

the instrumentation here. As Keller states in his notes on the website, this piece is a mixture of funk and Middle Eastern styles juxtaposed in ways that are very natural and flowing. The marimba and bass clarinet solos sound improvised, played over a repetitive vamp.

"No Return" features a "jazz-head-like" melody accompanied by walking bass and brushes on drumset. A bass solo follows that is very much in a jazz vein. The marimba "comps" with Thelonius Monk-like chords, and the bass clarinet improvises a solo. Then there is a section that is prearranged (shout chorus?) that leads back to the original material, yet with more improvisation, culminating in a short ritardando.

Another piece with a Middle Eastern feel is "The Astounding Eyes of Rita." Again, we hear the bass clarinet combined with the marimba, accompanied with bass and hand drums. Shiner McGuire plays a passionate, improvised marimba solo that draws the listener into the atmosphere of something like an evening in Israel under the stars.

"Sky Sketches" adds Mark Collins on flugelhorn. Another Middle Eastern feel is created here, and the flugelhorn fits in nicely as the tune morphs into a style where the distinction between jazz and the original Middle Eastern becomes blurred. "Healing" on the other hand, has a pseudo reggae feel that also seems to blend naturally into the Eastern groove. In this way, the music is delightfully noncommittal. The listener is taken on a musical journey that can lead almost anywhere.

It's not very often that I listen to a new CD that makes me want to immediately play the whole recording again. The textures are unique and captivating. The woody timbre of bass clarinet, especially when it is combined with the marimba and bass, is a sound I want to hear more of. Check out this recording; it's a refreshing experience.

—Tom Morgan

Latin Jazz Project Vol. 1

Ray Obiedo

Self-released

Latin Jazz Project Vol. 1 by guitarist/composer Ray Obiedo is an infectious rhythmic Latin-jazz CD. Most of the pieces featured are Latin-jazz classics, such as "Caravan" (Juan Tizol/Duke Ellington), "St. Thomas" (Sonny Rollins), "Pieadillo" (Tito Puente), "Vera Cruz" (Milton Nascimento), and "Sabor" (João Donato). Obiedo contributes several original compositions, but the clarity and quality with which the arrangements were done calls a Clare Fischer homage to my ear. Engaged for this project were a host of outstanding musicians including percussionists Karl Perazzo (congas, timbales), Peter Escovedo (bongos, timbales, percussion), Michael Spiro (congas, bongos, percussion), Phil Hawkins (steel pans), Sheila E. (congas), Paul van Wageningen (drumset), and ten-

or saxophonist Bob Mintzer. The rhythmic styles range from Cuban and Brazilian to Caribbean. Although this recording doesn't break any new ground for the genre, listeners will find Obiedo's work solidly grounded in the Latin-jazz tradition in the styles of Clare Fischer and Tito Puente, making this CD worthy of attention.

—N. Scott Robinson

Loci

Sean Hamilton

Self-released

Sean Hamilton is a percussionist, composer, and improviser whose interests primarily lie in the conjunctions of new music, electroacoustic music, free improvisation, experimental music, and interdisciplinary projects. In his own words, this CD is a representation of an ongoing series of improvised compositions of varying length for solo drumset and electronics exploring the possibilities of the improvised music and real-time electronics. While there are sonic differences between the eight tracks, the unifying factor is that they all fall into the category of free improvisation.

With the exception of a 13-minute selection, each track lasts between three and seven minutes, and each contains some sort of acoustic drumset sounds combined with electronic interactions. These electronic elements usually consist of static, blips, and garbled sweeps and sirens, as well as manipulated sine waves. A couple of the tracks showcase some decent performance chops, with regards to having fast hands and feet coordination on a drumset, even if without a steady pulse and rhythmic scheme.

While Hamilton is clearly committed to the music and the performance aspects of real-time electronic interaction, a 47-minute recording of this type of performance is best suited for archiving the act of exploration. Hamilton demonstrates wonderful improvisation skills, as well as the ability to produce a creative electronic soundscape. In terms of this CD, it's important to note that performance nuances of abstract art like this translate much better when experienced live.

—Joshua D Smith

MeiaMeia: New Music for Berimbau

Projeto Arcomusical

Innova

In a breathtakingly stunning effort, the Projeto Arcomusical ensemble has crafted a work of such unique beauty, I find it difficult to focus my thoughts amidst a flood of adjectives that spring to mind in response to the auditory joyful discovery this CD provides. *MeiaMeia: New Music for Berimbau* brings the Afro-Brazilian berimbau out of its position as a traditional accompanying instrument for Capoeira and its use as an exotic solo instrument for jazz percussionists to an ensemble instrument truly capable of compositional depth and performative expression.

