

the ground for the production and reception of text-sound work on the West Coast.

I should add that Canadian poets also played an early and significant role in the genre. For example, Steve McCaffery and bpNichol were among the local poets instrumental in organizing the ambitious seven-day Eleventh International Sound Poetry Festival (1978) held in Toronto.

Amirkhanian's landmark recording *Lexical Music*, sensitively remastered from the original analogue tapes, is accompanied by two informative critical essays in the 31-page booklet. Amirkhanian also serves as the primary vocalist on the album. His percussionist training coupled with his mellow, articulate, radio voice lends rhythmic precision, polished tone and a sense of gravitas to his recordings.

Through extensive repetition and stereo-channel (dis)placement, individual words are bleached of their usual meaning. Non-sequitur text-phrases are transformed into hypnotic washes of pure music. Amirkhanian masterfully challenges and plays with the borders between intelligible text and organized sound throughout the six works here. Just try to get the 2'02" *Dutiful Ducks* (1977) out of your mind once you've heard it.

Andrew Timar

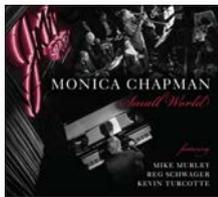
## JAZZ AND IMPROVISED MUSIC

### Small World

**Monica Chapman (Mike Murley; Reg Schwager; Kevin Turcotte)**  
LME Records 8 13429 00261 2  
(monicachapmanmusic.net)

▶ With her new release, Monica Chapman seamlessly builds on her previous successes with another eclectic, tasteful and brilliantly performed and produced project. A master of lyrical interpretation, she has drawn her material from the worlds of Broadway, the Great American Songbook and even the Spanish repertoire of Eydie Gormé. Collaborating once again with producer/arranger/pianist Bill King, Chapman offers up an irresistible smorgasbord of musical delights. Saxophonist Mike Murley (on alto here), guitarist Reg Schwager and trumpeter Kevin Turcotte are featured, supported by the dream-team rhythm section of King on acoustic piano, Dave Young on bass and Mark Kelso on drums and vocals. Additional support is provided by Nathan Hiltz on guitar, Rob Somerville on trombone and Magdelys Savigne on percussion.

Among the fine tracks is the opener, Arthur Schwartz' Depression-era classic, *A Shine on Your Shoes*, authentically arranged and rendered. Also excellent is a gutsy, bluesy,



contemporized take on Shirley Bassey's hit *Goldfinger*. The luscious title track comes from Sondheim and Styne's musical *Gypsy*, and not only shows Chapman at her most vulnerable, but features the pristine rhythm section as well as a sonorous trombone solo by Somerville. Most unexpectedly, Chapman displays her considerable *moda Mexicana* chops with a silky and sexy take on the Latin standard *Piel Canela* (*Cinnamon Skin*). Also in the silky and sexy category would be King's clever, up-tempo arrangement of *Baby It's Cold Outside*, featuring drummer Kelso's gorgeous tenor voice – the perfect complement for Chapman.

A true gem is Billy Holiday's *Don't Explain*. Chapman's natural warmth and vocal resonance reveal hidden dimensions and embrace each tragic word with melancholy longing

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

**Concert note:** Monica Chapman launches *Small World* at Jazz Bistro on June 4.

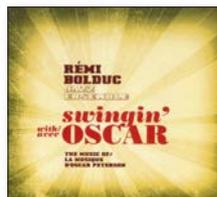
**Swingin' with/avec Oscar Rémi Bolduc Jazz Ensemble**  
Les Productions Art and Soul PAS1701  
(remibolduc.com)

▶ Whilst the term "less is more" does not really describe the exchanges between tenor saxophonist Rémi Bolduc and pianist Taurey Butler which shine with radiant apparel, there is an unmatched nimbleness of sound. This is no stripped-down performance, but a full and wholesome creation of songful dialogue between saxophone and piano almost in the grand manner of Schumann-like *Lied*. Only here it is Bolduc who is accompanied by ebullient arpeggios and unrestrained glissandi from the fingers of Butler.

It is easy to fall prey to the charms of this music. Song after song on *Swingin' with Oscar* combines a craftsman-like approach to Oscar Peterson's ingenious writing and inspired improvisations. Bolduc, Butler, Chantal de Villiers, Fraser Hollins and Dave Laing all play inspired roles in bringing the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic genius of Peterson to life for us again. And it's not just on *Place St. Henri* or *Laurentide Waltz*, but everywhere on this album.

The inspiration of course also comes from the memorable repertoire that seems to have been musical manna, fallen from the sky. Vitality and brilliance in each re-invention shine forth with the strongest and most appealing combination of colours. Dynamic range and balance between the instruments are achieved by each artist who, remarkably, never seems to tread on the other's turf. Rhythm is strongly marked, emphasizing thematic gestures, the subtlety of which makes for an utterly breathtaking experience.

Raul da Gama



**From This Side**  
Johanna Sillanpaa  
Chronograph Records CR052  
(johannamusic.com)

▶ In Canada, which is brim-ful of vocal talent, there is not always room for more unless the vocalist is unquestionably topnotch. Such is the case of Johanna Sillanpaa. Few vocalists seem to respond with such quintessential musicianship to the often passionate lyricism and rhythm of jazz as Sillanpaa. Her disc *From This Side* is redolent of luminescent textures which she employs to drive the musical drama with telling nuance, avoiding all glibness and sentimentalism sometimes associated with balladry.

On this 2017 album Sillanpaa seems to always be just a hair's breadth away from the listener's ears so that the adventures and misadventures of the music's protagonists are always experienced from close up. In Sillanpaa's performance where she is mining the depths of original works and standards we are privy to a singular sensuality born of remarkable articulation as she slides into character with lustrous glissandos and pitch-perfect singing. *Woodstock* is a strong case in point, but there are also nine other pieces that highlight her fascinating abilities.

The listener is also treated to fine musicianship from a stellar ensemble that includes bassist George Koller, trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, pianist Chris Andrew and drummer Tyler Hornby. Tangibles such as harmonics and time-keeping are scrupulously maintained but Sillanpaa also brings something ineffably heartfelt to musical subtexts which she unearths and executes with ethereal beauty on *In My Dreams*, the disc's most utterly memorable song.

Raul da Gama

**Circles MEM3**  
Independent (MEM3.info)

▶ MEM3 is a collective with a shared vision of what a contemporary piano trio is capable of. Writing responsibilities are divided more or less evenly between its members and a common thread runs through both the tunes and the arrangements. Many of the compositions share a deceptively minimal approach while others are through composed with elements of electronica in the mix. This is fresh-sounding music with a strong melodic vein and a level of sophistication and depth that can sneak up and take the listener

