic vibration, with clever usage of effects. The first one "Oscillatory Salt Transport" suggests a series of gentle, resonating waves that somehow bridge between the strict, highly disciplined minimalism of New York and sensual, folk melodies of the British isles. This piece actually refers to the waves of the ocean and how they are essentially pushing salt around the world, as mirroring cycles that occur in nature. On "And Maybe in the End" Pavone morphs a series of chords produced by strumming the viola strings through a chain of effects, suggesting a delicate and quite emotional ripples of electronic haze.

"Look Out - Look Out - Look Out" changes the atmosphere drastically and the acoustic sounds of the viola are processed and mutated so heavily that only repetitive, buzzing patterns of beating industrial noises are left, but as a kind of hypnotic spells from a friendly planet. The last title-piece was performed in a single take and here the acoustic viola of Pavone corresponds with a prepared electronic drone, patiently disciplines the noisy drone into evocative, song-based texture.

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On Stage: Pavone is a revelation in solo viola show

Feb 21st, 2019 · 0 Comment

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By **Denny Dyroff**, *Entertainment Editor, The Times*

A solo viola concert might not seem to be the most interesting of choices for an evening of musical entertainment. But, if the artist onstage is Jessica Pavone, then all preconceived expectations fly out the window.

When Pavone performs her solo viola concerts, audiences get drawn into her complex compositions. Boredom never becomes an issue.

Area fans will get to experience Pavone in concert when she performs at Fire Museum Presents show on February 21 at Vox Populi (319 North 11th Street, Philadelphia, <http://firemuseumpresents.com/events/jessica-pavone>).

Pavone (composer, viola, violin, electric bass) has performed in innumerable improvisation, avant jazz, experimental, folk, soul, and chamber ensembles since moving to New York City two decades ago. She currently leads her own string ensemble and plays with the band JOBS and in a duo with guitarist Mary Halvorson. Pavone also performs in Anthony Braxton's Tri-Centric Orchestra and as a solo violist.

"When I was in music school, we were learning classical," said Pavone, during a phone interview last week from her home in Queens, New York. "My taste in music is much wider.

"Near the end of school, I got into improvisation. That made me aware of this type of creative music. A friend took me to a concert by Anthony Braxton and that opened my mind.

"From improvisation, I got into composition. I thought - what if I took the things I thought were great and formed them into a composition. I started writing music and putting ensembles together. Leroy Jenkins was a huge inspiration because he played my instrument."

As an instrumentalist, Pavone has worked with and interpreted new music by Aaron Seigel, Andrew Raffo Dewar, Elliott Sharp, Glenn Branca, Henry Threadgill, Leo Smith, Jason Ajemian, Jason Cady, Jeremiah Cymerman, John King, Matana Roberts, Matthew Welch, Tristan Perich, Tyondai Braxton and William Parker. She has also played strings in bands such as Christy and Emily, Pure Horsehair, White Blue Yellow and Clouds, Joy Mega, and The Artificials.

"I grew up in Pelham, New York," said Pavone. "Music was a personal choice. When I was three, I started asking for a violin. When I was five, I was still asking for a violin, so my parents got me lessons. I liked violin because I liked



Jessica Pavone

the sound. I was taking violin lessons for a while and then switched to viola when I was in junior high. I wanted to study cello. With viola, I liked the lower sound.

“My main instrument now is viola. I picked up playing upright bass when I was in high school. Then, I learned electric bass — which I still play. After college, I started composing. I studied music and viola at Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Connecticut. Then, I got a master’s degree in composition at the Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music.”

Ever since then, Pavone has been an in-demand artist as a player and a composer.

Pavone has toured extensively throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe, performing in venues ranging from international music festivals, universities, and art galleries, to community centers and basements. Her music has premiered in venues in New York City such as, Roulette, Issue Project Room, and The Kitchen, and at the Klangbad Festival in Sheer, Germany. In 2011 she was featured in NPR’s “The Mix: 100 Composers Under 40.”

Pavone’s music is available from Taiga Records, Tzadik, Thirsty Ear, Relative Pitch, Porter, Skirl, and Peacock Recordings. She is now touring in support of her new album “In the Action” on Relative Pitch Records.

“This tour is for the new album,” said Pavone. “I’ve released three solo viola albums – one in 2014, one in 2016 and the new one. The show will be a mixture of all three, but I’ll be focusing on ‘In the Action.’ I’m playing viola and a simple chain of pedals.”

“*In the Action*” follows Pavone’s previous LPs “*Knuckle Under* (Taiga Records, 2014) and “*Silent Spills*” (Relative Pitch, 2016), and is the third in a series of solo viola albums that connect Pavone’s interest in the tactile experience and use of the body while creating sounds — a consistent theme she has explored in her compositional process.

Pavone’s recent works for solo viola and voice stem from years of concentrated long tone practice and an interest in repetition, song form, and sympathetic vibration. She combines her long tone rituals with delay, understated melodies and sparse lyrical content while continuously experimenting with new forms. She is interested in the physicality of performing her somewhat larger-than-comfortable instrument and believes that cultivating physical bodies as a strong container for her thoughts is part of the creative process.

“The solo record is a combination of myself as a composer and a performer,” said Pavone. “As a composer, I think of overall form. I’ll draw images – shapes of where I see it starting and ending. Often, I begin with a middle piece.

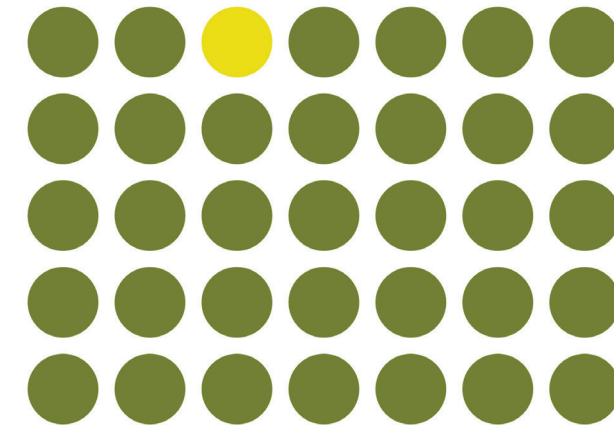
“Right now, I’ve been working in the studio. My composer brain came back and I’m writing for a string ensemble – for eight string players.”

For the show in Philly, Pavone has to concentrate on one string player – herself on viola – and that’s more than sufficient.”


Video link for Jessica Pavone — <https://youtu.be/dans-FOLp2l>.

IMPROVISED AND EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC

Jessica Pavone *In the Action*



Review: Jessica Pavone – In the Action

© February 27, 2019 |  vanessaluzv

Since moving to New York City in 2000, violist and composer Jessica Pavone (<https://www.jazzrightnow.com/artists-p-r/pavone-jessica/>) has become one of the most captivating musicians in the avant-garde music scene – performing in countless groups from improvisation to folk and so on. Working on a multitude of projects, Pavone has led her own string ensemble, performed in the quartet, JOBS, and has been regularly featured in in Anthony Braxton’s Tri-Centric Orchestra, as well as creating duo works with guitarist, Mary Halvorson (<https://www.jazzrightnow.com/artists-h-l/halvorson-mary/>). The list of musicians she has worked with is ever-growing as she continues to be an active composer and performer.

