

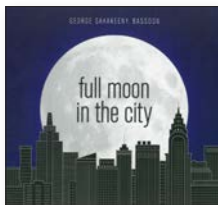
sustained attentiveness to still intervals and chords in a sparse tonal landscape. Long consonant fifths and thirds glint out and shine, and the perfect fifth (that strings tune to) seems iconic for Clementi. The composer's journey was a long one. By contrast, the much earlier, more chromatic *Reticolo: 4* (1968) has a quick steady pulse involving both pizzicato and bowed notes that set up unexpected jazzy syncopations.

The Montreal-based Quatuor Bozzini are ideal interpreters of Clementi's music. For example, in *Satz 2* (2001) their mastery of intricate non-vibrato and *sul ponticello* (near the bridge) effects is striking. Champions of new music performance at a high level, with an international reputation and their own Collection QB recording label, this is an ensemble well worth experiencing.

Roger Knox

Full Moon in the City
George Sakakeeny, bassoon; various
Oberlin ensembles
**Oberlin Music OC 15-05 (oberlin.edu/
 oberlinmusic)**

▶ George Sakakeeny is a professor of bassoon at the Oberlin Conservatory and a virtuoso soloist with significant works commissioned for him, including the Larsen and Schickele pieces on this disc. His tone is full and well-rounded, with excellent intonation and a secure upper register, and he receives able support from Oberlin ensembles conducted by Timothy Weiss and Raphael Jiménez. Of the disc's four well-crafted pieces, all by established American composers, I found the *Bassoon Concertino* (2014) by Augusta Read Thomas (b.1964) especially clear and coherent in tonal language. It is based on three modernist paintings; the melding of tones and tone clusters in *Part 2: Wassily Kandinsky: Sky Blue* is particularly appealing. Russell Platt (b.1965) brings out the instrument's lyrical qualities well in *Concerto for Bassoon and Strings* (2008), but I think errs toward nostalgia sometimes. Attractive bassoon lyricism also permeates the intriguing *Full Moon in the City* by Libby Larsen (b.1950), which evokes an urban pre-dawn stroll. Bits of popular songs about the moon appear in different guises, and the lush string writing gives a nod to noir style. (I associate this also with old late-night TV movies!)



The nature of *Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra* (1998) by Peter Schickele (b.1935) is indicated by the work's movement titles: *Blues, Intermezzo, Scherzo, Song, and Romp*. This engaging work demonstrates the composer's legendary wit and timing, along with deft orchestration and musical imagination to spare.

Roger Knox

JAZZ AND IMPROVISED MUSIC

Spirits of Havana: 25th Anniversary 2-Disc Edition

Jane Bunnett
Linus (linusentertainment.ca)

▶ This 25th anniversary re-release consists of *Spirits of Havana*, Jane Bunnett's landmark album – preceding by six years the first Buena Vista Social Club CD – the follow-up album *Chamalongo*, plus three previously unreleased tracks. The package is enriched by a 36-page booklet stocked with period photos, plus notes by musicologist Robert Palmer and Cuban music researcher Ned Sublette.



Toronto jazz flutist, saxophonist and band-leader Bunnett's multifaceted exploration of jazz and Afro-Cuban music has earned her numerous accolades over her career. They include multiple *Downbeat* awards and five JUNO Awards, the Order of Canada and two GRAMMY Award nominations, among many other honours.

In *Spirits of Havana*, Bunnett brings her considerable jazz flute and soprano chops to the studio, joined by top Cuban musicians including pianists Hilario Duran, Frank Emilio Flynn and Gonzalo Rubalcaba. Infusing the proceedings with particular Afro-Cuban mojo is the late singer Merceditas Valdés (1922-1996) who was key in popularising Afro-Cuban music throughout Latin America. All the tracks are supported by a killer rhythm section, serving to drive each track inexorably onward. We hear jazz layered onto Afro-Cuban songs and rhythms along with traditional Cuban tunes like *Yemaya*. The album is anchored by a loose-limbed, densely percussion-driven, rendition of Thelonious Monk's *Epistrophy* with strong soprano sax solos by Bunnett.

Chamalongo (1998) also features Bunnett, pianists Hilario Duran, Frank Emilio Flynn, Toronto trumpeter Larry Cramer, their rhythm section, in addition to the ten-member Cuban Folkloric All-Stars. The repertoire here features traditional Cuban songs, enhanced by two Bunnett compositions, *Freedom at Last* which is underpinned by advanced jazz harmonies, and *Piccolo Dance* which indeed showcases a sprightly solo by the composer framed by the Cuban Folkloric All-Stars male singers.

The release of *Spirits of Havana* in 1991 proved to be a significant musical event, introducing many listeners to the vigour and beauty of Afro-Cuban music and the keen talent of Jane Bunnett. Listening to it again today reveals a palpable collaborative excitement, the result of the confluence of wisely chosen repertoire and incisively brilliant performances from its Canadian

and Cuban musicians. The spirit and music on these albums remain un-dulled by the passage of time.

Andrew Timar

Soweto Stomp
Malcolm Goldstein; The Ratchet Orchestra
Mode Records 291 (moderecords.com)

▶ Longtime Montreal resident, violinist Malcolm Goldstein, 79, has since the early 1960s negotiated the fissure between improvisation and composition from the so-called classical side of music. Now that the rest of the world has caught up with him, this fine session demonstrates how his ideas can be amplified by his adopted city's 15-piece Ratchet Orchestra. Like the field commander who leads by example, the violinist is as much part of the fray as his much younger associates. Track one for instance *Configurations in Darkness* is a matchless instance of his knotty, string-jumping solo skill that's still sonorous enough to suggest a dulcet folksy air.



More indicative of the collaboration are tracks such as *In Search of Tone Roads No.2*, from 2013 which is a reimaging of a lost Charles Ives composition; and the title tune written in 1985 to celebrate both the Soweto uprising against Apartheid and Martin Luther King's achievements. Formalist without being formalistic, the first is no more an Ives copy than a photo of a smiling woman is the *Mona Lisa*. Instead, the cantilever arrangement mixes brass smears, peeping reeds and trombone counterpoint so that the tune evolves with its own narrative, mostly via Guillaume Dostaler's piano chording, while also suggesting earlier pastoral themes. Meantime Goldstein plus two additional violinists and one violist scratch out cunning string splays that provide a circumscribed framework for the performance as it builds to a polyphonic crescendo. Invested with kwela rhythms, Nicolas Caloia's double bass bounce as well as a shuffle beat from percussionists Isaiah Ceccarelli and Ken Doolittle, *Soweto Stomp* recalls *Maiden Voyage* as much as Nelson Mandela, with five reedists bringing in jazz inflections to mix with near-hoedown fiddle lines that together leap to a triumphant peppery and peppy conclusion. Ahead of his time for many years, it appears Goldstein has hooked up with the perfect ensemble to aid in his musical interpretations.

Ken Waxman

Dialogue
Myra Melford; Ben Goldberg
Bag Productions BAG 010 (myramelford.com)

▶ Chamber music-styled jazz that still manages to inject spunk into compositions