

"Afro Blue", Bud Powell's "Hallucinations", Dizzy Gillespie's "Bebop") and soul classics ("Betcha By Golly Wow", "What's Going On", "Hi-Heel Sneakers"), plus the title track, a Zaccai original. Zaccai Curtis's style on the Fender Rhodes is fluid but careful, giving each note its own space, almost like Ray Charles. On piano, his articulation is just as crisp, giving even the high-speed bebop of "Hallucinations" the feel of a recital. Blues, funk, Latin jazz and bop: this group essay it all in a pleasingly open-minded fashion.

### Ernest Dawkins New Horizons Ensemble featuring Vijay Iyer

#### *Transient Takes*

Dawk Publishing CD

Alto and tenor saxophonist Ernest Dawkins, bassist Junius Paul and drummer Isiah Spencer are joined by pianist Vijay Iyer for a largely improvised day in the studio – the pieces appear in the order they were tracked; this is a document more than a carefully shaped artistic statement. Nevertheless, it has a cohesion that comes from a shared language. Much of the time, this is bluesy, shoulder-swinging Chicago jazz, with Dawkins spooling out long honking phrases atop bouncing, strutting rhythms from Paul and Spencer; all Iyer has to do to fit in is strike some two-fisted chords and take equally energetic solos. There are also passages of shrieking post-Ayler free jazz, which the pianist is equally capable of handling; he gets his Bobby Few on without hesitation.

### Dead Neanderthals

#### *Craters*

Consoling Sounds CD/DL

The Dutch sax/drums duo Dead Neanderthals have evolved a lot since their early digital-only EPs, which were heavily indebted to the blast beats and screeches of John Zorn's Painkiller. *Craters*, like their 2015 epic *Endless Voids*, is an exploration of ominous atmospheres and extreme high and low frequencies. Guest bassist Maxime Petit is the dominant instrumental voice, unleashing floor-shaking chords and tremblers of feedback and distortion. Saxophonist Otto Kokke seems to be working through electronics, as he's barely discernible from the rumbles, crackles and piercing sine wave-like tones drummer René Aquarius (who barely touches the kit here) is creating via synth. This single 36 minute track rolls over your skull like a tank, leaving you breathless and unsettled but weirdly euphoric when it finally ends.

### Chris Greene Quartet

#### *Boundary Issues*

Single Malt CD/DL

Chicago based saxophonist Chris Greene's quartet have been together since 2005, with only one line-up change. Their music ranges from hardcore post-bop blowouts to genre-crossing mutations (their version of Horace Silver's "Nica's Dream" somehow survives being set to a reggae beat). They also interpret the Duke Ellington ballad "Day Dream", Kenny Kirkland's "Dienda", and "Summer Song" by smooth fusion act The Yellowjackets, but their originals give the

strongest sense of them as creative voices. Drummer Steve Corley takes a restrained but still house rocking solo on the forceful "Thunder Snow"; on "Blues For Dr Fear" bassist Marc Piane switches to electric, and guest guitarist Isiah Sharkey adds a barroom sting, as Greene walks the bar with swagger and an audible grin.

### Daniel Herskedal

#### *The Roc*

Edition CD/DL

This Norwegian quintet make unique, energetic music, far from the restrained chamber jazz their country is known for. Herskedal plays tuba and bass trumpet, and is joined by violist Bergmund Waal Skaslien, cellist Svante Henryson, pianist Eylvolf Dale and percussionist (not drummer) Helge Andreas Norbakken. Herskedal's horn work on the title track has a fluttering breathiness that almost brings to mind Arve Henriksen, but behind him the strings are surging, with Norbakken's percussion a whirl of handclaps and small slapping drums, almost North African in its trance-like feel. Dale's piano moves to the fore on the slower pieces like "Eternal Sunshine Creates A Desert", adding lyricism and melancholy. Skaslien's solo on "Kurd, Bayat, Nahawand To Kurd" has an exotic romanticism, while the tuba burps out bass.

### Theo Hill

#### *Promethean*

Posi-Tone CD/DL

Pianist Theo Hill entered the Posi-Tone Records universe as a member of trombonist David Gibson's band. Now he's making his studio debut as a leader, with Yasushi Nakamura on bass and Mark Whitfield Jr on drums. It's a cautious effort, paying tribute to many of his influences through its inclusion of tunes by Duke Pearson, Herbie Hancock, Kenny Kirkland (who gets the nod twice), Chick Corea and Bobby Timmons. The only original piece "The Phoenix" comes at the disc's exact midpoint, and it's a burner, allowing Whitfield in particular to go wild as Hill strikes heavy left hand chords and eruptions in right hand extrapolations that recall McCoy Tyner and Vince Guaraldi in equal measure. Here's hoping he writes more of the music next time.