This past week, Jessica Pavone (<https://www.jazzrightnow.com/artists-p-r/pavone-jessica/>) released her third solo viola album, *In the Action*. Continuing with her exploration of the relationship between a musician’s body and the instrument, each track was written “exclusively for performance by the composer.” At just about 27 minutes long, the EP consists of four pieces filled with a minimalist tone, variations in repeated phrases, and complex subtleties in her patterns.

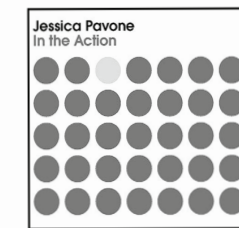
Opening with the longest piece, “Oscillatory Salt Transport,” Pavone draws us in with the long, drawn out notes with the bow, eventually moving in and out of her sharp multi-tracked harmonies. Reminiscent of some distant folk song, the movement throughout the track feels as though nature is taking its course. Personally, it places me in a setting overlooking the ocean, where I can feel the push and pull of the breeze and the sea, each on different planes but still coexisting and depending on each other. The track, and the record even, doesn’t feel like it is trying to achieve a natural state, it just inherently is. The pace of the piece gradually shifting back and forth mimicking the physical movement of the player.

“And Maybe in the End” finds a new pattern through clear plucked chords and distorted sustained notes. Keeping the slow pace, the four-and-a-half minute track is consistent in its repeated melody while varying specific notes. A process of repetition to discover something new, the piece could’ve continued and I would still be transfixed in its melody.

We get thrown into a vortex of distorted sounds and variations in the third piece, “Look Out – Look Out – Look Out.” An almost mechanical sound, Pavone shows us a completely different side of the viola. Still sticking with her sense of minimalism, the foreground stays rather consistent in its tone. But listening through the piece, there are as many subtle variations and slow moving changes that keep you fixated. The entirety of the piece has such a strong presence, with Pavone moving through the deeper ranges of the viola, the track ends on a higher and clearer note, as if that presence has moved on.

The closing title track, “In the Action” brings us full circle – beginning again with the folk melody and building up to the distorted loops. Listening to the seven-minute piece, I couldn’t help but feel a juxtaposition between the two ideas presented. As seen through the other three pieces, there is a base set with the resolved folk melody. The electronic distortions set a completely different setting, one that is man-made. With this final piece, the two coincide, moving around each other, until it completely shifts from one to the other.

The third in a series of solo viola records, *In the Action* continues to highlight Pavone’s interest “in the tactile experience and use of the body while creating sound.” The four tracks continue to be just as captivating the fifth and sixth times listening as it was the first. But to really dive deep into the record, I would encourage you to sit back in a place you won’t be distracted by the outside world and let your mind wander.



In The Action
Jessica Pavone (Relative Pitch)
by George Grella

This short (less than a half hour) recording from Jessica Pavone is something of a calling card for her skills and values as a violist and exploratory thinker. The four tracks are also an example of the fundamental, non-idiomatic avant garde; Pavone takes simple ideas and pushes them to the extremes of where logic dictates. The ideas on this record aren’t so much musical ones as physical ones. Pavone is interested in working with the body’s relationship with her viola, which produces a gorgeous tone but is awkward to hold and play.

The opening track, “Oscillatory Salt Transport”, is the longest and also the most straightforward music. Pavone repeats a simple pattern, then adds in a double stop that is tuned achingly flat and there’s a lovely release when she pulls the note up into tune. A solo acoustic drone piece, it succeeds on the focused intensity of her playing and the various timbres she produces.

That introduces the main body, so to speak, of the record, which is the sheer sound she gets out of the instrument. To the ears, she appears to be using close-mic’ing and distortion to create fuzzy, throbbing sounds at the edge of screaming like an electric guitar. There’s a physicality for the listener in these timbres, not just in the hearing but in the sensation that they are coming more out of Pavone’s body than the wooden cavity of her instrument.

The final three tracks, “and Maybe in the End”, “Look Out - Look Out - look Out” and “In the Action”, go deeper, step by step, into this luscious, haunting sound, which grows more and more like the crackly ambient texture of Tim Hecker. “Look Out - Look Out - look Out” is the sound of a machine, something like a helicopter crossed with a drill. The title track has Pavone playing bluegrass style music while simultaneously producing a sound like a revving motorcycle that fails to turn over.

For those who like their avant garde simple, direct and physical, this is a winner.

For more information, visit relativepitchrecords.com. Pavone is at Brooklyn Conservatory of Music Apr. 28th. See Calendar.



Playing With The Wind
Misha Tsiganov (Criss Cross)
by Ken Dryden

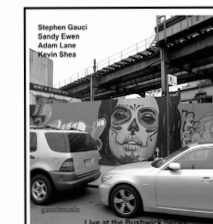
Jazz fans in the U.S. tend to focus more on American-born artists, whether because they are exposed to more of them through jazz radio and press or believe that home-grown jazz musicians represent the very best in the genre. A native of Russia, pianist Misha Tsiganov wasn’t planning to leave his homeland until a friend recorded a gig and sent it to Berklee College of Music,

producing an inquiry from none other than vibraphonist/professor Gary Burton. In 1991, Tsiganov came to the U.S. to study for two years before moving to New York to pursue his career. As on his two earlier Criss Cross Jazz CDs, Tsiganov draws from some of New York’s first-call instrumentalists: trumpeter Alex Sipiagin (who also came from Russia to the U.S. a year earlier), tenor saxophonist Seamus Blake, bassist Matt Brewer and drummer Dan Weiss.

The diverse session includes several originals, two gems from Wayne Shorter’s Blue Note period, a pair of standards and a reworking of Russian folk song as a nod to Tsiganov’s roots. Original “Playing With The Wind” opens with an intense roller coaster vamp and intricate interplay between Blake and Sipiagin (on flugelhorn), shifting into a more deliberate tempo for their solo features. Brewer and Weiss dive head first into tackling Tsiganov’s rhythmically demanding arrangement of Shorter’s “Witch Hunt” from 1964’s *Speak No Evil*, with strong solos by the leader, Sipiagin and Blake.

Miniature ballad “Dream Catcher” has the feeling of a lyrical standard and should be explored at greater length on a future recording. A dramatic recasting of the Arthur Hamilton warhorse “Cry Me A River” updates a song all too often tedious in the hands of less gifted artists. Only in Ray Noble’s “The Very Thought Of You” does Tsiganov opt for a more traditional approach, highlighted by spacious piano chords and Sipiagin’s sensitive muted horn.

For more information, visit crisscrossjazz.com. Tsiganov is at Russian Vodka Room Mondays-Tuesdays. See Regular Engagements.



