



LASZLO GARDONY / CLARITY

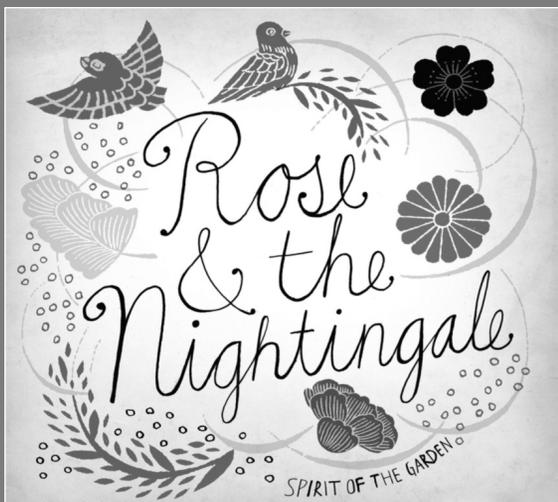
SSC 4014

In Stores May 7

LASZLO GARDONY: Piano

"One morning last October I was at my Berklee studio all by myself. I felt a burst of inspiration so I set up some mics, turned on a recorder and started playing. I kept playing for 49 minutes. When I finished, I was happy with the places I was able to take the music. But at that moment I put away the recording without listening to it. I wondered, after waiting a few months, would the music still speak to me? It did and it was then that I realized I was listening to my next album."

Save the date: Saturday, September 28 @ 8 p.m.
Greenwich House / 46 Barrow Street, NYC



ROSE & THE NIGHTINGALE SPIRIT OF THE GARDEN

SSC 1353

In Stores May 7

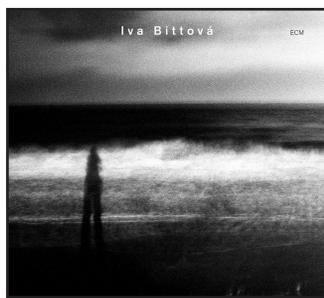
JODY REDHAGE: cello and voice
 SARA CASWELL: violin & mandolin
 LEALA CYR: trumpet & voice
 LAILA BIALI: piano & voice

appearing Wednesday, May 8 @
SubCulture / 45 Bleecker Street, NYC
 Doors 6:30PM / Show 7:30PM



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www.sunnysiderecords.com
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Eponymous Iva Bittová (ECM) by Kurt Gottschalk

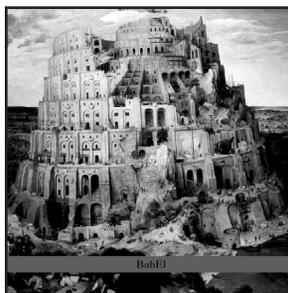
Celebrating the release of her new solo CD at Le Poisson Rouge in late March, violinist/singer Iva Bittová addressed the audience and, almost by way of apology, framed what her record is about. "I cannot promise you any order," she said at the beginning of the set, "because I jump from one to another and I don't know in advance where I'm going."

The 12 tracks don't necessarily seem incomplete but they are something like touchstones, keys to Bittová's enigmatic work. The album opens (as did the concert) with "Fragment I", a delicate piece for voice and kalimba. "Fragment II" is a slight piece centered on simple bow repetitions but then "Fragment III" (employing a Gertrude Stein text) has multiple parts and variations worked into its three and a half minutes. Later, she uses a Chris Cutler lyric and plays a Joaquin Rodrigo song, but the album never comes off as anything but her. What that quality is, however, isn't an easy thing to pin down. Bittová's music can be charming and haunting. It carries a bohemian feel of her Czech home and language and can be childlike, trancelike or mournful. But her own compositions (all but one here) always come off as deeply personal. On the album she rarely works in obvious structures but manages to find paths that seem innate and intuitive.

Live, she played violin melodies so slowly they almost became drones and sang melodies so quickly they were almost rants and then flipped the formula. Bird songs emanated from her strings and her mouth at different times, almost as if they were incidental, flying by outside the window. She captivated the audience in the dark room and commented on how quiet they were as she played one miniature after another. But the full house loudly demanded more when she took a second bow rather than playing more. She conceded with an upbeat, strictly metered piece, almost prog in its attack, twirling and moving backward across the stage as she played and sang, then exiting with a flurry and a shout.

A compact disc can't contain all her allure, but her glow is embedded in the audio, one of her most evocative - and beautifully recorded - solo efforts.

For more information, visit ecmrecords.com



Babel Uri Gurvich (Tzadik) by Terrell Holmes

In The Bible, the city of Babel was where the dissemination of languages and scattering of humanity occurred. The title of alto sax player Uri Gurvich's album *Babel* references this biblical episode ironically. The incident at the tower resulted in confusion and dispersal; Gurvich explores the intertextuality of different musical languages and cultures on this

outstanding album, dancing on their common ground.

Gurvich's songs are inspired by Israeli and North African music but they encompass various styles, genres and moods. The dynamic "Pyramids" is steeped in the hardbop tradition; "Nedudim" is fusion-spiced and has a fierce organ groove of which Jimmy Smith would be proud and the passion of the John Coltrane quartet is at the heart of "Valley of the Kings".

The alto saxophonist and the band can also play with a heartening tenderness, as evinced by the intense, brooding and lovely "Alfombra Magica" and the somber "Hagiga Suite", a beautiful tribute to victims of the Holocaust.

The leader also reinterprets and invigorates folk tunes like the hard-driving "Camelao" and "Scalercia de Oro", the latter embodying the album's spirit most vividly. This traditional wedding song, with lyrics sung in Ladino (Spanish Hebrew), gets a non-traditional reading with a cool rock spin, including keyboard highlights that mimic guitar riffs.

Gurvich takes this musical excursion with a band of keyboard player Leo Genovese, bassist Peter Slavov, drummer Francisco Mela and guest Brahim Fribgane playing oud and additional percussion. Their collective musicianship and on-a-dime interplay is fabulous. But it's Gurvich's energetic leadership that is the driving force throughout *Babel*. His alto is multifaceted, light and clear with an intermittent touch of grittiness. He can be soaring and joyous on uptempo tunes or introspective and melancholy on ballads. *Babel* is elemental and atavistic, yet fresh and innovative, a perfect combination of past and present.

For more information, visit tzadik.com. Gurvich's *Babel* is at The Stone May 14th-19th with guests Dave Douglas, Brahim Fribgane and George Garzone. See Calendar.



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