

thematic wheel slowly turning on these tunes. Most obviously and frequently this involves the frontline horns of Attias and the superb, brawny-toned trumpeter Ralph Alessi; they swell and recede together like huge waves that never crest on "No's No" and create circular currents on "Bad Lucid." But there are also sudden interludes, like when Matt Mitchell starts pounding piano chords and drummer Tom Rainey jumps in to ride herd during a come-and-go snippet of jungle intensity on "Calendar Song." Bassist Sean Conly, Attias' duet partner on the recent *Think Shadow* (OutNow), rounds out the quintet. When Attias is nimbly pulling them together, as on the sprightly "Ghost Practice," *Spun Tree* leaves you smiling.

BRITT ROBSON

THE DALE BRUNING TRIO

JUST BETWEEN US (Jazz Link)



Interview Bill Frisell long enough and you'll probably hear about Dale Bruning, the Colorado-based guitarist from whom he learned his craft as a teenager. (It's worth noting that Bruning also transformed his pupil's artistic life by introducing him—literally and metaphorically—to Jim Hall.) The double-disc *Just Between Us* reunites Bruning with his star student (and thoughtful bassist Michael Moore) for over two hours of cool-tempered interplay recorded live in Denver last March. For guitar heads who place good taste and empathy above chops, this set is a nonchalant joy, and it's easy to hear where Frisell got his unselfish collaborative nature and soul-deep melodic sense. The program, including Frisell favorites (Monk's "Misterioso"), comely standards ("My One and Only Love"), some original material and a few surprises ("Deep Dead Blue," a Frisell/Elvis Costello effort) is as tactfully curated as the playing. **EVAN HAGA**

SHAYNA DULBERGER

THE KILLMETRIO (Shayna Dulberger)



Shayna Dulberger must have a death drive. "Improvisation" opens the album with an out-of-time clangor of cymbals, low-register bass and keening alto saxophone grating on each other in increasing levels of postmodern percussiveness. Dulberger, saxophonist Darius Jones and drummer Jason Nazary are the avant-garde equivalent of Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit*; in

this case, hell is other instruments. The track titles reflect a pattern of self-loathing: "When I Think About You I Hate Myself," "Killher," "Myopia," "Lowed," "Duct Tape." The music follows suit, sounding like a band playing out the stages of grief in primal scream therapy. By "Appendix," the penultimate track, the three have reached resonant frequency—low on the bass, high on the saxophone, loud on the cymbals—in what feels like an exorcism. "I Wish I Was..." the closing track, takes the trio to a resolution point, a détente that averts mutually assured destruction.

AIDAN LEVY

ELINA DUNI QUARTET

MATANË MALIT (ECM)



Vocal music in a language we don't understand is normally a partial aesthetic experience, connotation without denotation. Elina Duni left Albania in 1992, when she was 10, moved to Switzerland and only recently rediscovered her country's traditional songs. From the opening track, "Ka një mot," her alluring voice, lonely in space, might be coming from beyond the misty mountains of Albania, pictured in the CD booklet. *Matanë Malit*, which means "beyond the mountain," is one rapt, solemn atmosphere.

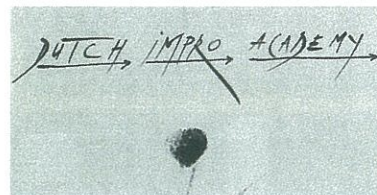
ECM offers a simple, obvious, but rarely seen solution to the language barrier. The complete lyrics to every song are printed in both Albanian and English. When we read the words, we understand the desolation in Duni's voice. Her accompaniment is the Colin Vallon Trio, an adventurous ensemble that here restricts itself to framing stark outlines for this mesmerizing album that Duni describes as "the echo of my childhood, my exile and my reconciliation." **THOMAS CONRAD**

TODD MARCUS

INHERITANCE (Hypnotic)



On Todd Marcus' second album, the bass clarinetist switches between a quartet showcasing his drive and one stressing his more thoughtful side. The tracks featuring pianist George Colligan and Warren Wolf (here on drums rather than vibes) are denser, if no less heartfelt. Perfor-



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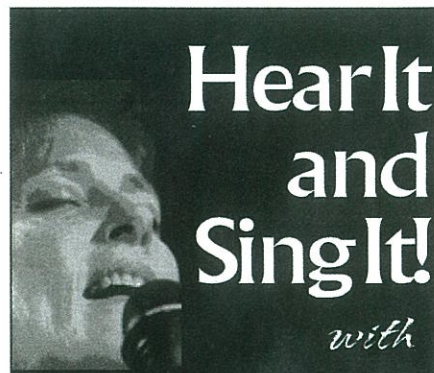
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