Live at the Bushwick Series
Stephen Gauci/Sandy Ewen/Adam Lane/Kevin Shea
(Gaucimusic)
by John Sharpe

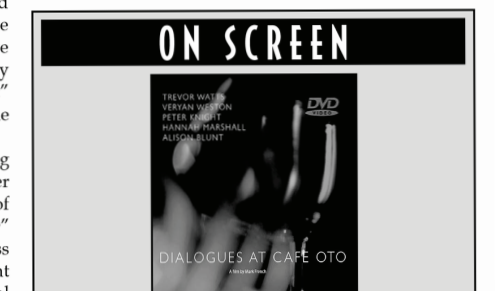
There’s an arresting consonance between the striking cover photo of street graffiti and the raw, edgy sound of tenor saxophonist Stephen Gauci’s group captured on location on *Live at the Bushwick Series*. The quartet’s regular 8 pm slot forms the cornerstone of Gauci’s ongoing presentation at the Bushwick Public House. Initially a trio, completed by bassist Adam Lane and drummer Kevin Shea, the band became a foursome when Gauci encountered guitarist Sandy Ewen and recognized something in her unusual approach that would sidestep any inclination towards stock response.

The 38-minute disc contains three episodic collective inventions with Gauci as the dominant voice. He has become a remarkably original stylist, not so much in his exploitation of the honks, screeches and multiphonics that he contrasts with a gruff lower register, but more so in his phrasing, where he combines short bursts and repetitions into asymmetric lines spiced with lengthy pauses. Nonetheless, there’s an inexorable sense of internal logic to his playing and in his reactions to changes in the level of dynamics in the group interaction.

Lane’s deep muscular pizzicato provides the central thread around which each of the pieces hangs. He imparts momentum that leaves Shea free to act as a percussive colorist as opposed to timekeeper, throwing in clusters of metallic clangs and unlikely resonances. “Improvisation #1” starts and finishes with saxophone and bass in duet, reveling in intense high energy

between times. Unhinged guitar gives the discourse an even more distinctive character with an atomized sound of scribbles, scratches and thrum. Tenor squeals mingle with guitar scrapings in making “Improvisation #2” a cacophonous glory. However, on “Improvisation #3”, the longest cut at 22 minutes, Gauci’s long almost lyrical tones become a recurrent motif, tempering only slightly the juddering abrasion and lurching tumult that prevails for much of the duration. This is free jazz at its most bracing, blending improv and noise in singular fashion.

For more information, visit gaucimusic.com. This band is at Bushwick Public House Mondays. See Calendar.



Dialogues at Cafe Oto (A Film by Mark French)
Trevor Watts, Vervan Weston, Peter Knight,
Hannah Marshall, Alison Blunt (Hi4Head)
by Kurt Gottschalk

Streaming video and DVDs bring onto our screens and into our homes the chance to interact with a performance in ways an audio document doesn’t afford. If you haven’t had a chance to visit London’s modest Café Oto—which over the last decade has become one of the world’s premier venues for free improvisation—or witness the enormous sensitivity of pianist Vervan Weston, a DVD like *Dialogues at Café Oto* can give you the opportunity, collecting three performances (totaling a bit over an hour) by Weston and saxophonist Trevor Watts.

It’s a perfectly serviceable entry into the long discography of either player, but it’s the filmic aspect that makes it of interest. No doubt Watts and Weston played equally strong gigs the week before and the week after. But this time around we have the opportunity to sit in on the conversation. Also of note is the chance to check out the string players on the session. The younger Alison Blunt (violin) and Hannah Marshall (cello)—both of whom have played with the London Improvisers Orchestra and otherwise made their marks in the U.K. free music scene—are featured on the first two tracks. On the third, Watts and Weston are joined by Peter Knight on a solid-body “octave violin”, strung to be tuned an octave lower than a traditional violin.

In the first half (running 45 minutes), Blunt and Marshall make for a tiny string orchestra. As a function of their familiarity with each other or just being a bit down in the mix (or likely a combination of both), the two fade to the back, behind the strong articulation of Watts and Weston. The 23-minute trio with Knight—a onetime member of the band Steeleye Span who is still better known in British folk circles than he is in the improv world—comes off more even-handed due to the rich voice of his instrument, often sounding closer to a cello than a violin, and the added benefit of being hard-wired.

The disc never quite finds its must-have moment, but perhaps it doesn’t need to. It’s music of the moment, even when preserved to disc, and will prove especially of value to those without the opportunity to witness the moment in the flesh.