### Tetraptych

Red Piano CD/DL

A tetraptych is a set of four paintings, exhibited together though each panel could stand on its own. It's a decent metaphor for a jazz quartet, and pianist Bert Seager, tenor saxophonist Hery Paz, bassist Max Ridley and drummer Dor Herskovits frequently leave each other entirely alone to work in parallel rather than together. But these men have found a way to maintain cohesion while constantly embarking on individual journeys. Paz more than others demands that traditional quartet dynamics be observed. His solos have an intensity reminiscent of Coltrane in 1964, but a bite (particularly on the ballad intro to "Star Wise") that can recall Ayler's work from the same year. □

Nick Cain on bleak seaside recordings, glacially arcing echo chamber drones, and a giddy robot fantasia

### Dave Clarkson

#### *A Red Guide To The Coastal Quicksands Of The British Isles*

Linear Obsessional Recordings CD

The primary source material for each of this album's five tracks is field recordings from coastal areas and beaches around the UK – the Wirral, Morecambe Bay and Land's End among others. It's safe to assume that the recordings were made in bleak, windswept winter conditions rather than at the peak of the holiday season, given the register of unease and disquiet which dominates. Their sense of location is diluted, however, through processing and counterpointed with instrumental detailing.

### Kymatik & Midwitch Cuckoos

#### *Anthropological Constants*

Paradigm LP

A pleasingly cryptic backwards glance from loose North London collective Kymatik, though it remains unclear who Midwitch Cuckoos are or what their relationship to Kymatik might be. The 19 minute "Dentists For Mice" first appeared on the *Dar-As-Sulh Volume 1* CD (Paradigm, 2001) and initially blends electronics and processed field recordings into a hazy backdrop. The piece becomes more structured as it proceeds, inexorably building a churning rhythmic momentum. "Ardèche Morning" is a bafflingly pleasant interlude, an apparently straight field recording of a rural idyll. Elsewhere is found non-specific littoral activity, extended abstraction, serrated electronic noise and throbbing frequencies.

### Nickolas Mohanna

#### *Chroma*

Karlrecords DL/LP

New York based composer Nickolas Mohanna's *Chroma* packs plenty of action and not a little bombast into a running time of not much over half an hour. Interspersed across its eight tracks are a sequence of widescreen Fennesz-like cacophonies, which bury melodies in multiple layers of distraction and distortion to then reveal their latent chromatic richness through gradually mutating textural contrast. Certain tracks segue together neatly to generate structural connections – the shuddering phased rhythms of "Blue Curve"

absorb tone kreee and upper-register drone, elements that "Mask I" blends together into a dense barrage.

### Muyassar Kurdi

#### *Live In Berlin*

Pan Y Rosas Discos DL

This digital release documents a concise though unmemorable Berlin gig from the New York based improviser. Kurdi's practice would seem to be based at least partly in performance, and minus any physical or visual context, *Live In Berlin* falls rather flat. Kurdi favours 1960s vintage electronic effects with a pronounced analogue patina. She combines a steady sequence of cross-spectrum frequency switches, whooshy oscillations and blustery abstractions to intermittent bursts of vocal ululations, snatches of text and vaguely ritualistic howls and chants. The piece matures as Kurdi introduces a degree of electronic layering and counterpoint, but eventually sputters out, leaving the impression that she has more to offer than this.

### Omit

#### *Negative Pulse Logic*

End Of The Alphabet DL/MC

Like many Omit releases, *Negative Pulse Logic* is based on a clearly modular scheme. A finite number of core sounds are forced to share space: glacially arcing echo chamber drones are counterpointed with slow, stuttering rhythmic patterns. These elements co-exist uneasily, agreeing to disagree and shying away from direct contact, as though propelled by a force of reverse magnetism. Structural relationships change subtly and variations on this theme and its balance of power are methodically explored. Rogue features sporadically appear and then make a hasty exit. *Negative Pulse Logic* opens itself to the possibilities of rhythmic interplay, though as its title implies, these are desiccated, etiolated rhythms, drained of any real impetus to movement.

### Yatta

#### *Spirit Said Yes! (Deluxe Edition)*

Purple Tape Pedigree DL/MC

Yatta Zoker is based in New York, but grew up in Houston, Texas, and is of Sierra Leonean descent. This debut gathers a clutch of her "digipoesms" – free-associative songforms that address themselves to topics both modern and perennial: belonging and exile, independence and digital connection. Zoker's almost ballad-like vocal delivery set against unpredictable arrangements, which bulge excitedly with sudden instrumental incident – bursts of percussion, shards of guitar, flashes of violin – and shoot off in unexpected directions. Characterful interludes punctuate proceedings – a giddy robot fantasia ("Cyborg"), a respectful rendering of "Ain't Misbehavin'", and "We Never Went To Church", which finds space for noisy industrial blasts and choral vocals. Also included is a recording of a February live performance, which finds Zoker appropriating pop lyrics and extemporising adventurously to the accompaniment of vocal and rhythmic loops. □