

Reviews and Picks

Mimi Fox

Perpetually Hip (Favored Nations)

BAY AREA GUITARIST Mimi Fox has been on the scene for nearly 20 years, but even so she's also won *Downbeat's* Rising Star poll for the last three years. Whether she's old hat

or the new kid, Fox's *Perpetually Hip* is a great overview of her talents that includes a disc of standards done by her solo and a disc with her leading a band through a mix of originals and a few more standards. Featuring bassist Harvie S., pianist Xavier Davis and drummer Billy Hart, the band disc gracefully moves from bop to swing to folk to groove. The bossa-swing arrangement of "But Beautiful" and the mildly exotic harmonies on "While Bangkok Sleeps" mixes things up nicely, while the expansive title track gets things off on the right foot with a propulsive Tyner-esque solo from Davis. A student and friend of the great Joe Pass, Fox's solo disc is a perfect outlet for the fleet-fingered former apprentice. Her clean lines and funky sense of meter keep the six tunes here moving right along, including a remarkably fresh version of "Caravan" and a multi-faceted take "Alone Together."



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— Tad Hendrickson

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Add Date: March 20
Release Date: April 4

Sathima Bea Benjamin

Musical Echoes (Ekapa)

THE CAREER OF Sathima Bea Benjamin reaches back to the late '50s in South Africa and is marked by records that were more often than not shelved or long delayed. It probably didn't help that her husband Abdullah Ibrahim overshadowed

her either, but she had bigger fish to fry as a longtime activist in her homeland's fight for racial equality. Benjamin's singing style is one where the pitch seldom sits still, and her range isn't broad: this has made her a tough sale for some, but Duke Ellington was just one of her early supporters. She does three Duke tunes here ("Caravan," "All Too Soon" and "Something To Live For"), one of her own and a few other standards. Also featuring a trio that includes American pianist Stephen Scott, standout songs on this loose session include an earthy version of Rodgers and Hart's "Falling In Love With Love" and an entrancing version of Noel Coward's "I'll Follow My Secret Heart."

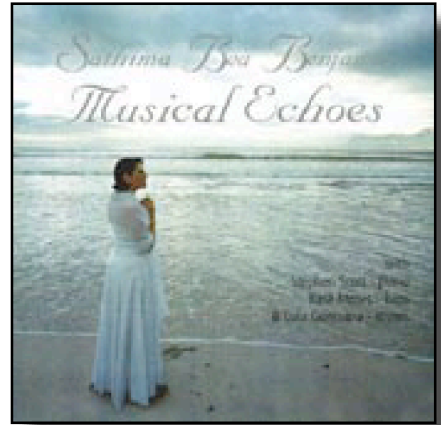
— Tad Hendrickson

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Gutbucket

Sludge Test (Cantaloupe)

WITH TITLES LIKE *Sludge Test* and *Dry Humping The American Dream*, New York City's Gutbucket is more than a little off. On its third album, the seven-year-old jazz-rock quartet (sax, bass, drums, guitar) continues to play with the frantic



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