For more information, visit hi4headrecords.com

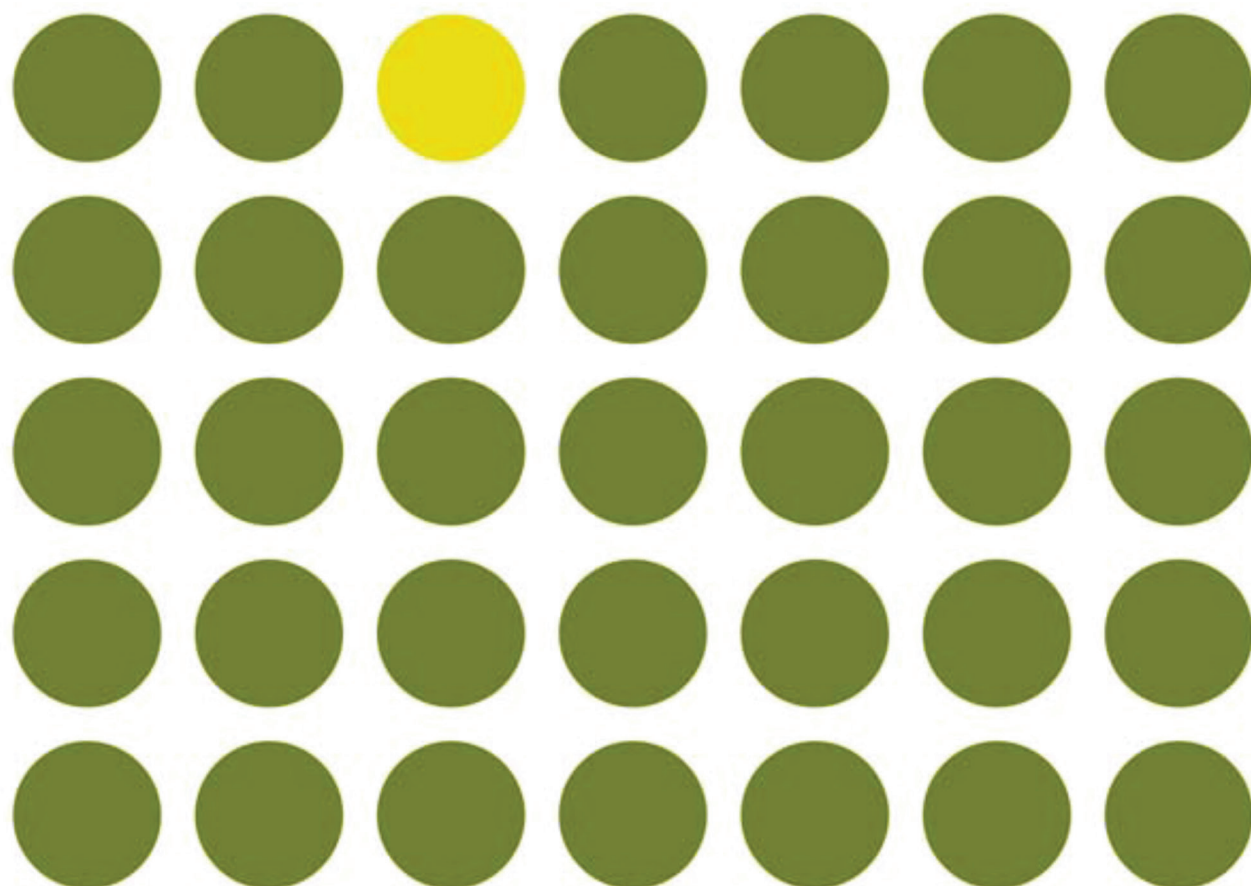


THE NEW NOISE

27/05/2019 / NAZIM COMUNALE

JESSICA PAVONE, In The Action

Jessica Pavone In the Action



Lunghi fili sospesi tra edifici fatti di finissima sabbia, cattedrali di vento, origami elettroacustici. Questo disco coglie la violista americana nel pieno dell'azione e dell'ispirazione, con quattro ampi movimenti che spostano l'aria. Sottile e celeste come ossigeno di altura, la musica di Jessica Pavone è un vero e proprio viaggio oltre le nuvole e dentro il nostro cosmo interiore. Lo stesso senso di meraviglia estatica in un qualche indicibile luogo tra minimalismo, contemporanea, ombre di bluegrass e memorie jazz che anima il violoncello dell'olandese volante Ernst Reijseger. Musica perfetta per le migliori visioni di Werner Herzog: da qualche parte il profilo di Tony Conrad ad annuire sornione, Morton Feldman si accende una sigaretta e noi restiamo rapiti dall'ascolto di questi 27 minuti di esplorazioni delle possibilità di uno strumento in solo, nudo o trattato attraverso un sapiente uso degli effetti ("And Maybe In The End"). Questo terzo lavoro in solo per la musicista, già al fianco di eminenze grigie del calibro di Anthony Braxton, William Parker e John Zorn, oltre che con la chitarrista Mary Halvorson è semplicemente magnifico. "Look Out – Look Out – Look Out" è un labirinto noise dove lo strumento suona completamente trasfigurato; schegge, specchi rotti, fragori, vampe, rumori, dolore, bellezza che stilla intatta dalle crepe di questo mondo in frantumi. Un suono potente e magmatico come potrebbe essere quello di un Phill Niblock o di un rumorista d'assalto convertito alla musica da camera. Oppure la risposta per strumento ad arco alla discesa negli inferi del respiro di Spelunker, il progetto per sax alto aumentato e feedback di Piero Bittolo Bon, o un frammento dell'Helicopter String Quartet di sua maestà Karlheinz Stockhausen.

Non si lascia definire questo audiolibro dalle pagine bianche, questo imprendibile monumento agli dei dell'Ascolto Profondo, cangiante e lucente, scuro e possente; la title-track chiude con un perfetto abbraccio tra fragranze dei monti Appalachi (già tanti hanno giustamente insistito sui parallelismi, meno paradossali di quanto apparirebbe a prima vista, tra certo minimalismo e alcuni rami del secolare albero folk) ed esplorazioni al confine tra rumore e silenzio. Come un cuore indomito che batte, pulsa vita il suono in quest'ultima composizione, in perfetto equilibrio tra grazia e furore. Guardiamo fuori, guardiamo fuori, guardiamo fuori. E forse nella fine...

REVIEW: JESSICA PAVONE – SILENT SPILLS

08 OCT 2016 / POSTED IN: RECORD

Sometimes I forget to be grateful. When I'm feeling distracted or impatient, my ears start to blur sounds just as tired eyes soften shapes; I hear the overall shape but start to reject the nuances within them, casually allowing the nourishment of total experience to pass me by. Sometimes I need a record like *Silent Spills* in order to reset myself; a release that takes each gesture one at a time, lingering on the circumstances that bring each moment to be, and depriving me of certain musical devices so that I might greater cherish their eventual return. Pavone achieves these sensations with just a viola and a small handful of FX. Her decision to mute the strings or activate distortion pedals feels fatefully exact, as if the only way to progress into the future is to exhaust an appreciation for the present tense. Only once I have fully explored the beauty of a particular gesture does Pavone carry me somewhere else.



There's a moment during "Shed The Themes" when a high violin note wanders the air in search of a harmonic partner, repeating one note like a question persistently posed to emptiness. Pavone makes me dwell in this harmonic neglect for a whole minute – waiting for me to empathise with the note, perhaps feel sorry for it – before a lower pitch slides in like a warm embrace, reframing the higher note as the gleeful major harmony in a simple symbiotic duet. It hits me like warm food during winter fast. Prolonged absence leads me to appreciate this gesture as if for the first time. Similarly, Pavone's voice appears only once (that is, if we are to discount the audible sounds of mouth movement and occasional nasal breath). During "Dawn To Dark", her song dances upon pizzicato like stepping stones, uneven in spacing and playful in tone, vanishing into a sudden surge of distortion and never returning, like a child running inside when the rain starts to fall. Everything is beautifully spaced and beautifully timed. From the pluck of a single string to the panoramic arc of amplifier feedback, I never doubt the right of Pavone's sounds to occupy the present tense. They belong here as much as I do, and the longer we share company, the more we learn about one another.

TAGGED: JESSICA PAVONE, RELATIVE PITCH, SILENT SPILLS

Jessica Pavone – *Silent Spills* (Relative Pitch, 2016) ****

Wednesday, October 26, 2016 | [No comments](#)



By [Eric McDowell](#)

Looking at the track listing of *Silent Spills*, violist Jessica Pavone's latest solo release, you might think something's missing. Five tracks totaling less than twenty-five minutes? But a single listen reveals the album as a complete musical statement, one executed at such a level of intention and intimacy that it would hardly be sustainable for much longer— for neither performer nor audience. Want more? Better play it again.

Fans of Pavone's 2015 solo album, *Knuckle Under*, will find themselves in familiar territory here—not just both albums' brevity, but their penchant for minimalism and repetition, their meditatively drawn-out tones, their judiciously employed effects, their rustic folk leanings.

Silent Spills begins with an exercise in entropy. Two steadily oscillating notes establish a sense of stability and order, Pavone sawing with concentration, and the music develops with a simple logic as a new pair of notes is introduced in predictable alternation with the original two. But almost imperceptibly Pavone's playing accelerates until the sound begins to splinter with distortion, eventually breaking the whole thing down. The piece gathers itself back together again with another oscillation, this time between two sets of distorted pulses, as if we were hearing the initial two notes slowed way down, or through some type of auditory microscope.

