



Gin
Jill McCarron Trio (Jazz Bird)
 by Pierre Giroux

Jill McCarron's second release as a leader, *Gin*, is a testament both to her prowess as a jazz pianist and composer. Though born in the U.S., she moved to Toronto at an early age where she completed her education by attending Toronto's Humber College, majoring in jazz performance, before beginning a professional career performing in Toronto (and Montreal) clubs. After being awarded a Canada Council grant, she moved back to the U.S. and furthered her skills and enriched her style in New York, studying with pianists Richie Beirach, Kenny Werner and Hal Galper.

Gin showcases her versatility and creativity in the company of stellar musicians, including special guests Vincent Herring (alto, tenor) and Randy Brecker (flugelhorn). The 13 tracks are a potpourri of jazz classics, American Songbook standards, and a three-part original suite appropriately titled "The Gin Suite". The session opens with "The Jody Grind" (the title track from Horace Silver's 1966 Blue Note recording). Led by Herring (on

alto), the band remains faithful to the tune's rhythmic antecedents and creates a confident reimagining of the number. "Blues Bells" is a trio chart with bassist Chris Haney and the one track with drummer Chuck Redd (elsewhere it's Andy Watson). It is a stylish swinger as McCarron commands the piano with confidence and finesse. The bassist and drummer are each given solo space to show they are not only passionate but technically accomplished players.

Reaffirming her status as an impressive talent, the pianist dives into the Bill Evans composition "Waltz For Debby" in a solo piano exposition. The result is an expressive, insightful and tastefully restrained rendition. The album centerpiece is the three sectioned "The Gin Suite": "Gin/Bitters/The Luck Of The Draw". These vignettes deliver a fascinating musical journey encapsulating sultry melodies in the first section, intricate harmonies in the second and some up-tempo improvisation in the third, demonstrating McCarron's command not only of composition but of arrangement. Trumpeter Brecker (on flugelhorn) joins the McCarron trio, as does tenor saxophonist Ada Rovatti, for a run-through of Don Grolnick's "The Whisperer", an evocative and thought-provoking number that seamlessly blends each of their unique voices and makes for a dynamic, engaging, creative sound.

Throughout the album, McCarron shows how her musical influences and appreciation for jazz' rich history inform her playing.

For more info visit jillmccarron.com. McCarron is at Knickerbocker Bar & Grill May 18 and Pierre Hotel Thursdays. See Calendar.



Green Lights
Troy Roberts (Toy Robot Music)
 by Keith Hoffman

From its noir-influenced cover shot of a pensive Troy Roberts with a New York City-scape behind him, to its generous helping of more than 70 minutes of music, *Green Lights* is all about space and mood. The saxophonist's 14th leader date is a return to his acoustic-based, straight-ahead approach, following two recordings of his Nu-Jive fusion-based unit. The album is unusual in that it features all leader originals. Although hailing from Perth (like bassist Linda May Han Oh), the only populous area in sparsely inhabited Western Australia, Roberts has been a New Yorker since 2012, and this is an undeniably New York album. Anchored by Brooklyn-born bassist John Patitucci, the project has a hip, dark feel throughout, alternately (or simultaneously) soulful and spacy.

The title track opener is a beautiful, long and languid workout, with master guitarist Paul Bollenback doubling the melody, then providing understated, minimalist voicings under Roberts' tenor. The saxophonist offers new versions of two tunes he previously released on 2020's *Stuff I Heard*.

***Electric Miles 2*, the follow up to the acclaimed *Electric Miles* (2018), is a further exploration of Miles Davis' early electric period. The NYC ensemble features soloists such as trumpeters Tim Hagans, Clay Jenkins and Scott Wendholt; saxophonists Jimmy Greene and Alexa Tarrantino; trombonists Alan Ferber and Michael Davis; guitarist Pete McCann and pianist Henry Hey, backed by bassists Chuck Bergeron and Ugonna Okegwo and drummer Jared Schonig.**



"With skill and imagination, Pillow arranges the music that shocked the jazz establishment in 1969"
 —Doug Ramsey

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