

Foundation, singing 'The Braggart'. Parks' marble smooth, mellifluous pipes subsequently graced a trio of songs – 'Shades Of Joy', 'If I Should Lose You' and 'African Other Blues' – on Nicola Conte's 2014 album *Free Souls*, both the second and third of which appear on this hugely impressive self-titled debut. Released on the Milan-based Schema Records, and produced by Conte, the debut sees Parks back in the company of a number of players from the *Free Souls* line-up including trumpeter Francesco Lento, pianist Pietro Lussu, percussionist Pierpaolo Bisogno, and Conte himself on guitar. With its distinctively chromatic melodic line, Parks delivers a winning interpretation of Billy Strayhorn's 'A Flower Is A Lovable Thing' and a big-hearted take on the Styne/Cahn standard 'I Fall In Love Too Easily'. Giving a nod to one of his greatest influences, Nat King Cole, 'The Very Thought Of You' is a standout, with Park's lustrous baritone at its most enchantingly intimate. To hear him at his eloquent, quietly dramatic best, head straight for the Jobim/de Moraes classic, 'How Insensitive'. **Peter Quinn**

John Patitucci/Yotam Silberstein/Rogerio Boccato

Irmãos de Fé

Newvelle Records NV007LP ★★★★★

John Patitucci (b, el b), Yotam Silberstein (nylon string g, el g) and Rogerio Boccato (d, perc). Rec. 8-9 September 2016

Bassist John Patitucci has long been among the instrument's elite 'dubblers', distinguishing himself in particular on double bass in imperiously creative style for 15 years as part of Wayne Shorter's renowned Quartet, while he first burst onto the international stage in the late 1980s wielding a six-string electric bass and soloing with Brecker-like fluency as part of Chick Corea's chops-heavy Elektric Band. In fact, it was the latter piano icon's seminal 1973 album *Light as a Feather*, and its featured percussionist Airo Moreira, who first fired Patitucci's passion for Latin American sounds, later seeking out Moreira for lessons on the rich tapestry of rhythms that fuel salsa, son and samba. This empathy with the music and both sidemen – Israeli guitarist Yotam Silberstein and Brazilian percussionist Rogerio Boccato – and some exquisite gems from a host of South American songwriting giants including Buarque, Nascimento, Jobim, Gismonti, Garoto and Dominginhos, has created an effortlessly balanced album of

memorable melodies and richly satisfying solos. *Irmãos de Fé* is a masterclass in pacing and production – the title-track kicking things off in finely poised style, side one also including the slow-motion ballad 'Pr'um Samba' and the dazzling baroque-ish unison guitar and basslines of 'Desvairada', with Patitucci's heartrending arco melody on the stunning Jobim/Moraes/Buarque-penned 'Olha Maria' a hushed showstopper. Side two's opener, 'Samba do Grande Amor', finds the bassist grabbing his semi-acoustic six-string bass guitar to lay down subtle, yet heavy, samba groove, the electric instrument's deep and sweet tone a wonderful foil to Silberstein's perfectly judged nylon and electric guitar work throughout, while Boccato is equally on point with his impeccable percussion on every track. Rarely has Patitucci sounded so soulful, corralling his mighty technique utterly at the service of the music and with the kind of perfectly weighted artistic intent only the most mature musicians can achieve. This is a real high point of his glittering career so far. **Mike Flynn**

Nicholas Payton Afro-Caribbean Mixtape

Paytone 006 ★★★★★

Nicholas Payton (t, v, ky, perc), Vicente Archer (b), Kevin Hays (ky), Joe Dyson (d), Daniel Sadowick, Weeide Braimah (perc), DJ Lady Fingaz (turntables), Blake Leyh (clo, v), Grayson Brockcamp, Eva Liebhaber, Philip von Maltzahn, Bruce Owen, Gabriel Platica (strings). Rec. 2016