"Shed the Themes of Broken Records" colors the album's introspection with a touch of melancholy. In the first part of the track Pavone makes excellent use of silence, razoring a note or two into the air and letting the sound decay. Later come rich folk-tinged drones, played with feeling and almost mistakable for harmonica. Actual breath—not just metaphorical or simulated—plays a part in the third track, "Dawn to Dark," where Pavone sings in unison with stop-start pizzicato: "far from the sea / not near the sky / the sun gets weaker / and the earth dies..." Yet the song's delicate humanness—built of fingers and a small voice—then gives way to the mechanical, with relatively harsh high-pitched distortion that's carried through into "Ugly Story," the shortest and humblest of the five tracks.

"Seeded and Seated" closes *Silent Spills* on a more buoyant note, combining and recapitulating Pavone's various approaches throughout the record, from the opening pizzicato arpeggios and strumming to the serrated drones that overtake them to the silence that utterly blooms between the album's final notes.

the pulse

CHATTANOOGA, TN ARTS - ENTERTAINMENT - CULTURE

Jessica Pavone morphs, Bob Drake surprises.

Jessica Pavone

Knuckle Under

(Taiga)

Violist Jessica Pavone's new vinyl-only album *Knuckle Under* is characterized by its methods and attitudes, and not by any genre. If listeners are to use the album's title as a clue regarding the proceedings, to "knuckle under" means to submit to someone; in this case, Pavone extrudes wild sounds, using distortion and effects-manipulation, from pure notes, yet she demonstrates an acute control over them, reining them with the illusion of freedom.

In certain examples, Pavone will use an individual sonic idea—a motif or even a single note—and take it as far as it can possibly go.

On the opening and closing tracks, "But Not Here" and "Plutonium," Pavone plays double-stops with the lower notes being open-string pedal notes and the upper notes mapping out melodies, exploring sound contours that favor bow pressure and attacks over intonation to be expressive. On "But Not Here," the dissolving digital-delay echoes transform gradually into oppressive, sharp-edged blocks, as if pumped out of industrial machinery; "Plutonium" forks into a different path, with Pavone's sung notes being mirrored by distorted pizzicato.

"Salute Flying" begins with another simple premise, using the repetition of two notes separated by an octave, with the second note being a crystalline harmonic; gradually, more sustain is added so that the note feeds back, almost to the point of no return on a slippery slope—however, Pavone holds the notes on a leash, directing their dissolutions precisely.

Later, her manipulated viola notes sound like electric piano tones, slipping into mysterious softness before an abrasive sonic scouring, contrasted with interjections in the form of untreated notes.

The album's title track uses a crackling ball of squeaky harmonics with forceful, percussive bowing, joined by a ghostly chorus fog, with the marshaled chaos resembling supernatural fiddling. While methodical, the fascinating *Knuckle Under* never sounds clinical, and although Pavone keeps everything in line seemingly systematically, the original tones morph, bubble and char from the applied heat, assuming new shadowy lives of their own.



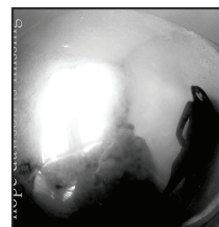
Dear Abbey: The Music of Abbey Lincoln
Teri Roiger (Inner Circle)
by Joel Roberts

Abbey Lincoln is nearly alone among the late great divas of jazz singing - the ones instantly identifiable by first name alone, like Ella, Sarah, Billie, Carmen, Betty - in that she wrote much of her own material and left behind as rich a legacy as a composer as she did as a vocalist. There have been a handful of recorded tributes to this much beloved artist but not many, which is a surprise given what a fertile ground for exploration and improvisation her compositions provide.

Veteran vocalist Teri Roiger answers the call to keep Lincoln's music alive on her new CD, which revisits 13 of Lincoln's best tunes, including "Wholly Earth", "Bird Alone" and "You Gotta Pay the Band". It is an obviously heartfelt effort that's helped immeasurably by Roiger's impressive musicianship and a vocal timbre that in many ways recalls Lincoln's. Like Lincoln and their mutual influence Billie Holiday, Roiger doesn't have a big voice, but she makes up for it with a delicate, sultry, sure-handed touch and a flair for drama. Also like Lincoln, she surrounds herself with superb sidemen and gives them plenty of room to roam. Her fine quartet includes husband John Menegon (bass), Frank Kimbrough (piano) and drummer Steve Williams. Alto master Greg Osby appears as a guest soloist on five tunes and guitarist Mark Dziuba on one.

If there's a complaint here, it's that the arrangements, while handled expertly and enthusiastically, stick pretty close to Lincoln's originals, a shame given the opportunities her open-ended tunes provide for fresh treatments. Still, this is an enjoyable hour spent with a delightful vocalist and some wonderful tunes. Kudos to Roiger for doing her part to ensure that Lincoln's still underappreciated songs earn their rightful place in the jazz canon.

For more information, visit innercirclemusic.net. This project is at Dizzy's Club Sep. 3rd. See Calendar.



Hope Dawson is Missing
Jessica Pavone (Tzadik)
by Sean Fizzell

Widely known for her work with composer Anthony Braxton and longstanding duet with guitarist Mary Halvorson, violist Jessica Pavone seeks boundary-blurring music. In her own projects, she's infused folk-like song forms into classical chamber settings and improvising groups. On her Tzadik debut *Songs of Synastry and Solitude*, Pavone composed for a string quartet with bass supplanting 2nd violin.

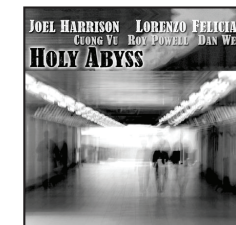
On the followup *Hope Dawson is Missing*, she augments the chamber group with Halvorson's guitar, Tomas Fujiwara's drums and Emily Manzo's voice. The song-cycle explores contradictions - deprivation and nourishment, demolition and reconstruction, falsity and truth - and the music similarly works in

contrasts of instrumentation and style with dramatic results.

The prelude "Hope" boasts the Toomai String Quartet introducing recurring melodic motifs, including one spurred by insistent but spare percussion. A clipped guitar phrase opens "Providence", as bass and percussion pulse sweeping string movements and short call-and-responses for Manzo to sing against. Her almost liturgical delivery on "Dawn to Dark" matches the strings' emotively soaring highs and rumbling lows, suggesting both spiritual and physical longing. "If You Can't", an uncomplicated song interestingly introduced by plucked strings, gains momentum as the voice mirrors the string cadence and percussion punctuates the phrases.

Halvorson provides textural relief after classical strings open "Plutonium", as bass and cello pulsate with supporting minimalist touches. Fujiwara's unwavering percussion paces "Jump to the Thunder" as the piece morphs into a colloquial song from its classically structured beginning and he powers the concluding "And at Last" with a forceful and melodic solo before a dynamic middle passage of guitar and cropped pizzicato retorts recede to a moody atmosphere and brief vocal denouement. A phrase from "Deconstruction, Reconstruction" may best summarize Pavone's maturation as a composer: "confidence results in migration from what's familiar."

For more information, visit tzadik.com. This project is at I-Beam Sep. 4th. See Calendar.



Holy Abyss
Joel Harrison/Lorenzo Feliciati (Cuneiform)
by Ken Waxman

There's a thin line between low-key and listless and sadly much of this otherwise lyrical CD crosses it many times. For some reason the five seasoned musicians decided to pitch most of this program of all-originals at tempos that range from gloomy to lugubrious, only occasionally lively enough to sound cheerful.

