

Freddie Hubbard's "Little Sunflower" and other structurally simple but melodically attractive fare of the mid-1960s. Hutchinson is the groove-maker here, reveling in his arsenal of choppy rimshots and slashing cymbal attacks. Mehldau enters with single-note lines that gradually blossom into a more complex exploration of the form behind percussive chording and call-and-response choruses with himself. McBride remains characteristically supple and surefooted throughout.

Two Bernstein originals from *Signs of Life*, "Blues for Bulgaria" and "Jive Coffee," are reprised in an affectionate, good-natured manner, as though two long-lost friends had suddenly reappeared. The guitarist, like his rhythm mates, is a master of understatement. Throughout the session, he demonstrates how much can be said with just the right inflection at the tail end of a bluesy chord. And while the impulse of pure spontaneity Bernstein and his bandmates radiate throughout is palpable, they also display a pronounced intellectual character and subtly calculated nuance that elevate the performances to a realm removed from any conventional quartet date.

— Mark Holston

Gerald Clayton *Tributary Tales* (Motéma)

Tributary Tales is an apt title for the most accomplished and adventurous album yet from pianist Gerald Clayton, a scion of SoCal jazz royalty. The music is forever moving, riding streams of intriguing, pleasing sounds — ambling grooves, burrowing piano solos and colorful and often unpredictable multi-saxophone lines. All are tributes of a highly personal music that's clearly drawn from jazz tradition but headed in new, unexpected directions. It's brainy, yes, but heavy on emotional content, too.

"Soul Stomp" exemplifies this collection of original compositions, all written and arranged by Clayton. The track opens with a playful piano figure and

oozing organ. Then a modified R&B groove kicks in under a swaying melody provided by saxophonists Logan Richardson on alto and Ben Wendel on tenor. Clayton's searching piano improvisation follows, as do sections featuring alternating sax solos, Joe Sanders' bowed-bass figures, large-ensemble swells and a return to the theme.

Tumbling, hyperactive percussion underscores the elongated, twisting sax lines of "Unforeseen," the album's opener, while "A Light" thrives on dizzying bebop sax figures fueled by Justin Brown's groove-digging urban trap-kit propulsion. The silky, large-ensemble textures of "Lovers Reverie" provide a bed for the expressive spoken-word incantations of Aja Monet and Carl Hancock Rux; the two reprise their roles on the pensive closer, "Dimensions: Interwoven."

Dayna Stephens' baritone sax adds a chunky bottom to the slippery themes and solos of "Wakeful," and Sachal Vasandani's wordless vocals lend an exotic aura to the multi-hued "Squinted." For extra measure,



Clayton offers several short, improvised pieces. All are integral to an album-length journey that feels like a natural segue from 2013's *Life Forum*, if worlds away from 2009's *Two-Shade*, Clayton's debut (a trio recording with Brown and Sanders). *Tributary Tales* presents a fresh chapter in a brilliant career.

— Philip Booth

Duende Libre *Duende Libre* (self-released)

On their eponymous debut, Duende Libre shatter preconceived notions of "global jazz fusion," the eclectic power trio's all-encompassing description of their sound. Boundless hybridity certainly comes to



mind, shaped not just by the confluence of cultures within their music, but by the revelation that the trio is firmly rooted in the Pacific Northwest.

Duende Libre is an 11-track sonic voyage unlike any other, right down to the mysteriously enticing psychedelic album cover. Fronted by composer and pianist Alex Chadsey, this band of Seattle denizens deftly capture their adopted city's rich cross-currents of Latin, Caribbean, Brazilian and African influences. In the process, they deliver a strikingly authentic blend, one that has marked their city as an epicenter for musicians who share an appetite for bridging worlds.

With Farko Dosumov on electric bass and Jeff "Bongo" Busch on drums and percussion, Duende Libre's lush soundscapes frequently give the impression of a much larger ensemble. The album opens with Cuban pianist-composer Frank Emilio Flynn's "Rio Pescadores," a traditional jazz-trio composition showcasing Chadsey's piano *montuno*, a distinctive, swinging Cuban-style of comping. "Forgotten Well," a Brazilian-flavored track, features the twang of the *berimbau*, an Afro-Brazilian gourd instrument with a single-string



Angelica Sanchez

bow, and a chanting chorus of melodic *capoeira* music. “Michel” swings with more Brazilian-tinged hues of samba soul, while the sinuously dramatic “Sevilla” brims with Afro-Cuban cadence and once again displays Chadsey’s affinity and ease with the *montuno*.

A contemplative ode to Malian music, “Salif” honors Salif Keita and is highlighted by an elegantly cascading piano solo. “Still,” a funky, head-bopping tune laced with organ-sounding keyboard, is enveloped in a spirited take-me-to-church vibe. Toward the end of the track, Busch whimsically employs a *cuica* friction drum, a staple of samba and Brazilian *enredos* (Carnaval songs). The album’s closer, “Sinister Minister,” seals the deal, offering further evidence that Chadsey and company are polyglot alchemists and that Seattle’s global jazz fusion is a special brew in the making.

— Lissette Corsa

The Angelica Sanchez Trio *Float the Edge* (Clean Feed)

Pianist Angelica Sanchez has been a key figure behind several noteworthy projects during the past several years, whether leading her own groups or collaborating with artists such as Wadada Leo Smith, Kris Davis and Rob Mazurek. On *Float the Edge*, she applies her compelling vision to the piano-trio format with a work that’s by turns graceful, tumultuous and exhilarating. It certainly helps that Sanchez’s rhythm section consists of bassist Michael Formanek and drummer Tyshawn Sorey, two of the most dynamic and creative artists on their respective instruments.

“Float” is an apt descriptor. Sanchez’s gossamer phrases often seem to suspend

over the rest of the trio, lending her melodies a ruminative intensity. You can hear it over Formanek’s bowed lines and Sorey’s delicate symbol splashes on “Pyramid.” Even on knottier pieces, such as

“The Traveler,” the trio manages to convey a delicacy that tempers the melodic turmoil. Whether instinctive or by design, Sanchez also employs repetition, frequently injecting motivic melodic figures to break up the abstractions (e.g., on “The Traveler” and “Black Flutter”).

Formanek and Sorey each bring an orchestral quality to their performances. The pair develop an ebb-and-flow rumble under Sanchez’s quick-strike phrases on “Shapishico.” On the title track, Formanek’s bowed lines and Sorey’s skittering patterns heighten the anxiety of Sanchez’s staccato figures. Sorey employs a variety of tex-

