



Monk Restrung
Freddie Bryant (s/r)
by Joel Roberts

Freddie Bryant has made a name for himself over the past two decades as a highly skilled and versatile guitarist who can play equally well in a variety of jazz and non-jazz contexts: classical, AfroCaribbean, world music, you name it, often combining several genres at once, as he does with his international-flavored group Kaleidoscope.

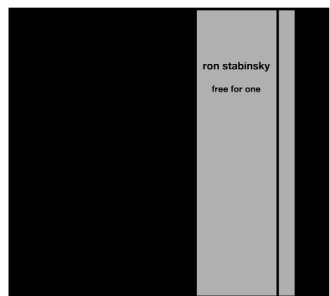
This new release finds Bryant in an unusually (for him) straightahead setting, covering the music of Thelonious Monk. Recorded in 2005 and inexplicably unreleased until now, the album grew out of Bryant's role in former Monk drummer Ben Riley's Monk Legacy Septet and includes a dozen classic Monk titles, along with a pair of Monk-inspired Bryant originals. Most tracks feature the guitarist in a finely honed, hard-hitting bebop trio with bassist Greg Ryan and drummer Willard Dyson.

Bryant's virtuosity is on display throughout, whether romping through the fast-paced tropical notes of his own "Samba Para Monk" or digging into the deep blues of "Misterioso". The trio is particularly successful at navigating the thorny lines of "Brilliant Corners", one of Monk's most difficult tunes. While the songs are familiar, Bryant, playing electric, nylon and 12-string guitars, finds fresh avenues to explore in Monk's quirky, often unpredictable compositions.

In addition to the trio selections, the album pairs Bryant in duos with some of his esteemed guitar brethren. He's matched with swing titan Howard Alden for an exquisite take on the ballad "Pannonica" and with New York stalwart Peter Bernstein for an equally gorgeous reading of "Round Midnight" on which Bryant shows off some of his impressive classical technique. Romero Lubambo joins Bryant for dazzling Brazilian excursions on "Monk's Mood" and "Just You, Just Me".

Though reaching the public more than a decade late, *Monk Restrung* is sure to be welcomed as a treat by Monk fans and guitar fans alike.

For more information, visit freddiebryant.com. This project is at Dizzy's Club Nov. 28th. See Calendar.



Free For One
Ron Stabinsky (Hot Cup)
by Stuart Broomer

Pianist Ron Stabinsky has been first an adjunct and now a regular member of Moppa Elliott's Mostly Other People Do the Killing, in the process demonstrating the ability to simulate Jelly Roll Morton (*Red Hot*), replicate Bill Evans and Wynton Kelly (*Blue*) as well as cover a broad contemporary stylistic range (*Mauch Chunk*). Stabinsky's debut as a leader, however, is distinctly personal, a series of solo improvisations.

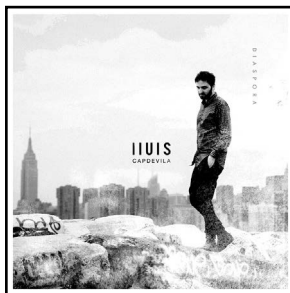
It's in the nature of the instrument's lineage that

the history of jazz piano is also a history of the merger of jazz and specifically 'classical' elements, whether it is Tatum's adventures in the repertoire (Chopin, Dvořák, Massenet), Powell's variations ("Bud on Bach") or Bill Evans' importation of Eastern European modernist harmony. Stabinsky continues what has become a long line: he has touch, technique and harmonic breadth contributing to a genuinely personal synthesis, contrasting polyrhythmic and polytonal complexities with intense single-note lines, spare, moody harmonies and occasional punchy trebles.

Each piece is a probe into both the impulses of the moment and an extended investigation. The opening "...After It's Over" floats between Scriabin and blues, individual phrases alternating consonant sunlight and dissonant knots at once emotional and harmonic; the brief "31" and "For Reel" are very different explosions, the former bright, the latter contrasting spinning repetition with pointillism. The increasingly spacious runs of "Viral Inflection" link the cutting-edge precision of Sonny Clark and that of early Cecil Taylor, suggesting rare attention to the occult history of great jazz piano. "Gone Song" is a somber meditation moving toward flickering light. In the lengthy "Not Long Now / Long Now", Stabinsky manages both frequent shifts in density and continuously patterned development in a piece that at times suggest a kind of high modernist, atonal stride, at others rumination. The final "Once, But Again" is a luminous, welling ballad.

Stabinsky shows a continuous creative engagement with his materials, alive to the possibilities of sonority, inflection and the instrument's fresh suggestions. *Free For One* is a remarkable debut.

For more information, visit hotcuprecords.com. This project is at Roulette Nov. 15th. See Calendar.



Diaspora
Lluís Capdevila (s/r)
by Donald Elfman

Pianist Lluís Capdevila moved to New York from his native Spain in 2007 and was inspired to create this new album based on what he felt about that transition and what had become of his generation. The moods are nostalgic and melancholy yet hopeful, sad yet also playful. It's an absolutely lovely display of the glories of a piano trio as Capdevila joins forces with bassist Petros Klampanis and drummer Luca Santaniello for a set of the pianist's originals and a delightful version of a Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart gem.

Gentle repeated chords introduce "Long Time No See", a bittersweet hymn about the act of missing. Capdevila is a smart and sensitive composer and those qualities inform his playing as well. After the captivating theme, he takes a solo that both pushes him forward into a new world but also continues to celebrate the emotion inherent in the title and main theme. The tune is brought to its close with Capdevila playing those chords accompanied by some gently propulsive drum fills, then back to that main theme. Some of the same longing is back in "Leaving Spain". The melodic line is smart modern jazz tinged by a touch of home. Klampanis plays the theme with Capdevila on the second go-round and he and Santaniello grace all that happens in the tune – another intimate and intriguing solo by the pianist and then trio improvisation reminding us that these artists are

playing as three-in-one. Rodgers-Hart's "My Romance" is perfect in this setting as Capdevila and his cohorts find mystery and magic going from inward to expansive. Klampanis solos with a great sense of the melody and its possibilities.

Enchanting moments appear throughout – in the syncopated rhythms of "Another Day"; beautifully relaxed swing of "Workshop", which features electric piano and some fine brush work; and very danceable "Cabana Leo", which, like much of this wonderful recording, celebrates both old and new worlds.

For more information, visit lluiscapdevila.com. This project is at Cleopatra's Needle Nov. 18th. See Calendar.

A Lennie Tristano Retrospective
BY BILL STEVENS

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Rose Room / Stompin' At The Savoy / For Francko
Ballade Romanez / Gloria Forever / Waltz For Esben
After You've Gone / Je Suis Seul Ce Soir / How High The Moon
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