Certainly the talent is here. New York-based session co-leader guitarist Joel Harrison, whose previous CDs have featured the likes of saxophonist Dave Liebman, manages to work in trebly tone distortions and spidery reverb in some of his solos, but otherwise stays more linear than a super highway. Italian bassist Lorenzo Feliciati, the session's co-leader, was influenced by King Crimson and worked with saxophonist Bob Mintzer, but his writing on three tracks seems more noteworthy than his stolid playing. British keyboardist Roy Powell, who now lives in Norway, has played with figures such as guitarist Terje Rypdal and manages to inhabit many piano styles from supper-club comping to bop chording. Drummer Dan Weiss, sideman of choice for saxist David Binney among others, plays spaciouly and rhythmically, but never seems to dig into the material. Probably the biggest surprise is Seattle-based trumpeter Cuong Vu, whose harmonizing with Harrison provides many of the CDs defining moments, closer to his discreet contributions to guitarist Pat Metheny's group.

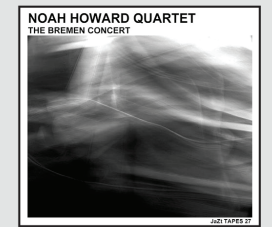
That said the trumpeter's best soloing occurs on the Harrison-composed "North Wind (Mistral)", where his flutter-tonguing and vibrating triplets join Feliciati's slap bass and the composer's rock-tinged licks to toughen the initially moderate theme. "Small Table Rules", composed by the bassist, is a spirited

stand-out, although its soul-jazz vibe sounds a bit strained. With the chromatic line pushed along by Weiss' rolls and pops, the piece gains in intensity as it careens forward, goosed by sustained triplets from Vu, until Harrison's steady blues progression calms things down to eventual diminuendo.

With artful composing and playing evident at points, *Holy Abyss* isn't in a complete void. But next time out more variety in the writing and liveliness in its execution could move the band closer to producing something (w)holly satisfying.

For more information, visit cuneiformrecords.com. Harrison is at ShapeShifter Lab Sep. 6th. See Calendar.

UNEARTHED GEM



The Bremen Concert
Noah Howard Quartet (JazT TAPES)
by Robert Iannapolo

By 1975, when this concert was recorded, alto saxophonist Noah Howard had already logged six years as an expatriate, residing in France. In the late '60s, as a member of the second wave of free jazzers, with a brace of ESP albums to his credit but with dwindling live venue options and very little press, he had little choice but to leave the US to find an audience. It's somewhat surprising since, among the vanguardists, his style was more accessible than most. His tone was lyrical but with a tart edge and his solos could pack heat. But he was just as likely to bask in a lyrical glow as he was to scream his piece.

Recordings from this time period featured a quartet that usually included pianist Takashi Kako, bassist Kent Carter and drummer Oliver Johnson. *The Bremen Concert* is with that group and is the third recording to be released from Howard's European tour of early 1975. (*Berlin Concert* and *In Europe, Vol. 1* are the others.) One has to question this release, however. It's a copy of a radio broadcast and the sound is less than optimal. The first minute is practically inaudible due to what sounds like a crinkled tape. When it does finally settle into what seems like a reasonable sound, the bass is boomy and overpowering, the drums are muffled and the piano is underrecorded. Additionally songs and musicians are mislabeled.

But all that said, this is a prime Noah Howard performance. The opening track, listed as "Ole Negro", a Noah Howard tune found on his *Black Ark*, has nothing to do with what is played. It's actually Coltrane's "Ole", a piece Howard frequently used as an opener around this time. It's a stirring performance and Howard tears through it with verve. "Pearl Stream" has a skeletal theme that is quickly discarded as the band navigates into free territory. Howard's passionate, searing sound spits out shredding lines while Kako's peculiar mix of Cecil Taylor and McCoy Tyner scurries after him. "New Arrival" is a feature for Howard's limpid lyricism and "Ziki" closes the set with Coltrane-ish meditative calm. *The Bremen Concert* is as good as any example of Howard's music of this period. Just wish it sounded better.

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Jessica Pavone - Hope Dawson is Missing

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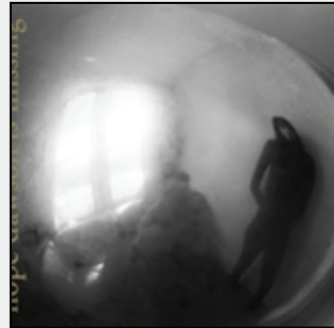
Dusted Reviews

Artist: Jessica Pavone

Album: Hope Dawson is Missing

Label: Tzadik

Review date: Aug. 9, 2012



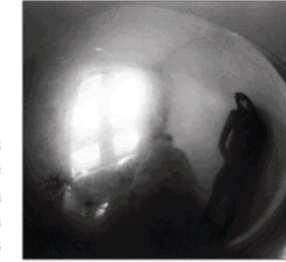
Jessica Pavone's last album for Tzadik, *Songs of Synastry and Solitude*, got its name from a Leonard Cohen album. This time around, Pavone's inspiration came her own discography. *Hope Dawson is Missing* is titled after its predecessor's final track, but there's more than nomenclature that links the two. The lean and unfussy style of composition that marked *Songs...* returns, with one major addition, the voice of Emily Manzo. Pavone maintained that her last album was comprised of songs, and with the introduction of lyrics to the music's lyricism, *Hope Dawson is Missing* bolsters that claim. It's a simple change, but a prominent one, a more concrete communication of some of the themes and emotions that *Songs...* wordlessly suggested.

Hope Dawson is Missing is an album built on timeless things. The forms and melodies of the music repeatedly evoke Early music, and the themes and emotions communicated in the lyrics are no less ancient. This album makes more explicit the rueful melancholy at which its predecessor sometimes hinted, an often somber exploration of those things that not a single one of us can escape. Despite her subject matter, Pavone isn't one for tearjerkers, and only rarely writes with any tinge of schmaltz. Songs often move in an unhurried and stately manner, with Manzo's voice matching the strings and percussion in straightforward approach and beauty. Her airy vocals aren't immediately striking, but they add a welcome human element to music that's almost flawlessly fluid and precise.

Augmenting the Toomai String Quartet with Mary Halverson's guitar and a rhythm section isn't as bold a move as adding a singer, but they're also part of what makes *Hope Dawson is Missing* more than simply *Songs...* redux. Pavone probably could have scaled back the change a bit; the percussion in "And at Last" too often runs roughshod over the strings, and I wish *Hope* wasn't the only instrumental on the disc, as the music can sometimes feel too subservient to the vocals. Still, it'll take much more to strip Pavone's music of its allure. She remains a composer whose pop sensibilities and classical training mesh naturally and assuredly, a writer of unique songs that aren't too flashy or tricky, just simply well done.

