



Leap Day Trio Live At The Café Bohemia

GIANT STEP ARTS

★★★★★

Recorded on Feb. 28 and Feb. 29, 2020, the gutsy, glorious album *Live At The Café Bohemia* pays homage to a storied New York club with daring, absorbing music. This is the evolution of exploratory stuff the Café Bohemia was known for when it was Charlie Parker's hang and Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers recorded there.

Parsing each of its nine tunes would diminish the satisfaction this long recording provides. Hear drummer Matt Wilson's "Dewey Spirit,"

his homage to mentor Dewey Redman; "Ghost Town," featuring saxophonist Jeff Lederer at his most lyrical; and "Gospel Flowers," a showcase for Lederer's command of breath.

The best example of this trio's ferocity may be "Strival For Survival." Lederer launches it with coiled, thick runs, ascending to supersonic embouchure-stretching before it begins its descent. Wilson and Jones provide the necessary rumble. Even silence is dramatic here.

The album closes with the burly "For Friends," an occasion for Lederer to evoke the great tenor blowers of the past. Circular breathing, overblowing, honking — he integrates them all into his expressions. There's plenty of yawp and skronk, like his inspiration Albert Ayler used to display. At the same time, a bluesy sensibility grounds this group. No matter how "out" the improvisation, the Leap Day Trio finds its way home.

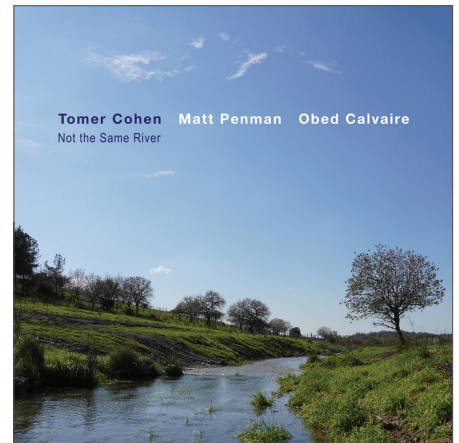
The Greenwich Village club reopened four months before this recording after being closed for 60 years. This album, beautifully produced by the band and engineer Jimmy Katz, seats you at a choice Café Bohemia table.

—Carlo Wolff

Live At The Café Bohemia: Dewey Spirit; Leap Of Faith; The Dream Weaver; Ghost Town; Strival For Survival; Leap Leap; Wind Spirit; Gospel Flowers; For Friends. (68:27)

Personnel: Mimi Jones, bass; Jeff Lederer, tenor saxophone; Matt Wilson, drums.

Ordering info: giantsteparts.org



Tomer Cohen Not The Same River

HYPNOTE

★★★★½

Although Israeli guitarist Tomer Cohen's debut album is out on the Belgian Hypnote label, certain ECM-ish qualities and resonances are hard to avoid. Among those echoes are a minimalist typeface and a nature-themed photograph gracing the cover — and, more importantly, musical echoes of such classic ECM guitar trio models as the Gateway albums (with John Abercrombie, Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette) and Pat Metheny's own debut album, *Bright Size Life*, the renewably important influence in modern jazz guitar trio mode.

Raised on a kibbutz in Israel, Cohen, now all of 25, is now very much plugged into life in New York, studying at the New School and circulating with high-level Gotham musicians, including his superb trio-mates here: the poetic and flexible drummer Obed Calvaire and nimble bassist Matt Penman.

Folk elements and Middle Eastern/Israeli musical characters variously interact with Cohen's jazz foundation, as heard on the tender title track opening the set, the odd-metered "Connecting Dots" and the alternately pensive (with shades of Jim Hall and Gabor Szabo) and energetic trio discourse of "Empty?"

The quirky rhythmic puzzle in the 7/4 "Probably More Than Two" trips up foursquare groove analytics, but nonetheless contains an essential quality of moody introspection and searching harmonic voice heard more directly in the lilting "Sunrise" and the balladic finale, "First Laps." Cohen's first lap, solo discography-wise, makes a strong artistic statement, but one that also entails critical restraint and an organic melodic impulse at the center of his musical being. He's one to watch and listen for.

—Josef Woodard

Not The Same River: Not The Same River; Connecting Dots; Hithadshut (Regeneration); Empty?; Pastures; Sunrise; Probably More Than Two; First Laps. (48:21)

Personnel: Tomer Cohen, guitar; Matt Penman, bass; Obed Calvaire, drums.

Ordering info: hypnoterecords.com

Margherita Fava Tatatu

INDEPENDENT RELEASE

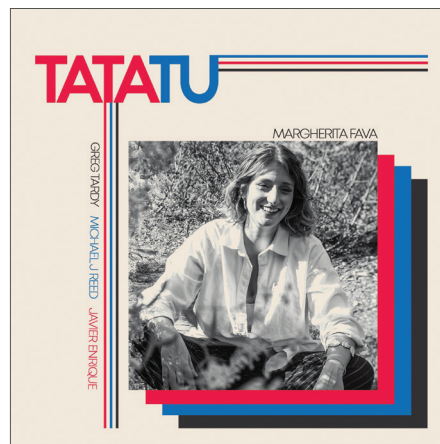
★★★★★

Italy native Margherita Fava's debut album features refreshing cover versions of Thelonious Monk's "Rhythm-A-Ning" and the Kern-Hammerstein chestnut "All The Things You Are," but it's her six originals that make the album memorable. The form of this piano quartet is conventional (no surprise instruments or effects here), but the music feels fresh and new.

Driven by Fava's piano, with Greg Tardy on flute-like clarinet, "Bird Of Passage" is as much a rhythm section showcase as a solo display. The tune ebbs and flows, the players circling each other to rope in the listener. The song is partially composed, largely improvised and altogether seamless.

The multi-part, multi-mood "Resilience" finds Tardy on tenor saxophone, laying the foundation as Fava churns below him. Different rhythm lines add to the drama, and Fava tickles the tune to a close.

"Restless Mind" is the most abstract and daring track on this edgy, confident debut. Fava leverages her left hand in her solo, a gem of purpose and strength. It's enthralling to hear her



pace Reed and Enrique, quite the energy source themselves. Fava grounds the tune as Tardy spins lines of varying lengths and intensities.

"Hard To Say" begins with a circular, repeated Fava figure bedding Tardy's clarinet in a tune that unfolds like a conversation. A very pretty way to end such a well-rounded album. Don't miss Mark Stryker's succinct and insightful liner notes.

—Carlo Wolff

Tatatu: Face Off; Tidal Waves; Rhythm-A-Ning; Bird Of Passage; Resilience; All The Things You Are; Restless Mind; Hard To Say. (45:40)

Personnel: Javier Enrique, bass; Margherita Fava, piano; Michael J. Reed, drums; Greg Tardy, tenor saxophone, clarinet.

Ordering info: margheritafava.com