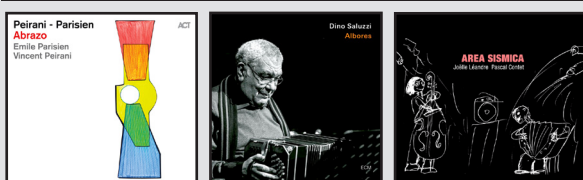


## GLOBE UNITY



**Abrazo**  
**Vincent Peirani/Emile Parisien (ACT Music)**  
**Albores**  
**Dino Saluzzi (ECM)**  
**Area Sismica**  
**Joëlle Léandre/Pascal Contet (We Insist!)**  
 by Tom Greenland

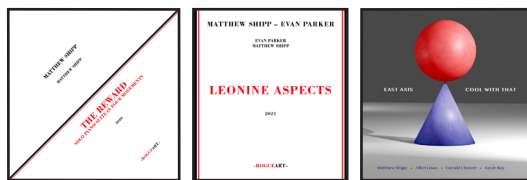
The bellows-driven instrument colloquially known as a squeezebox has many variants, two of which, chromatic button accordion and bandoneón, are considered here for their application to improvisation, the former played by two Frenchmen, Vincent Peirani and Pascal Contet, the latter by Argentinean Dino Saluzzi.

Peirani and soprano saxophonist Émile Parisien have developed close-knit musical chemistry from the thousand-plus gigs they've logged over the last decade. *Abrazo* is their second duet album, a tribute to tango, but only in the sense that the genre serves as a jumping-off point for the highly unique and expressive interpretations. Parisien handles most of the melodies and soloing in a manner blending jazz' traditional roots with its progressive branches. On "Memento" he recalls the delicacy and authority of Sidney Bechet, on "A Bebernos Los Vientos" the dexterity and ingenuity of Michael Brecker. Peirani is both incessantly rhythmic and tactfully impressionistic. On Jelly Roll Morton's "The Crave", he enriches an old-school accompaniment style with fanciful ornaments, volume swells and an unorthodox rhythmic feel that swings on its own terms. He is featured on two originals: the pensive "Between T's" and the fast, flighty "Nouchka".

*Albores* ("daybreak") by Porteño bandoneónist Saluzzi is a deeply introspective and atmospheric solo album, a companion to and extension of *Kultrum* and *Andina* (recorded in 1982 and 1988, respectively), though here he only performs on bandoneón and any percussive elements are downplayed in favor of rubato rhythms that imply rather than establish an underlying pulse. At 85, with over 60 years in the creative music business, Saluzzi has much on which to reflect. He frames his thoughts within rich chord structures laced with moving inner lines, as on the hymn-like "Adiós Maestro Kancheli" (an elegy to the late composer/mentor), "Ausencias" ("absence") and relaxed yet restless "Don Caye—Variaciones sobre obra de Cayetano Saluzzi" (composed by his father), the latter two tracks notable for complex counterpoint in the manner of J.S. Bach. Though melancholia pervades the session, the cumulative effect is calming and healing.

*Area Sismica*, accordion player Pascal Contet and bassist Joëlle Léandre's fourth duo album since 1994, is named for the venue in Forti, Italy where it was recorded in April 2019. In comparison with the squeezeboxers reviewed above, Contet is impressionistic like Peirani and introspective like Saluzzi, but also an intrepid explorer of timbre and extended techniques, an ethos patently obvious in the wind- and wave-like sounds introducing the opening track, which segues to rubbings/scrapings of the bellows and tappings/whackings of the instrument case to evoke the labored breathing of an uneasily sleeping giant, all just a prelude to the track's grindcore middle section. Léandre's dynamic sound, now declarative, now suggestive, toggles between the bestial and ethereal. Throughout, she and Contet spiral over and under each other like a musical double helix.

For more information, visit [actmusic.com](http://actmusic.com), [ecmrecords.com](http://ecmrecords.com) and [weinsistrecords.com](http://weinsistrecords.com)



**The Reward (Solo Piano In Four Movements)**  
**Matthew Shipp (RogueArt)**  
**Leonine Aspects**  
**Matthew Shipp/Evan Parker (RogueArt)**  
**Cool With That**  
**East Axis (ESP-Disk')**  
 by Kurt Gottschalk

Last year, in an interview with Troy Collins for the online journal *Point of Departure*, pianist Matthew Shipp directly addressed his penchant toward retirement. "I have meant it when I said it, but I keep getting offers—some I have not been able to refuse," he said. "I seem to have a fan base that has not gotten sick of me yet. I don't want to keep recording forever and really do feel I am near the end. But I have been able to keep growing. At some point that will be that as far as records go."

That interview marked a busy year for the pianist, culminating with his 60th birthday in December and following another announcement of possible retirement the year before. We can be thankful that the offers keep coming and that the pianist keeps growing, because new evidence keeps supporting the notion that Shipp hasn't run out of ideas.

Also at the end of the year, French label RogueArt released *The Reward*, a wonderful document of Shipp's solo artistry. The set was issued as a double LP to reinforce the idea that it is four suites, not a collection of 20 tracks, each with its own character.

