Lars Danielsson Liberetto
Echomyr
ACT

★★★★

Echomyr, according to bassist Lars Danielsson, is a neologism for the combination of reverberant sound and soulful depth: music that reflects the 67-year-old Swede's growing interest in expressing human emotion. With a decade of work behind it, his quartet — British guitarist John Parricelli, Martinican pianist Gregory Privat and Swedish drummer Magnus Ostrém — has built the kind of trust needed to express music that delves deeply.

While pieces like "Allen" carry the formality of classical composition, expressed with light-handed drumming and flowing piano, there's an increase in intensity as the piece ends that counteracts the underlying austerity. Ostrém, best known for his work in e.s.t., is particularly flexible in these situations, shifting nimbly between fluid gestures and stadium-level drive.

A trio of other Danielsson compositions — "Supreme," "Ascending" and the title piece — add details with, respectively, Arve Henriksen's electronic trumpet effects, Magnus Lindgren's balletic flute and Carolina Grimne's ethereal English horn. In each case, the leader applies these added voices judiciously, wasting nothing.

Listeners won't mistake Liberetto for a typical American quartet, and may hear echoes of other distinctly "Northern" recordings, notably some by Jan Garbarek. There is asceticism in these compositions, but Danielsson's compositional characteristics are leavened by a popular music sensibility. While there may be tension, and that closing reminder of current world events, emotions are muted and channeled into intensity of purpose. —*James Hale*

Echomyr: Pre Allan; Supreme; Glör; Sensitiva; Ascending; Hinten; Duetting; Echomyr; Presto; Something She Said; Allt Det Du Vill Det Du Vill Det Du Vill; Ascending (Alternate 1); gimber (fil); piano 100, John Parricelli, guitar; Arve Henriksen 03, 73, trumpet; Magnus Lindgren 80, flute, alto flute; Carolina Grimne 88, English horn; Gregory Privat, keyboards; Magnus Ostrém, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: actmusic.com

Álvaro Torres Trio
Mairena
FRESH SOUND NEW TALENT

★★★½

Spanish pianist Álvaro Torres is quite explicit in his connection to flamenco tradition, but as a jazz musician he honors that folk heritage by internalizing its sound and forging something fresh with it.

The pianist lives in New York, where he's built a fruitful bond with bassist John Hébert and drummer Barry Altschul, but he keeps his European connections alive, working closely with the excellent Danish drummer Kresten Osgood, who brings crisp precision, loping drive and time-fracturing energy to this superb live recording taped at gigs in Madrid and Seville in the midst of a 2025 European tour with bassist Masa Kamaguchi. His post-bop chops are clear, but what distinguishes this trio is the halting flow.

The brooding "Calaboxito" was inspired by the legendary flamenco singer Camarón de la Isla, but elsewhere the genre's influence is more oblique, deployed through rhythm and the silences embedded within them.

On these six original tunes Torres builds in pauses and dynamic space, a kind of two-gear rubato that makes the music lurch and stop, with a similar strain of hurtling force that makes its propulsion so exciting and unpredictable.

The melody on "Mairena" unfolds in terse stabs, leaving the rhythm section to chatter quietly between phrases. That method brings a delicious tension to the proceedings, bringing a volatility to a fairly direct post-bop sensibility.

In fact, as tuneful and harmonically sleek as Torres is, it's his sense of time and the rhythmic invention of his phrasing that distinguish his playing here. —*Peter Margasak*

Mairena: Ulum Verdu; Mairena; Calaboxito; Everything I Love; Lisbon Mood; The Good Life; 144:28

Personnel: Álvaro Torres, piano; Masa Kamaguchi, bass; Kresten Osgood, drums.

Ordering info: freshsoundrecords.com

Jeff Parker ETA Ivtet
Happy Today
INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM/NONESUCH

★★★★

Guitarist Jeff Parker's ETA Ivtet with saxophonist Josh Johnson, bassist Anna Butterss and drummer Jay Bellerose has been working together for years in Los Angeles, first at the small room dubbed the Enfield Tennis Academy (a reference to David Foster Wallace's novel *Infinite Jest* and the source of the group's initials) and now at various other intimate venues.