Payton's interest in West Indian music has surfaced on numerous occasions during his two-decade career, but this is the most comprehensive exploration of the region's great cultural riches. Indeed, the conceptual foundation of this 2CD release is as much socio-political as it is musical, as the multi-instrumentalist celebrates the African diaspora in the broadest sense, looking at how territories such as Haiti, Cuba and New Orleans have come to form a complex sonic and spiritual matrix, which in turn shapes a wide range of genres. Payton has accordingly set his sights far and wide, creating a 22-track opus in which the rhythmic shifts are constant, taking in downbeat-led funk, thudding proto-ragga and airy swing, amid an interesting synthesis of dubbed up keyboard licks and wah-wah-like turntable scratches. The reason why the mixtape works is not just down to the diversity of the elements deployed though. Payton inflects the above materials in unexpected ways, introducing a decidedly 1980s hip hop vocabulary, complete with pinging electric cowbells,

before graduating to string-laden 1970s soul à la Donald Byrd and 1990s neo-soul à la Erykah Badu. Quite significantly, Payton doesn't really go overboard as a soloist, and while his improvisations are enticing, bolstered by a beautifully misty Hubbard-esque tone, they do not dominate the compositions. The use of recordings of strong statements by innovators such as Dizzy Gillespie, Duke, Max, Blakey and Miles also anchors the historical base of the project, and while a few of the pieces could have been arguably more effective as interludes rather than full-length tracks the result is as thought-provoking as the claim that jazz is a four letter word. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Jeremy Pelt Make Noise!

HighNote HCD 7299 ★★★★★

Jeremy Pelt (t), Victor Gould (p), Vicente Archer (b), Jonathan Barber (d) and Jacqueline Acevado (perc). Rec. 9 September 2016

With every new Jeremy Pelt album, there's always something different to look forward to. This is the follow-up to the recently reviewed *Jiveculture* which featured Ron Carter. This time around he uses Victor Gould on piano, whose leader debut CD on FSNT made this writer's 'Best of...' list for 2016; Vicente Archer, one of New York's major bassists; Jonathan Barber, a highly rhythmic drummer, whom Pelt used for European dates (very loud in person!), whose feature number is 'Evolution', probably the most adventurous of the originals; and, as an additional stimulant, his young percussionist discovery Jacqueline Acevado, who kicks off the record with a prologue for the melodically exciting title tune. Another big difference to *Jiveculture* is that Jeremy wrote all the tunes, with the exception of 'Digression' (Archer's feature), which is by a Pelt associate, pianist Simona Premazzi, and one of the album's high-spots. But it's Jeremy's record, with arguably his best trumpet playing to date. For once, no fluegelhorn. His sound is robustly flawless – very pure and, of course, there's a lovely ballad 'Your First Touch', which has some equally tender Gould piano. Two

of the most satisfying tracks are saved until the end – the ultra-mellow, conga-backed 'Chateau d'Eau' and the closing hard-hitting belter, 'Bodega Social'. There are some really terrific trumpet records around at the moment, like the Roney, Weiss and Harrell/Akinmusire. Here's another corker! If you can, try and buy them all!

Tony Hall

Noah Preminger Meditations on Freedom

Dry Bridge Records 005 ★★★★★

Noah Preminger (ts), Jason Palmer (t), Kim Cass (b) and Ian Froman (d). Rec. December 2016

Trump's election has not only firmed up the tendency for musicians to frame their music in a political context – *Meditations on Freedom* was digitally released to coincide with Trump's inauguration day. It's also triggered a second look at earlier protest-framed anthems. This album opens with Dylan's 'Only a Pawn in their Game', has George Harrison's 'Give Me Love Give Me Peace on Earth' as the penultimate track and includes Sam Cooke's 'A Change is Gonna Come', which was also covered by Joey DeFrancesco on his uplifting *Project Freedom* album. Noah Preminger's version, though, is a good deal more contemplative than De Francesco's joyous reading; more 'what's going on?' than 'we'll get there some day'. Preminger's meditative vision is filtered through a sparse chord-free quartet and a clear-lined, schooled-soul aesthetic that matches the sound of his nicely rounded tenor sax. Trumpeter Jason Palmer is a spiky and thoughtful foil and with bassist Kim Cass and drummer Ian Froman equally on song, the album's vibe is tight, talented and downtown. Preminger's originals are as strong as the covers, and like them, their melodies are enhanced by warm brass harmonies and a sensitive rhythm section, while titles like 'Mother Earth', 'Women's March' and the closer 'Broken Promises' develop the album's focus as a 'conversation starter'. Articulate and soulful, the album's certainly a nice listen. More than that, the streets await. **Mike Hobart**



John Patitucci