

aggressive, fun and solidly grooving. It is a combination of hardcore/alternative fusion with solid beats and free-form soloing. The “beats” come from a longer-term project between saxophonist Bryan Murray and Lundbom which is forthcoming, but Lundbom was inspired to record live versions of those songs with the Big Five Chord (Lundbom with Jon Irabagon on alto and soprano saxophones, Murray on tenor and balto! saxophones, Moppa Elliott on bass and Dan Monaghan on drums).

Two examples of this album’s range are: *People Be Talking* which features a 6/4 metre propelled by an eccentric bass and drum groove, melodic head, sputtering and energized tenor solo by Murray and then a reverbed, ethereal guitar solo from Lundbom. *Prednisone* is slower with a cautious, crawling melody played in fourths with the saxophones. Justin Wood (a guest “sixth chord”) plays a lyric alto sax solo and then Lundbom finishes with a fuzzed-out guitar displaying very solid fusion chops. None of the tunes end with the traditional recap of the melody; the solo finishes and that’s it. The beats are seriously heavy and the playing is intense.

Ted Parkinson

Weighting Gabriel Zucker

ESP-Disk ESP5027 (gabrielzucker.com)



► Gabriel Zucker is a New York-based composer and pianist who has been creating music which combines elements of contemporary compos-

ition, jazz improvisation and indie band music. He writes and performs for a band he calls The Delegation which has a revolving membership and recently toured Ontario. *Weighting* sounds similar to the music of The Delegation, but it is a specific project based on the novel *The Flamethrowers* by Rachel Kushner. The group comprises Zucker with Tyshawn Sorey (drums), Adam O’Farrill (trumpet) and Eric Trudel (saxophone).

Weighting contains sounds and motifs that unwind narratively in three parts: *Soul*, *Appointments* and *Stones* (each of which has two or three movements). The first movement of *Part 1 – Would It Come Back to You?* – begins with trumpet and saxophone playing lines that are part counterpoint, part call and response; they grow loud, then soft, interspersing flurries of notes with longer tones. The piano and drums enter after the piece is half over, filling out the sound with discordant clusters of notes and drum rolls and then all four players exchange several intense riffs until only the piano is left to calmly introduce the second movement, *The Uselessness of Truth/Not to be Anything*

More. Soon Sorey joins with some bow-on-cymbal work and eventually Trudel plays primarily pads over a soft piano background.

Each of the movements contains contrasting composed sections and some improvised parts which maintain the sense of moving forward to the next idea. Zucker has carved out a unique vision with his music and *Weighting* is an engaging album.

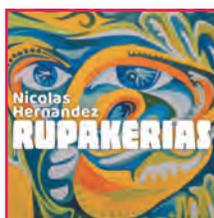
Ted Parkinson

POT POURRI

Rupakarias

Nicolas Hernandez

Independent (nicolashernandez.com)



► Nick Hernandez is a beautiful guitarist who generally keeps a low profile. The Toronto-based musician is an accompanist to flamenco dancers and singers, as

musical director of Esmeralda Enrique’s Spanish Dance Company, and for the last dozen or so years, his main gig has been accompanying another fine guitarist, Jesse Cook. Now he’s stepping into the spotlight somewhat with his second album in 13 years (time flies!), *Rupakerias*.

Filled with original compositions in traditional flamenco song styles like guajiras and tarantas, the album also has some non-traditional elements such as South Asian drums, courtesy of Toronto tabla master Ravi Naipally.

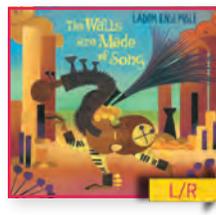
The title of the album is a portmanteau of two song styles – flamenco bulerías and the Indian classical tala, rupak. The song *Rupakerias* is an artful mashup of the two styles with tabla blending beautifully with the guitar and vice versa. The jaleos (calls) and palmas (hand claps) at the end give the song a traditional touch.

The gorgeous *Mociones y Emociones* is one of the more accessible songs on the album. Its Gipsy Kings-esque sound – a rumba style, which I think of as the pop music of the flamenco world due to the group bringing the style to prominence and global airplay back in the 80s – gives it a ring of familiarity.

The fiery bulerías *Recordando a Cesar*, will get your heart started with percussionist Rosendo Chendy León Arocha’s cajón playing and palmas driving the tempo. *Dos Mundos* is a bit of a departure with its searing electric guitar work, courtesy of Kevin Laliberté. *Re Mi Sol* is a sunny and evocative closer to this fine album.

Cathy Riches

The Walls are Made of Song Ladom Ensemble Independent (ladomensemble.com)



► The much-anticipated second release of local instrumental group Ladom Ensemble features tight, infectious, energetic and virtuosic performances

by each member. Pianist/composer/arranger Pouya Hamidi, accordionist Michael Bridge, cellist Beth Silver and percussionist Adam Campbell play both as soloists and ensemble musicians in the wide-ranging musical genres performed.

The four classical arrangements for Ladom show respect for the original work while exploring new sounds in the transcriptions. Of note is the entertaining Brahms’ *Hungarian Dance No.5 in G Minor* featuring rapid accordion melody lines with tremolo bowing, and contrasting dramatic fast and slow sections. The first movement of Bach’s *Keyboard Concerto No.7 in G Minor* is an interesting approach with contrapuntal lines against more modern, almost party-like rhythms. The stylistically accurate *East Coast Medley* featuring the “fiddle” parts on cello, a straightforward rendition of Piazzolla’s *Libertango*, and an orchestral flavoured cover of Radiohead’s *Weird Fishes/Arpeggi* bring welcome sonic contrasts. Vocalist Brenna MacCrimmon sings on two tracks. Her clear, beautiful vocals on the traditional *Azeri Lullaby* are supported by held notes to the final “falling asleep” cello pluck. Three original works are performed. Hamidi’s *The Walls are Made of Song* is a slower tonal soundscape with dramatic build and dynamic contrasts while his *Gift* is more a reflective almost mournful piece. Maziar Heidari’s *Summer in Tehran* features well placed short ideas.

Ladom Ensemble is an exciting, evolving group with musicality, technical acumen and an overwhelming sense of joy in playing.

Tiina Kiik

Risorgimento

Romina Di Gasbarro

Modica Music MM0022 (romina.ca)



► Multitalented Canadian vocalist/composer/instrumentalist Romina Di Gasbarro stretches her musicianship to the limits in her third CD release. She

weaves together ancient and modern music such as folk, jazz, opera, art song and pop, in both Italian and English, to tell old-to-current cultural and political stories. Other than a