This performance, consisting of two LP-side-long pieces, was recorded and mixed (it almost feels like a bootleg) at Lodge Room in L.A.'s Highland Park neighborhood in August 2025. The musicians were surrounded by a small but enthusiastic audience who can be heard whooping and hollering as the pieces gradually rise from gentle, mantra-like introductions to peaks of ecstatic, tuned-in interplay. The group's music hovers and wavers in a fascinating zone as welcoming to fans of Tony Conrad and Faust's *Outside The Dream Syndicate* or Miles Davis' *In A Silent Way* as the Grateful Dead's *LiveDead* or *Cass's Soon Over Babaloma*. It has some of the qualities of minimalist music — the pieces are built around extremely simple melodies, and it's generally more about gradual extrapolation of a groove than intricate, challenging solos — but it's also very much about the members of the quartet listening carefully to one another and never interrupting or drowning anyone out.

Individual players do seize the spotlight; Parker and Butterss both take conventional solos on "Like Swimwear," and even the typically anti-solo Johnson stretches a little on the title piece. But this is collective music first and foremost. —*Phil Freeman*

Happy Today: Like Swimwear; Happy Today; 144:28

Personnel: Jeff Parker, guitar; Josh Johnson, alto saxophone; Anna Butterss, bass; Jay Bellerose, drums.

Ordering info: intlanthem.bandcamp.com

Nolatet
Somethin' To Relax With
ROYAL POTATO FAMILY

★★★★

The New Orleans-based group's third release, *Somethin' To Relax With*, was actually recorded live at the LowDown in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It has all the technical polish of a studio recording, but the playing here evokes the magic of the small jazz club. The ensemble itself has been playing for many years, anchored by bassist James Singleton and drummer Johnny Vidacovich, who decided that the club in Tulsa would be an apt space to produce a recording. Pianist Brian Haas and vibraphonist and percussionist Mike Dillon round out Nolatet, whose penchant for groove-forward, reflective tunes nevertheless make for engaged listening. Singleton's composition "Doc Richter To You" is a moment where that interplay checks out. It is followed by beautiful playing from Haas that introduces "Black Pencil," which has the feel of a through-composed piece, though its improvisational elements are clear. The arresting two tracks work well as peak and highlight. But these are hardly the only compositions in the six-tune program that will reward re-listening. The title track, a blues, is one of the rare times on the recording where one could hear the audible reactions of the live audience. There remains something relaxing about the driving force of the blues. —*Josh Myers*

Somethin' To Relax With: Switchback; Somethin' To Relax With; Doc Richter To You; Black Pencil; Dizzlin' B; Sunny Hazard; 149:09

Personnel: Johnny Vidacovich, drums; James Singleton, bass; Brian Haas, piano; Mike Dillon, vibraphone, percussion.

Ordering info: royalpotatofamily.com

Zhengtao Pan Jazz Orchestra
Day By Day
OUTSIDE IN

★★★½

Much is afoot on writer/bandleader/conductor Zhengtao Pan's sixth album. A concept piece about a musician's routine life and practice, the set is both diverse (evoking Pan's Chinese heritage on "Childhood," driving hard on the post-bop "Endless Cycle," reinterpreting Ravel's prelude to "The Tomb of Couperin") and complex, with multiple sections and changes of key and rhythmic feel all over the place (though most especially on "Wind Dance"). It could easily be exhausting.

But it isn't. Because within all that ambition, Pan never forgets to hit the plainspoken emotional buttons. The daunting 7/4 of "Liu Yang River" goes down easy in part because its basic ostinato breaks down into two simple three-note phrases, but also because of the wondrous, majestic passages for horn and reed ensembles and solos. Guests acquit themselves well, with Steve Nelson's persistent soprano solo on "Wind Dance" and Sara Gazarek's wordless-but-not-formless vocal on "Aurora" of particular note. Drummer Jared Schonig is a powerhouse across the whole album. Pan's smart writing, though, is the star. —*Michael J. West*

Day By Day: Childhood; Dawn's New Family; Endless Cycle; Wind Dance; The Tomb Of Couperin I; Prelude; Liu Yang River; Aurora; Day By Day; 73:231

Personnel: Zhengtao Pan, conductor; Andrew Gould, Juanito Saus, Sam Dillon, Ryota Sasaki, Andrew Gutauskas, Steve Wilson (5); Hanhna Ri; reeds; Akihiro Kobufukata, John Lake, Sean Tarrene, Shota Yamamoto, Ryan Yoshimoto, Ryan Yoshimoto, Victor Yao, trombones; Peter Kuhl, trumpet; Isaac Ivanhoe, Chen Wang, guitar; Adam Birnbaum, Martha Kato, piano; Edward Perez, Rufus Reid (1), bass; Jared Schonig, drums; Sara Gazarek, vocals 99.

Ordering info: outsidemusic.com

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