

Goldings Bernstein Stewart *Perpetual Pendulum*

SMOKE SESSIONS

★★★★★

After more than 30 years and a dozen albums together, playing with this much trust and cohesion is strictly second nature to organist Larry Goldings, guitarist Peter Bernstein and drummer Bill Stewart. Their communication skills are so finely honed by now that they are perpetually in sync, whether tackling an intricate head (Wayne Shorter's "United"), swinging lightly and politely in old-school fashion on a standard ("Come Rain Or Come Shine") or

exploring spacier terrain (Stewart's In A Silent Way-inspired "FU Donald," his caustic salute to the former president).

Goldings' "Let's Get Lots" (with allusions to Frank Loesser-Jimmy McHugh's oft-covered "Let's Get Lost") has the organist setting a lush mood while also injecting a touch of playful humor. Stewart's swinging pulse ignites Bernstein's "Little Green Men," which appeared on the trio's 1992 outing *Light Blue* (as The Larry Goldings Trio), while his extended drum solo here is both furious and uncommonly melodic. A polyrhythmic marvel on the kit, Stewart never fails to surprise.

Bernstein, who possesses one of the purest tones in jazz guitar today, carries the melody on Duke Ellington's beautiful ballad "Reflections In D" and the solo guitar intro to John Lewis' gorgeous "Django" with refined delicacy and masterly finesse. Yet, he is very capable of burning a blue streak (Gary Bartz's "Libra") or dealing in bluesy inflections (George Gershwin's "Prelude 2"). Individually, these three musicians are at the top of their respective fields. Together, they have become standard-bearers for the B-3 tradition.

—Bill Milkowski

Perpetual Pendulum: United; Let's Get Lots; Libra; Prelude; FU Donald; Come Rain Or Come Shine; Little Green Men; Reflections In D; Perpetual Pendulum; Lurkers; Django. (64:50)

Personnel: Larry Goldings, organ; Peter Bernstein, guitar; Bill Stewart, drums.

Ordering info: smokesessionsrecords.com



Mostly Other People Do The Killing *Disasters, Vol. 1*

HOT CUP

★★★★★

Disasters, Vol. 1 is an album of swirling trippiness that never loses focus. These tunes are both expansive and lean, with MOPDtK configured as a trio for the second time in this excursion. There's a greater accessibility in this collection of songs, a kind of weird that isn't off-putting or too in-joke as they've been known to be from time to time. They're continuing to innovate on their 12th album while also falling into a pretty good groove for a group of two decades.

"Johnstown" is a 14½-minute epic that darts between concepts and turns on a dime. It's the main culprit of having so many ideas in a song that could be too big for its britches, but this thankfully isn't the case. The other songs named after Pennsylvania towns that underwent assorted disasters are tighter in execution though certainly not in feeling. Moppa Elliott's bass sassily struts on "Exeter," while Ron Stabinsky and Kevin Shea's electronic effects take that strutting to the cosmos, all while Stabinsky is still stolidly playing the melody on the piano and Kevin Shea gets all worked on up the kit, bubbling and fizzing all over the place.

There's just enough skeleton on Elliott's compositions and three guys who have all the right tools to do something interesting without getting in one another's way — as one would expect from a group that has played together in assorted configurations for nearly 20 years — that *Disasters Vol. 1* makes for yet another tremendous album that the jazz world will spend time talking about. It's what people do with MOPDtK albums.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

Disasters, Vol. 1: Three Mile Island; Exeter; Marcus Hook; Wilkes-Barre; Centralia; Johnstown; Boyertown; Dimock. (50:32)

Personnel: Ron Stabinsky, piano, Nord electronics; Moppa Elliott, bass; Kevin Shea, drums, Nord electronics.

Order info: mostlyotherpeopledothe Killing.bandcamp.com

Myra Melford's Fire And Water Quintet *For The Love Of Fire And Water*

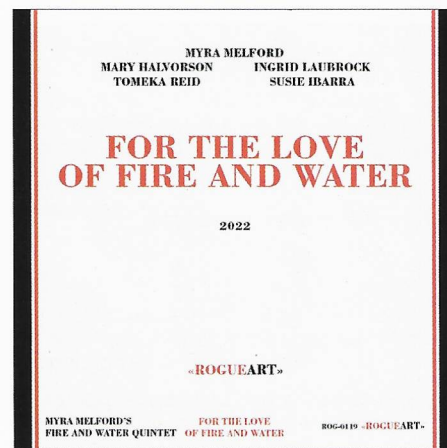
ROGUE ART

★★★★★

The Fire And Water Quintet takes its name from a collection of drawings by the late American artist Cy Twombly, whose gestural art has long inspired pianist Myra Melford. But the group's music is so elemental that it's also tempting to take the name at face value. Perhaps it's best to let both meanings stand.

Melford originally convened the group as one of two new ensembles that she presented during a weeklong residency in 2019 at The Stone in New York. While she knew instantly that she wanted to keep the group going, the pandemic ensured she had plenty of time to think about what she wanted to do with it before she took it into the studio in summer 2021.

The resulting music is expansive, containing both artfully arranged ensemble passages and freeform encounters between a couple players within an album-length suite. The opening movement feels like a translation of vigorous, scrawling motions into sound, with each instrument laying its mark atop another's. But the group turns on a dime to realize an intricate, mobile configuration that twists



sharply drawn lines around Melford's theme.

The performers likewise balance flamboyant, instantly recognizable actions with expressions that are necessary, but not showy. Each player's actions align with the artistic acts and natural phenomena that gave the project its name, which ensures that even the music's stormiest moments feel very much in tune.

—Bill Meyer

For The Love OF Fire And Water: I; II; III; IV; V; VI; VII; VIII; IX; X. (44:14)

Personnel: Myra Melford, piano, melodica; Susie Ibarra, drums, percussion; Ingrid Laubrock, soprano and tenor saxophones; Mary Halvorson, guitar; Tomeka Reid, cello.

Ordering info: roguart.com