One hastens to call *The Reward* a mature work, especially when "even-handed" is such a nice turn of phrase in this context, but it's a tasteful and sophisticated recital, whichever words we choose. (The studio session was actually recorded in 2015, but more than 25 years into his recording career, a certain maturity had certainly been achieved.) The reward itself, according to Shipp's interjection in the late poet Steve Dalachinsky's liner notes, lies in the music resonating with the listener. It would be surprising if *The Reward* failed to resonate with anyone already tuned into the intellectual idiosyncrasies in Shipp's playing.

Shipp is among those special improvising artists who is rarely better than when he's on his own. He does have proclivities that it's fun to hear tickled, however, and his seemingly compulsive tendencies toward rhythm and repetition often come closest to the surface when he's not carrying the whole of the burden.

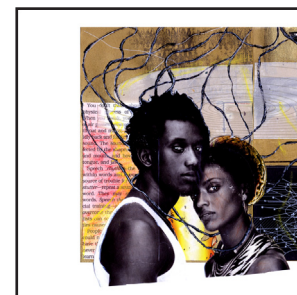
One of Shipp's finest fellow conversationalists is British tenor/soprano saxophonist Evan Parker and a month after *The Reward*, RogueArt issued *Leonine Aspects*, their third duo album after the 2011's *Rex, Wrecks & XXX* (also RogueArt) and 2006's *Abbey Road Duos* (Treader). Like *The Reward*, there's a sophisticated restraint on the humbly titled meeting, recorded live at the Festival Météo in Mulhouse, France in 2017. The 51-minute venture (followed by a brief reprise) includes moments of staggering delicacy and provocative propulsions that suggest something unison while not being that at all. There's a convivial familiarity between the musicians, which makes, unsurprisingly, for an engaging dialogue.

In August of last year, Shipp came together with a new quartet—East Axis—for a studio session just released by ESP Disk' under the title *Cool With That* and again it's a treat to hear the pianist with such thoughtful collaborators. On the opening track, "A Side", Shipp acts as an alternate rhythm section, laying separate geometries under Allen Lowe's crying saxophone. He enters and leaves again as if controlled by an on/off switch, making evident that he's filling about half the space and reshaping the other half. It's a fantastic demonstration and makes for a fascinating, shape-shifting listen. Lowe, of course, has his own

wealth of influences to draw from as a saxophonist, guitarist and historian who has written about and produced massive CD sets compiling the developments of jazz and blues. He plays hard and fast but is always listening; he's an eminently responsive improviser, evident in the slow sear of "Social Distance" and bluesy "I'm Cool With That". The rhythm section of bassist Kevin Ray and drummer Gerald Cleaver play great support throughout.

When Shipp eventually does follow through with his threats of retiring from the recording industry (dating back at least to 1999), he'll have earned his rest. Until then, we can savor in his business of keeping busy and keeping it fresh.

For more information, visit [roguart.com](http://roguart.com) and [espdisk.com](http://espdisk.com). Shipp is at Vision Festival Jul. 22nd. See Calendar.



**EarthSeed**  
**Nicole Mitchell & Lisa E. Harris (FPE)**  
 by Robert Bush

For many years now, flutist, composer and educator Nicole Mitchell has crafted a position for herself at the very apex of the creative music field, consistently releasing projects that push the envelope and challenge the listener. Her latest effort is a collaboration with vocalist/multi-instrumentalist Lisa E. Harris, whom she met at the New Quorum Composers Residency in New Orleans a few years back, bonding over a mutual admiration for the African-American science fiction author Octavia Butler. Joining them is the latest iteration of Mitchell's Black Earth Ensemble: Julian Otis (vocals), Zara Zaharieva (violin), Ben Lamar Gay (trumpet/electronics), Tomeka Reid (cello) and Avreeayl Ra (percussion).

The opener features Mitchell and Harris weaving lines around one another, creating an intoxicating texture highlighting the strength of each contributor. One is instantly drawn to the impossibly rich dynamics of Mitchell's flute, but it is important to note that she does not dominate the process at any point on this disc. Collaboration is the keyword here.

Harris and Otis work well together and on "Biotic Seeds", they effectively divide the narrative, intoning "In all living things is seed" and "Your enemies and your saviors are within". Mitchell adds a layer and then hands off to Reid and Zaharieva with Ra's subtle shadings guiding the rhythmic dynamic.

It all comes together on "Yes and Know", as the vocalists whirl like dervish dancers and Mitchell and Reid tattoo an ostinato onto the stage (this is a live set recorded at the Art Institute of Chicago). Just as Mitchell came to dazzle the world back in the day, Reid has arrived as an instrumental force. Her contributions to this album are so strong that the absence of a bassist hardly seems noteworthy.

Over a cello vamp and jangling tambourine, the Black Earth Ensemble creates a compelling tension as each instrument adds another layer, leading to an almost orgiastic climax on "Elemental Crux", with the singers intoning "Darkness is our mother. The space within... Creativity is our home. The space within".

Elements of Butler, opera and free jazz make *EarthSeed* a delicious sonic treat and another example of Mitchell's ongoing creativity.

For more information, visit [fperecs.com](http://fperecs.com). Mitchell is at Vision Festival Jul. 24th. See Calendar.