



Song Yi Jeon/ Vinicius Gomes

Home

GREENLEAF MUSIC

★★★★½

On “Eleven Houses,” the opening track of *Home*, an altogether luminous and deeply musical collaboration between vocalist Song Yi Jeon and guitarist Vinicius Gomes, the varied and evolving terrain of the tune hints at the beauties and challenges to come on the album. On the Gomes original, a sweet melody line, underscored by Gomes’ shifting harmonic base, segues into an improvisatory free zone

Patricia Brennan

More Touch

PYROCLASTIC

★★★★½

More Touch is Patricia Brennan’s second solo album, and her first as a bandleader. It advances her individual approaches to both mallet instrumental technique and composition.

A veteran of work with Michael Formanek, John Hollenbeck, Vijay Iyer, and Mary Halvorson, Brennan plays both vibraphone and marimba. Her use of effects pedals imbues her playing with a slippery quality that bears a striking tonal similarity to Halvorson’s guitar sound. Brennan twists notes into bent and flickering forms. As heard on during the onrushing opening and midsession meltdown of “El Nuahalli (The Shadow Soul),” this can be woozily psychedelic, but it’s not a mere novelty. Rather, Brennan’s use of technology extends the sound of her vibes beyond the wave-like decay one usually associates with the instrument, placing both clarity and disorientation within her compositional reach.

The percussion-heavy configuration of Brennan’s quartet emulates Cuban and Mexican precedents, which she learned firsthand growing up in Veracruz, Mexico. But the episodic structures, understated melodies and

before locking into an intricate and serpentine unison line, returning to the resolving theme, with a gentle smile.

Consider the song a prelude to a musical feast.

Home, released on Dave Douglas’ Greenleaf Music label, glows from within and impresses on multiple levels. A powerful empathetic link binds the Brazilian-born, New York-based Gomes and Korean, Swiss-based vocalist Jeon — a virtuoso blessed with glorious tone and phrasing — as they explore a near-perfect example of a duet project. Highlights among original material includes Gomes’ impressionistic “Flow” and Jeon’s introspective “Expecting Spring.” These weave naturally with such selective covers as Keith Jarrett’s ballad “Prism.”

Gomes switches from the standard Brazilian tool of fingerpicked classical guitar to pick-driven fat-body electric guitar only once, for a captivating version of “A Timeless Place,” veteran singer Norma Winstone’s lyrical version of Jimmy Rowle’s moving and intricate classic “The Peacocks.” Jeon’s radiant takes one of the song’s finest interpretations to date.

—Josef Woodard

Home: Eleven Houses; Dancing Stars; Prism; Expecting Spring; Albany; Milonga Gris; A Lonesome Place; A Timeless Place; Niliopolitano. (49:27)

Personnel: Song Yi Jeon, voice; Vinicius Gomes, acoustic and electric guitar.

Ordering info: greenleafmusic.com



windows for improvisation within her compositions draw more from her classical training and jazz practice; even when she uses a Cuban rhythm as the foundation of “Square Bimagic,” her music does not sound particularly folkloric. Rather, the vibes and bass turn a son vamp into a platform for exchanges between drums and hand drums that stray far from that idiom.

—Bill Meyer

More Touch: Unquiet Respect; More Touch; Space For Hour; El Nahualli (The Shadow Soul); The Woman Who Weeps; Square Bimagic; Convergences; Robbin; Sizigia (Szyzygy); And There Was Light. (70:45)

Personnel: Patricia Brennan, vibraphone with electronics, marimba; Kim Cass, bass; Marcus Gilmore, drums; Mauricio Herrera, percussion.

Ordering info: patriciabrennanpyroclastic.bandcamp.com



Nicholas Payton

The Couch Sessions

SMOKE SESSIONS

★★★★½

Nicholas Payton emerges from the pandemic blur with creative energy to spare and attributes we’ve come to expect; chops and taste as one of his generation’s finer trumpeters, gestures of contextual/semantical rebellion and ample respect for titans in the jazz pantheon. (A caveat: Payton maintains his stern advocacy against the j-word, as reminded by a new version of his “Jazz Is A Four-Letter Word.”)

Payton literally checks in with heroes, flying in interwoven spoken-word testimonials from such artists as Geri Allen, Keith Jarrett, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock and Max Roach. From the purely musical angle, *The Couch Sessions* boasts the potent rhythm section of Buster Williams and Lenny White on bass and drums, with Payton eloquently completing the sonic canvas on keyboards and horn.

Although the smoky voice of Miles Davis is missing here, his presence and influence is embedded in multiple ways, not limited to the potent imprint of Davis’ touch and attitude on the horn.

Payton draws attention to Davis’ landmark mid-’60s quintet, with commentaries from Shorter and Hancock. Musically, Payton serves up affectionate, personalized takes on classic from Davis’ undervalued gem of an album *Nefertiti*, Shorter’s “Pinocchio” and a groove/Rhodes-lined redux of “Fall,” as well as Hancock’s title cut from *The Sorcerer*, in fervent, full swing.

Payton also tips his respectful hat to important women in jazz who have passed in recent years, framing the sequence: Geri Allen’s “Feed The Fire” opens the set, closing with with “From A Flicker To A Flame.”

—Josef Woodard

The Couch Sessions: Feed The Fire; Bust-a-Move; Blossom; Pinocchio; His Name Is Lenny; Bleep’s Blues; Along Came Betty; Fall; Cristina; The Sorcerer; Jazz Is A Four-Letter Word; From A Flicker To A Flame ... (for Meghan Stabile). (1:14:11)

Personnel: Nicholas Payton, trumpet, piano, Rhodes, clavinet; Buster Williams, bass; Lenny White, drums.

Ordering info: smokesessionsrecords.com