

ELDAR DJANGIROV

'A NEVER-ENDING DANCE'

To display Promethean chops is pianist Eldar Djangirov's long-established default basis of operations, and his new, self-released album, *Rhapsodize* (Twelve Tone Resonance), is no exception. On this program of originals and covers, the pianist—joined in the studio by bassist Raviv Markovitz and drummer Jimmy Macbride—seamlessly blends the languages of classical and jazz.

"It represents all 12 tones on the keys, and the various resonances you can capture and replicate in how you want the flow of your song to sound," Djangirov said about the name of his label. "They can be melodic, or harmonic, or rhythmic—or the heart."

Then he addressed the album title. "Literally, a rhapsody is to speak about something with great enthusiasm, which I feel encapsulates the entire album," he said. "I'm interested in many different aspects of music. I want to incorporate them in a way that's genuine to me."

Synth-generated backgrounds complement the melancholic-to-joyful emotions contained in the funky title track and the gospel-meets-classi-

cal "In July," both original tunes. Elsewhere, the pianist delivers a reflective reading of "Willow Weep For Me" and creates an operatic arc for Soundgarden's "Black Hole Sun."

The trio operates with remarkable precision and interplay throughout *Rhapsodize*. "It's a never-ending dance, a micro-adjustment on a milli-second level that happens with three musicians who focus on their placement in context with each other," he said.

"Eldar's technical mastery is second to no one, but what's blown me away is his multifaceted approach and ability to evoke emotion in so many different worlds," Markovitz said.

In conversation, Djangirov breaks down complex ideas to fundamental components, an attribute he's deployed in taking control of his musical production since his 2015 trio album, *World Tour Vol. 1*. Djangirov sold that album via his website, with selected tracks posted on YouTube. Now he's "further circumventing the system" by releasing *Rhapsodize*—and, last December, *Letter To Liz*, which showcased his meditations on a cohort of Great American



DAVID PATINO

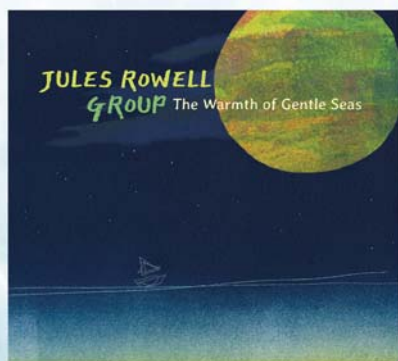
Songbook standards—on a variety of platforms.

The databases and infrastructure that Djangirov has accumulated over the years are helping him withstand the enforced isolation and gig cancellations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. He's generating income from increased online lessons, the membership platform Patreon, YouTube royalties and his catalog.

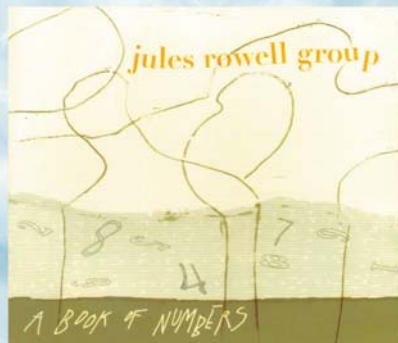
Key Madness Duo, a plugged-in project with drummer Ludwig Afonso, recently issued a live EP, and as of early April, the keyboardist was fast-tracking another electronic recording.

"It's really been therapy," Djangirov said of this phase of his creative process. "So much about the solitude is meditative and therapeutic; I think the music will reflect that." —Ted Panken

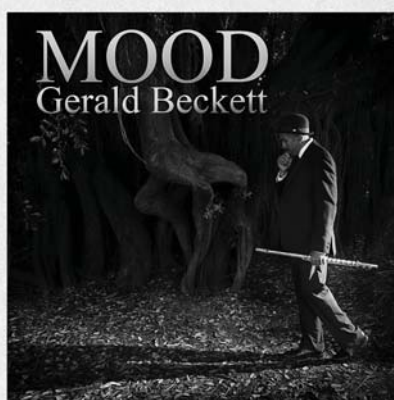
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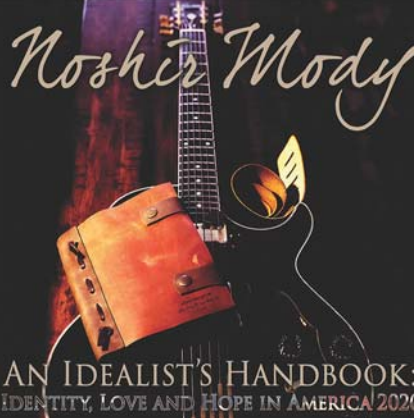


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RARENOISE

BLURRING THE LINES OF GENRE

Before he was a label owner, Giacomo Bruzzo was a frustrated finance bro. Born in Italy, he moved to the U.K. in 1991, attended university and, as the decade ended, began working in the financial industry. After a few years, he entered a Ph.D program in mathematics when, as he put it via Skype from London, “in 2006, I crashed. I locked myself at home for six months, and when I came out of it I realized I just could not go back.”

Adrift in his mid-30s, Bruzzo began searching for something that would be not just a career, but a passion. This eventually brought him into the orbit of multi-instrumentalist Eraldo Bernocchi, who was connected to a universe of players and producers busily blurring the lines of jazz, rock and electronic music. By 2008, Bruzzo and Bernocchi had the RareNoise concept in place, launching the label the following summer with a half dozen releases, including titles by Bill Laswell-associated projects.

Since that initial burst, RareNoise slowly has built a catalog filled with adventurous releases that no one else would have thought to support.

The primary qualification seems to be Bruzzo’s gut: “I like music that gives me a sense of vertigo, like I’m half a second away from the cliff’s edge.”

One of RareNoise’s most exciting 2020 releases is Belgian vocalist Sophie Tassignon’s *Mysteries Unfold*. She uses layer upon layer of vocals—and no other instruments—to create stunning reinterpretations of songs by Dolly Parton, the Cowboy Junkies and Vivaldi, as well as four originals. “What appealed to me about RareNoise was Giacomo’s interest in releasing albums that are very eclectic and powerful, but not genre-specific,” she explained, adding that Bruzzo “seems to enjoy letting artists be themselves.”

RareNoise opened its doors in the wake of the 2008 recession, which Bruzzo now sees as a boon. “If you start when everything doesn’t work, it’s good, because you get used to things not working.” This allows him to believe that the label will survive the music industry’s current coronavirus-related semi-paralysis. “It’s gonna be a kludge ... [W]e have to somehow make it work.”

Bruzzo said he expects numerous pandemic-related factors—increased lead times in vinyl



Giacomo Bruzzo’s RareNoise label has built a catalog filled with adventurous releases.

production, fewer indie stores selling product, less-efficient mail systems and the grounding of artists who would be touring—will result in a 30 percent revenue loss during the next 12 months.

But one way RareNoise has been making it work has been through its Leap of Faith program, where fans can pay in advance for the label’s entire slate of releases for a given year. “It helps quite a bit,” Bruzzo said. “The idea is, you have a boutique operation and you’re trying to create ambassadors. You try to create ties to people, and I’ve seen that recurrence in buying is very high.”

—Philip Freeman

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