By Adam Strohm

Jessica Pavone
Hope Dawson Is Missing
TZADIK 7727
★★★★½



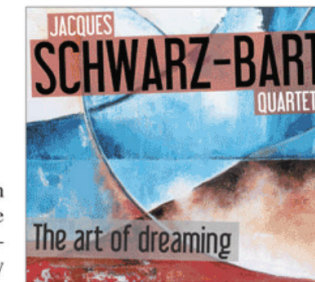
Although violist Jessica Pavone is well known as a genre-averse improviser, working regularly with Anthony Braxton, Mary Halvorson and Taylor Ho Bynum, she's always devoted a good chunk of time to composition, and her latest effort continues a steady growth curve. *Hope Dawson Is Missing* is a song cycle that warps lines between classical chamber music and pop like its instrumental predecessor *Songs Of Synastry And Solitude*, but this time out Pavone has written lyrics to seven of the eight pieces, abstractly addressing what she calls "these of destruction and rebuilding, migration, falsities and undeniable truths."

Those words are voiced by Emily Manzo, a superb classical pianist who also works in art-pop, who brings a measured approach to the composer's melodies. Pavone's writing for the Toomai String Quartet, on the other hand, is formal and accomplished, yet it flows from pop-like accessibility to rich contrapuntal explication. Guitarist Mary Halvorson and drummer Tomas Fujiwara complement those sounds, underlining certain pieces with rhythmic firepower, contrasting colors and added heft, yet they never upstage the string core of the performances.

—Peter Margasak

Hope Dawson Is Missing: Hope; Providence; Dawn To Dark; If You Can't; Plutonium; Jump To The Thunder; Deconstruction; Reconstruction; And At Last. (40:19)
Personnel: Pala Garcia, violin; Erin Wright, viola; John Popham, cello; Andrew Roitstein, double bass; Mary Halvorson, guitar; Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Emily Manzo, voice.
Ordering info: tzadik.com

Jacques Schwarz-Bart
Quartet
The Art Of Dreaming
NAIVE 64006
★★★★½



This is the domestic release of an album that bowed in Europe earlier this year. A better-than-respectable *tour de force* by French tenor saxophonist Jacques Schwarz-Bart, it serves as his introduction to the American audience.

Schwarz-Bart is featured with a capably pliant rhythm section of pianist Baptiste Trotignon, bassist Thomas Bramerie and drummer Hans Van Oosterhout. Schwarz-Bart conceived the 10 pieces as a musical rumination on the meaning and methodology of mystic writer Carlos Casteneda, for which he can be forgiven. By any other name, this is a tenor workout by a journeyman player on modal and free frameworks. At his best, Schwarz-Bart taps into a fluid source of inspiration that has him navigating loose and lucid. But as a saxophone showcase, the rewarding trio gets short-changed.

Schwarz-Bart has an airy but full-bodied sound. He's an expressionist, but even though the structures are minimal, he's no abstractionist. Lyricism abounds, and he spins melody like thread out of a sewing machine. Bar lines are disregarded, and Schwarz-Bart's liquid overblowing acts as graceful accenting. He plays pretty—pure and simple.

Trotignon delivers such tantalizing piano work—like the unaccompanied chorus on "DLO Pann"—that his playing begs for more exposure. His few features serve as much-needed relief from the near-overload of Schwarz-Bart's rich yet high-caloric improvisation.

—Kirk Silsbee

The Art Of Dreaming: Blues Jonjon; It's Pair; Peyoff; Moods; Now; Lullaby From Atlantis; Massasoit; DLO Penn; Emile; Voir. (58:16)
Personnel: Jacques Schwarz-Bart, tenor saxophone; Baptiste Trotignon, piano; Thomas Bramerie, bass; Hans Van Oosterhout, drums.
Ordering info: aztecmusic.com

Sean Wayland
Click Track Jazz: Slave To The Machine Volumes 1 And 2
SEED MUSIC RECORDS 019
★★★★



Australian pianist Sean Wayland has released nearly a record a year since 2000, but the sprawling *Click Track Jazz* shows Wayland at his most prolific. The two discs meld straightforward acoustic with fusion, a combination that turns out to be more of a peaceful coexistence than a battle. While much of the EWI-driven sounds harken back to 1980s experimentation, the amalgamation works well in this context.

Volume one opens with the effervescent "Belt Parkway," a tune that sets the tone for the rest of the collection. With a bit of help—Wayland showcases no less than four drummers, four bassists, three guitarists and a host of other musicians—he lays down broad acoustic piano chords to propel the frantic, busy EWI melody, then taking the mantle for an acoustic piano solo, his style evolving from hammered single notes to glistening runs. When Mark Shim returns for his EWI solo, this technological leap forward seems fitting. Wayland composed most of the tunes, the majority of which are frenzied, bubbly flits of modern jazz, branching out to many different musical avenues in one song. The general pace makes tunes that don't follow this driving idea stand out. In "Devotional," Wayland puts vocalist Kristen Baradi amid a sensitive mixture of acoustic piano and electronic whirs and beeps.

—Jon Ross

Click Track Jazz: Slave To The Machine Volumes 1 And 2: Disc One: Belt Parkway; Boxing Day; Conglomerate; Funky Sesame Street; Marshmallows; Devotional; Compression Is Your Friend; I Still Got It; Ditty; Oh Yeah; Flypaper; Solo Piece; China Takes Over; Stop I Want To Get Off (71:04). Disc Two: 2012; Neu Neu; Giant Steps; Waiting For The Computer To Take Over; The Show Must Go On; QY70; Rotovibe; Technocalypse; Mark Is Enough; Special When Lit; Superarc; Neu Neu Blow; I'll Face Ya (62:18).
Personnel: Sean Wayland, piano, keyboards; Kristen Baradi, vocals; Mark Shim, EWI; Donny McCaslin, alto saxophone; Orlando Leffemng, Matt Penman, Jeff Hanley, Matt Cohesy, bass; Michael Voleanu, Wayne Krantz, James Muller, Nate Wood, guitar; Mark Guiliana, Keith Carlock, Jochen Rueckert, Andrew Gander, drums.
Ordering info: seanwayland.com

Roni Ben-Hur/
Santi Debriano
Our Thing
MOTEMA MUSIC 95
★★★★



Guitarist Roni Ben-Hur, bassist Santi Debriano and drummer Duduka Da Fonseca have worked and played together for years, but *Our Thing* marks their first recording as a group. Mesmerizing and softly propulsive, the disc speaks to a unique combination of creative concepts and influences. From the artists' respective globe-spanning backgrounds to their individual interests, which have ranged from samba to bop to free-jazz and beyond, the lineup alone promises well-executed, left-of-center ideas. Although the project was born out of collaborations between Ben-Hur and Debriano at an annual jazz camp they co-lead in France, Da Fonseca adds a necessary depth to the group's overall sound. One of his best moments is on the tango "Milonga For Mami," built around a regimented marching drum beat over which various percussive voices shake, rattle and roll in fits and starts, creating multidimensional layers within the song. A long, slow whistle connoting a departing steam train reflects the group's attention to curious, but fitting, details.

