

Powerful Poetry of Guitar

New Orleans native **Davy Mooney** joins Japanese drummer **Ko Omura** on the co-billed **Benign Strangers** (Sunnyside 1517; 60:04 ★★★★★). With potent contributions from pianist Glenn Zaleski and Mooney's former NOLA colleague, saxophonist John Ellis, the guitarist places his seven-string axe in service of his five originals and five by Omura. Mooney's graceful, metrically shifting "In This Balance Of Time" has him deftly chording in unison with Ellis' tenor saxophone and Zaleski's piano on the lilting head, before he launches into a solo brimming with lyricism and effortless virtuosity. On Omura's "Unimagined Virtues," the drummer switches to tabla, underscoring a sparse dialogue between Ellis and Mooney. The guitarist's cascading runs also come into play on his polyrhythmic "Polly Pulse" and his intricate burner "The Heights." Mooney's superb playing here places him solidly in the ranks of New York's finest young guitarists for sheer chops, conception, tone and taste.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Brazil's **Nelson Veras** joins New York's **Jonathan Kreisberg** on **Kreisberg Meets Veras** (New For Now 0005; 54:47 ★★★★★½). A brilliant blend of warm-toned electric guitar and nylon-string acoustic guitar, this intimate duet ranges from sublime to scintillating on Kreisberg originals. Sparks fly on covers of Thelonious Monk's "Bye-Ya," Charles Mingus' "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" and Chick Corea's spirited jazz waltz "Windows," all underscored by Veras' unerring comping and fueled by Kreisberg's uncanny linear approach. Veras is front-and-center on a beautiful interpretation of Milton Nascimento's "Milagre Dos Piexes," another highlight in this collection of six-string poetry, which stands as Kreisberg's most personal outing since his 2013 solo effort, *One*.

Ordering info: jonathankreisberg.com

German guitarist **Hub Hildenbrand** offers an affecting, cross-cultural blend of atmospheric world jazz on **Nenemia** (Ears Love Music 8023; 71:36 ★★★★★½). A Turkish music scholar, Hildenbrand successfully adapts microtonality to the guitar with adept string bending on "Run" and "Agia Marina," while his open-string droning on "A New Dawn" and "Ariadne's Thread" recalls the early cross-cultural experiments of guitarist Gabor Szabo. Hildebrand is on equal footing here with Greek-born Cretan lyra player Zacharias Spyridakis and Cyprus-born fretless electric bassist Gabriel Karapatakis, who reveals a distinctly Jaco-esque lyricism on the melancholy ballad "A Story From Now."

Ordering info: earslovemusic.de



Nelson Veras (left) and Jonathan Kreisberg

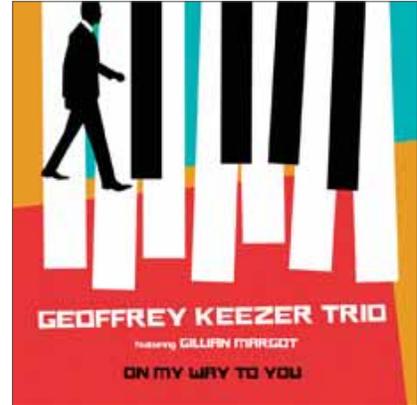
On transplanted Frenchman **Jean Chaumont's** debut as a leader, **The Beauty Of Differences** (Misfitme Music RJ02/CDJC771; 48:24 ★★★★★), he joins a crew of formidable players on the New York scene, including drummer Rudy Royston, whose precision playing elevates the proceedings. The guitarist alternates between steel-string acoustic and warmed-toned electric on the uplifting Metheny-influenced opener, "Renewed Perspective," then showcases his fleet-fingered fretboard flights on the dynamic, harmonically sophisticated "Audrey's Code" and the aggressively swinging "PPCB," each propelled by Royston's crisp attack and intense fills. "For Each One Of Them" opens with uncommon delicacy, before shifting mid-song to a blistering fusion romp that has the guitarist exchanging distortion-laced eights with pianist Michael Bond and tenorist Sam Sadigursky, before Royston erupts for a show-stopping drum solo.

Ordering info: jeanchaumont.bandcamp.com

Veteran Pete McCann summons monstrous chops, while revealing a few iconic influences along the way on his versatile **Pay For It On The Other Side** (McCannic Music 1001; 59:19 ★★★★★½). With a stellar crew of New Yorkers (alto saxophonist John O'Gallagher, keyboardist Henry Hey, bassist Matt Clohesy, drummer Mark Ferber), McCann dips into his Jone Scofield bag on the funky-bluesy second line number "Mud Flap," summons up touches of Allan Holdsworth's stunning legato approach on the Indian-influenced "Nikhil" and John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu-esque arpeggiations on "Polygons." The clavinet-fueled "Conventional Wisdom" sounds like an outtake from Tony Williams Lifetime's *Believe It*. And for sheer uptempo burn, listeners can't do better than the swinging title track.

Ordering info: petemccann.com

DB



Geoffrey Keezer Trio *On My Way to You*

SELF RELEASE

★★★★★

Memo to Geoffrey Keezer: Don't be such a stranger. We all know you haven't been idle since your previous studio album, *Falling Up* (Maxjazz), but that was released 15 years ago.

On My Way To You, then, is overdue and most welcome. It adheres to an old-school model, with bass and drums generally supporting the pianist, rather than assuming equal prominence. That said, bassist Mike Pope and, especially, drummer Lee Pearson are masterful accompanists. "You Stay With Me" is an apt illustration: With a 7/8 intro and middle section bookended by verses and choruses in 4/4, and with chords and melody that skim through these changes without losing momentum or emotion, the drums smooth out, but underscore, the changing meters and lyrical nuances, often busy but never intrusive.

On that track and three others that also feature Gillian Margot's vocals, Keezer's challenging melodies and noteworthy changes blossom within a range that even modestly gifted singers should be able to handle. Margot, though, shows a far rarer talent. Whether wordlessly jamming with Keezer on "Guanajuato" or casting a spell with him on their duo interpretation of "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," in her exquisite timbre and flawless control of vibrato, she complements Keezer's vision perfectly.

Which brings us to the last point. It's such a joy to hear Keezer stretch out on the keys. He swings and flows, he casts familiar tunes in daring new light, sometimes so outside that I'm still trying to hear "All The Things You Are" in his rearrangement. So, I've given up searching and just started listening, as should we all.

—Bob Doerschuk

On My Way To You: These Three Words; You Stay With Me; All The Things You Are/Serpentine Fire; Red Leaf; Brilliant Corners; On My Way To You; May This Be Love; Guanajuato; The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face; Across The Universe/Give Peace A Chance. (63:58)

Personnel: Geoffrey Keezer, piano, keyboards; Mike Pope, bass; Lee Pearson, drums; Gillian Margot, vocals (2, 4, 6, 8, 9).

Ordering info: geoffreykeezer.com