

Off the Record



**Renaud Garcia-Fons:
Solo – The Marcevol Concert**

Enja ENJ-9581 2 www.enjarecords.com

★★★★☆

This two-disc set contains a deeply moving performance available both in CD and DVD configurations. Renaud Garcia-Fons has pulled off a tour de force by being both playful and profound. He succeeds in entrancing us by drawing out a wide range of sounds from his instrument, for instance in “Kalimbas,” during which he slips a sheet of paper between the strings, or making use of some electronics elsewhere in the record. As expected from him, references to Andalusian music and Arabic rhythms are present throughout, but the double bassist takes us on many journeys, from the Far West (“Far Ballad”) to Ireland (“Pilgrim”, a show stopper played like a bouncy “reel”). Whether bowing his strings or striking them like a guitar, violin or percussion instrument, sounds gush out and surprise us at almost every turn. Beyond his phenomenal dexterity and accuracy, the exceptionally gifted Renaud Garcia-Fons tops it off with his captivating brand of lyricism and rich melodies. Listen to the CD first before watching the DVD, but the latter will allow you to fully appreciate the gracefulness of the musician and revel in the inspiring surroundings. **AL**

In concert: July 7; Montreal

by **MARC CHÉNARD &
ANNIE LANDREVILLE**

Colin Vallon trio: *Rruga*

ECM 2185 B0015433-02 www.ecmrecords.com

★★★★☆

The title *Rruga* is an Albanian word meaning road. Pianist Colin Vallon takes us on a familiar one, trodden down for years by Keith Jarrett (for his lyricism) and Jan Garbarek (a pioneer in the blending of Nordic folk music with jazz). But this should not surprise anyone because both those artists are at the heart of the “ECM sound.” Colin Vallon, born in Switzerland in 1980, does not renege his predecessor but is also a stylist of our time. Indeed, he is as modern as Brad Mehldau, whose influence is obvious on the record, this trio’s third release and first on this German imprint. While the pianist is the group’s main composer, he lets his sidemen contribute pieces of their own. Inspired by various ethnic musics, from Turkey, Bulgaria and Caucasia, the musicians offer us evocative melodies, often heartwrenching, sometimes sensual, or both at the same time. Drummer Samuel Rohrer’s inventiveness is particularly interesting, at once churning and shimmering. Of equal calibre, Patrice Moret is a very skilled bassist, even when bowing. All three players understand how to establish moods that enable them to tell a story. Case in point is the gradual crescendo that unfolds in “Eyjafjallajökul,” named after that notorious Icelandic volcano that erupted in 2010. Here we have the embodiment of a musical project in which an apparent and sometimes meditative calmness thinly veils a rumbling volcano below. **AL**

In concert: Vancouver, July 1; Montreal, July 4; Quebec City, July 5

**Médéric Collignon – Jus de Bocse:
Shangri-Tunkashi-La**

Plus loin music PL4522 www.plusloin.net

★★★★☆

Light years away from the pristine calmness of the previous album, the “Shangri-Tunkashi-La” project from cornettist Médéric Collignon is anything but relaxing. This French musician’s latest album at the helm of his quartet

Jus de Bocse dives head-first into Miles Davis’ electric period of the 1960s-70s. Listeners are treated to emblematic period pieces like “Bitches Brew,” “Ife” (just killing!), “Mademoiselle Mabry,” “Interlude” and to cap things off, a cover of Led Zepplin’s “Kashmir,” this one being the weakest track of an album that is at once heavy and powerful, playful and jubilant. Recorded in 2009, in the wake of a prize granted to him for his previous effort (a re-interpretation of Miles Davis’s take on *Porgy and Bess*), this side is as energetic as it is electric. Médéric Collignon would have it no other way. To tackle this hard-edged and funky repertoire requires a strong character, which the Frenchman surely has, but he does so with meticulousness and daring. This surely explains why this repertoire of the master is one of the least revisited for it is so easy to miss the time-specific nature of the music and fall prey to turning out pale imitations instead. Obviously, it’s hard not to draw comparisons, at least after getting over the first listening experience. True, the melodies are all there, the riffs, chords and overall musical forms, but there are no guitars or saxophones to be heard here, just cornet, Fender Rhodes, bass, drums and, on a few tracks, a complete section of French horns. Simply stunning. **AL**

In concert: Edmonton, June 23; Vancouver, 24; Victoria, 26; Saskatoon, 27; Ottawa, 28; Montreal, 5; Quebec City, 6; Halifax, 7

Han Bennink / Brodie West / Terrie Ex: *Let’s Go*

Terp Records LPT16 As

★★★★☆

There’s no mistaking it: a pianoless trio drops the gloves and goes for it, no holds barred. And this is what the mad Dutch tubman loves the most. Released in vinyl in 2010, but soon to be available in CD for their upcoming Canadian tour, this album pits Bennink with electric guitarist Terrie Ex and Toronto altoist Brodie West. There are but two tracks here, each one clocking in at a little under the 20-minute mark (one per LP side); everyone free associates according to his whims, with an even

