

BEST OF 2020 JAZZ HONORABLE MENTIONS



MARK WADE – SONGS FROM ISOLATION (JAZZ): Composer, band leader and three-time *Downbeat* magazine poll finalist Mark Wade followed up his 2018 album of note, *Moving Day*, with the solo release *Songs From Isolation*. Forgoing the trio format, Wade included five selections performed solely by him on electric or triple bass. A New York City resident, Wade put isolation in his residence to good use. What resulted was a fascinating blend of compositions which were as impressive as they were inspiring. “Hours Till Dawn” immediately drew you in with its percussive double-bass foundation and equally evocative solos. Wade employed multi-tracking to provide a fully realized rhythmic foundation. “Blues in Isolation” created an almost outer-worldly atmosphere with its stark yet warm feel. Wade’s decision to use only the double bass on this song seemed risky, yet again the music was fully fleshed out and swinging, even before the bowed main theme entered. The visual presentation was equally stunning. The final song, “Nothing Like You,” featuring vocalist Teri Leggio Wade, was a joyous and slightly off-kilter take on a Gil Evans arrangement. The combination of Mark Wade’s acoustic bass and Teri Leggio Wade’s vocal brought this album to a fascinating and satisfying end.



RAPHAËL PANNIER QUARTET – FAUNE (JAZZ): Band leader and drummer Raphael Pannier conspired with sax player Miguel Zenon, bassist Francois Moutin and pianist Giorgi Mikadze to create one of the most stunning debuts of the year. Dynamic and thematically vibrant, Pannier combined originals and standards to produce an otherworldly record, leaving the listener captivated. *Faune*, which is French for wildlife, was an apt title for this project, which melded French, Puerto Rican and New York elements to create something new and original. “Lonely Woman” demanded repeated listening, as arranger/sax player Zenon danced with Raphael Pannier’s snare and cymbal work out while pianist Mikadze added different splashes of color. “E.S.P.,” written by Wayne Shorter, showed another side of the band which was no less intriguing. My final Best of 2020 Jazz honorable-mention album was a musical gem.



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