Having studied with Naná Vasconcelos,

the foremost master of the berimbau as a creative instrument beyond Brazilian tradition, I used to think myself as fairly experienced with berimbau creativity. Now I find myself both pleasantly surprised and excited by the work of Dr. Gregory Beyer, Alexis C. Lamb, and the rest of the Projeto Arcomusical ensemble (Kyle Flens, Chris Mrofcza, Abby Rehard, Alexy Rolfe, and Daniel Eastwood). This work breaks new ground beyond the foundational artists who first pioneered the berimbau as a creative solo instrument in jazz contexts: Vasconcelos, Aíro Moreira, and Okay Temiz, among others. The instruments used are specially made tunable berimbau, and the ensemble's precision performances throughout make it difficult at times to not hear this sextet ensemble as a single performer. The compositions explore minimalistic processes, harmonic development, and rhythmic and timbral contrast in such a way that I found myself drawn to each composition for its artistic merit and expressiveness.

This CD features 12 exquisite solo and ensemble compositions, equally attractive packaging/notes, and recording quality for the audiophile (with the Arcomusical website offering scores for 34 berimbau compositions). The compositions draw on diverse influences, such as Berimbau Quintet, No. 1, "Solkattu," which draws on South Indian rhythmic practice, Steve Reich, and Béla Bartók. Berimbau Sextet, No. 1, "Kora," draws on Mandinka kora practice of Mali. Berimbau Trio, No. 1, "Harmonia," involves a 12-bar structure in which no harmony is repeated. The solo "Um só," the only piece to include the traditional caxixi, was inspired by Brazilian Capoeira.

Projeto Arcomusical takes the berimbau way beyond Brazil in its path toward new musical expression while assuring the musical bow's zenithal connectivity to its roots in both Brazil and Sub-Saharan Africa. I find myself without hesitation in offering Projeto Arcomusical the highest recommendation I could humbly fathom.

—N. Scott Robinson

Music in Me

Little Johnny Rivero

Truth Recordings Collective

Web: [sample recordings](#)

Music in Me by Puerto Rican percussionist Little Johnny Rivero is an excellent tribute to tradition and variation in contemporary Latin-jazz. This CD is brimming with rhythmic and stylistic variety including jazz mambo à la Tito Puente on "Little Giants," folklorica on "Africa My Land," and hard bop swinging jazz on "Bombazul," to a Latin-funk jam band on "Afro-Rykan Thoughts."

Rivero's gifted hands are skillfully applied on a variety of percussion instruments throughout the recording including congas, bongos, timbales, West African talking drums, udu, bomba, cajon, bata, and shekere. Percussive assistance is provided by Anthony Carillo, Luisito Quintero,

and Ludwig Afonso (drumset). The CD is nicely packaged with liberal notes and credits on all the pieces. With over 100 recordings to his credit, there is nothing "Little" about Rivero's musicianship and career as this CD is exemplary of, which offers a "lot" of ingenious contemporary Latin-jazz.

—N. Scott Robinson

Thoughts

Electrum Duo

Self-released

Thoughts is a well-crafted debut from the Electrum Duo (Sophia Anastasia, flute, and Ralph Sorrentino, percussion). With 18 tracks, there is plenty of music to showcase this duo's versatility and excellence in performance. The recording quality is superb, and each player delivers thoughtful, musical, and sensitive performances throughout an array of repertoire.

Percussionist Sorrentino covers each piece with aplomb. Whether he is coloring the atmosphere created by flutist Anastasia, as on Alan Chan's "Rituals," or leading the duo on Payton MacDonald's "Devil Dance," his playing is always superb, musical, and appropriate.

Highlights of the disc include the aforementioned "Devil Dance," as well as Neil Deponte's "Thoughts," showcasing Sorrentino's abilities on vibraphone, and Karl Ahrednt's "Seven Modal Minatures," in which Sorrentino emphasizes a different instrument (glockenspiel, woodblocks, drumset, vibraphone) in each movement.

My only criticism of the disc is the relative shortness of each track. While there is a lot of music on the disc, much of it clocks at around five minutes or less. While it is only personal preference, this reviewer would like to hear more of the exemplary playing of Sorrentino and Anastasia in more substantial repertoire.

—Justin Alexander

Two Hands One Heart

Arthur Lipner

Malletworks

This two-CD set is a "best of" compilation by vibraphone/marimba soloist and composer Arthur Lipner. Spanning his creative output from 1990–2015, each disc contains 12 tracks, with one dedicated to acoustic performances and the other to electric. Lipner employs a host of notable musicians, such as Bob Mintzer, Glen Velez, Fred Hersch, Jerome Harris, Vic Juris, Nelson Faria, Harvie S., Joel Rosenblatt, and Tommy Igoe.

The most impressive aspect of Lipner's compositions and performances is his ability to move seamlessly between a variety of styles, often in a way that makes his music accessible to the casual listener while also landing solidly on the radar of serious musicians and critics. The first disc opens with his solo composition "Crystal Mallet," a straight-eighth-note showpiece with a "new agey" feel. This is contrasted by the delicate ballad "This is What the Silence