—Jennifer Odell

Our Thing: Green Chimneys; Milonga For Mami; Our Thing; Fotografia; Afrosopic; Anna's Dance; Isabella; Earl's Key; Suave; Ela E Carioca; Let's Face The Music And Dance. (56:43)
Personnel: Roni Ben-Hur, guitar; Santi Debriano, bass; Duduka da Fonseca, drums and percussion.
Ordering info: motema.com

MASSIMO RICCI. TOUCHING EXTREMES.

HOME ARCHIVES 2001-2008, WARTS AND ALL CONTACT, INSTRUCTIONS AND FAIR WARNINGS

CRITICISM IN SOUND ART IDEOLOGY OF WASTED TIME OH NO, NOT HIM AGAIN!

JESSICA PAVONE – Hope Dawson Is Missing

BY MASSIMO RICCI JUNE 15, 2012

Tzadik

The inhabitant of diverse compositional and improvisational neighbourhoods, Jessica Pavone has already demonstrated with a preceding solo outing on this label – 2009's *Songs Of Synastry And Solitude* – her ability in turning the basic structure of a song into a charming, occasionally daring orchestration. The eight chapters comprised by this cycle confirm that there is no need to shout to convey the scents of an uneasy reality; refined action by skilled instrumentalists (members of the Toomai String Quintet plus Emily Manzo on voice, Mary Halvorson on guitar and Tomas Fujiwara on percussion) and cryptically incisive lyrics penned by Pavone jointly yield several moments of unpretentious aural gratification, a bit of head scratching and, in general, a sensation of not-completely-solved problem. The same kind of feeling that lingers on when a couple goes through issues generating unrepairable cracks subsequently masked by an apparent normality.

Manzo's singing is not one to fall in love with at first hearing, yet her somewhat doleful delivery ends being almost perfect for the type of vibe that most of this music transmits. Pavone has a way with distributing information across a score in singular fashion: where a listener would expect a vocal detail to appear, something else occurs instead. And that particular word may perhaps be pronounced a minute later, in improbable sections of the piece. Some of the tunes mirror the composer's interest in contemporary chamber designs, whereas others retain a visible semblance of harmonic simplicity and might be thought as the reason behind a slight inhomogeneity in certain parts of the album if compared with the classiest contrapuntal conceptions. At any rate, it's all part of a coherent entirety: human frailty, guilty silences, solitary ruminations and sudden brief openings to light. Pavone's vision manages to reflect all of the above, and a silly list of strengths and weaknesses would totally miss the point of a work that is unlikely to strike a superficial audience, but contains numerous well-disguised hints to potentially life-wrecking matters. The delightful acoustic dress does help in swallowing those bitter pills of truth.



EN ARTICULOS

JESSICA PAVONE, DRAMÁTICAS ESCENAS TEATRALES DIBUJADAS SOBRE PENTAGRAMAS

Por: admin 18 May, 2012 | 0 Comentarios



Review por [Francisco Javier Rodríguez](#)

Jessica Pavone es una joven músico/compositora estadounidense que derrocha carisma y talento a través de su arte en instrumentos de cuerda como el violín, viola y cello, entre otros. Creció en Queens y desde hace unos años asentó base en Brooklyn, tiempo en el que se ha convertido en pieza fundamental del engranaje que da forma a la actual camada virtuosa de la nueva escena neoyorkina.

Siempre inserta en atmósferas de música melódica, composiciones minimalistas, folk, y también las cuotas necesarias de improvisación, ha plasmado su trabajo en diversos proyectos como The Thirteenth Assembly, The Pavones, Normal Love, Quotidian, entre otros. Ha construido una exquisita discografía que la acredita como líder (y co-líder) en más de 15 álbumes entre los cuales figuran sus duetos junto a Jackson Moore, discos solistas, y lanzamientos con la guitarrista y gran compañera musical Mary Halvorson (MH Trio, Trevor Dunn's Trio Convulsant). De forma complementaria también es necesario comentar que su rol de colaboradora junto a Jeremiah Cymerman,

Matthew Welch, Anthony Braxton, y The New York Underground Orchestra, ha dado frutos en más de 25 placas... cifras que sin dudas la catapultan a un lugar privilegiado a sus 35 años de edad.

Luego de debutar en la casa disquera de **John Zorn** en 2009 con su disco "*Songs of Synastry and Solitude*" (TZ-7719), **Jessica Pavone** vuelve este 2012 con su segundo álbum para la serie *Oracles*, "**Hope Dawson is Missing**", un cuadro de 8 composiciones que entregan exactos 40 minutos de música docta fuertemente ligada al concepto de lo que conocemos como música de cámara. Con la colaboración de **Toomai String Quintet**, **Mary Halvorson**, **Tomas Fujiwara** y las voces de **Emily Manzo**, la placa se vuelve un torrente de perfección y formalidad, generadora de fuertes escenas teatrales que agradecemos con total regocijo.

La instrumental **Hope** da el inicio con un escalofriante juego de cuerdas que -complementado con las percusiones de Fujiwara- dan el toque exacto de drama que envuelve la obra, un inicio que permite contextualizar el sonido que libera el pentagrama de la hábil Jessica en su permanente hábitat de exactitud melódica. La guitarra de Halvorson introduce a **Providence**, una hermosa canción que reluce con la inserción vocal de líricas escritas con la inspiración de la cordura y prudencia en el actuar del momento. La solemnidad de **Dawn to Dark** es impresionante, y dándole el título del track de mayor duración al disco, nos entrega un lapso de introspección con un frío sonar que grafica perfectamente la orientación del concepto invernal al cual se refiere la letra...sin dudas un trozo de gélida penumbra que te ancla en lo más profundo de la escena que construyó Pavone.

If You Can't es una pieza de pizzicateo constante que adorna muy bien el segmento medio de la entrega, con una particularidad de quedar grabada inmediatamente por su ritmo noble y de toques medievales. Le sigue **Plutonium**, una composición netamente de inspiración clásica que con su configuración exclusiva de cuerdas le da un reposo absoluto a "*Hope Dawson is Missing*", un espacio que invita a la meditación y reflexión con el vibrar de su esencia. **Jump The Thunder** cae en gracia y vislumbra la capacidad de Pavone en escribir piezas tan diversas, ésta podría ser parte de una sutil danza para elegantes teatros, de belleza única comienza a dar salida al disco con sus arreglos en percusión emulando tamborilleros sobre caballos galopantes.

La temática itinerante de la migración inspira a **Deconstruction, Reconstruction**, un denso y lento momento que da el pase para que explote Fujiwara en una intro de batería para llegar a la pieza folk del álbum, **And at Last** se titula el track que cierra con un juego de duetos entre platillos y enérgicos violines que tributan la transformación de la muerte expresada con la sutil voz de Emily. Un cierre dramático a más no poder.

"*Hope Dawson is Missing*" será lo próximo de la serie *Oracles* en **Tzadik**, álbum que estará disponible desde el 25 de Junio a manos de Jessica Pavone. **Te invitamos a experimentar el placer de oír esta hermosa obra cargada de dramatismo y formalidad, compuesta por una verdadera experta en la recreación de imágenes teatrales a través de su música.**