

resulting music is a distillation of influences – Lankum to be sure, as well as Clare's strong live music scene, and her own US influences, the Americana Gothic strand of folk steeped in the juices of isolation and concentration. Think Anna & Elizabeth's *The Invisible Comes to Us*.

Cinder Well's background is in the west coast anarchist scene – squats, collectives, folk punk – and it was while touring Europe that she encountered Lankum, and embarked on a life-changing move to Clare. *No Summer* is the result, extracting intuitive performances from a repertoire that mixes her own songs with Appalachian numbers and powerful traditional songs such as Jean Ritchie's 'The Cuckoo', Roscoe Holcomb's 'Wandering Boy', and a tune that epitomises the whole project, 'Queen of the Earth, Child of the Skies', a west Virginian take on an Irish set dance. You'll find much to absorb you when you gaze into Cinder Well.

TIM CUMMING

TRACK TO TRY *The Cuckoo*

Compro Oro with Murat Ertel & Esma Ertel

Simurg (34 mins)

★★★★★

Group invite Turkish musicians for psychedelic explorations



Simurg is the third album from Belgian psychedelic collective Compro Oro. The album is a

collaboration between the group and Turkish musicians Murat Ertel and Esma Ertel. This partnership began in 2016 when the group's guitarist performed with Murat at Istanbul Express. The album is, they say, 'entirely based on improvisation' between the group and both collaborators. Though its conception is different to their last album, *Suburban Exotica*, they initiate a similar sonic pallet, comprising of fuzz guitars, marimba, drums, synths and electronics, but with the addition of Murat providing electric *saz* and Esma performing spoken word passages. It swings between guitar and *saz* driven psych-rock ('Ben'), moody dub-esque moments ('Murwur') and avant-garde abstractions ('Valley of Gossip').

The album takes its name, *Simurg*, from a mythological Iranian bird, which is used as the conceptual framework for this project. It shows how the group still don't mind

pilfering the folklore of cultures they are trying to evoke in an attempt to create their own mysticism. Murat and Esma provide the most memorable and captivating parts of the record. Their distinct musical voices enable narratives to be born – if the group were to allow them more space, these stories could be fully realised.

MAREK TYMKÓW

TRACK TO TRY *Ben*

Duende Libre

The Dance She Spoke

Duende Libre (55 mins)

★★★★★

These hips don't lie



Duende Libre's third album, *The Dance She Spoke*, finds the band's founders – pianist Alex Chadsey, drummer Jeff 'Bongo' Busch and bassist Farko Dosumov – extending their genre-blending jazz with a more intentional incorporation of West African musical traditions. Today, *Duende Libre* is a quintet that includes vocalist and percussionist Frank Anderson as well as vocalist Chava Mirel. The three original members of the band drive the groove with the accomplished ease of longtime musical companions, and their tight interplay becomes a luminous, jazzy tapestry upon which Anderson and Mirel trade call-and-response vocals.

Six of the album's tunes are based on rhythms that Anderson learned studying dance and percussion in Guinea and Mali. Several (which are also album highlights) feature West African percussionist Thione Diop beautifully propelling the beat with *djembe* and *tama*. At times I wished for the tunes to veer towards more memorable intensity and maybe some dynamic surprises, but overall, the album is a delightful musical stroll, permeated by a gentle joy.

CATALINA MARIA JOHNSON

TRACK TO TRY *N'gri (Wassolou)*

India Electric Co

The Gap

Shoelace Music (34 mins)

★★★★★

You don't have to mind this gap



It's been five long years since India Electric Co released their debut, *The Girl I Left Behind Me*. In that time,

there have been two EPs from the prodigiously talented London-based

duo. Now their second full album is here, running to just over half an hour. They say you should leave 'em wanting more. We want more!

Singer Cole Stacey and multi-instrumentalist Joseph O'Keefe do the vignette well. They create haunting fiddle airs, guitar hooks and repeated phrasings in an instant, then let them wash away a minute later on an ebbing tide. This brevity speaks of the confidence of this duo, who reviewers have found so notoriously difficult to categorise. Their music harks at folk, has the lightness of the best pop, and the elegance and sense of improvisation of jazz. Just when you're thinking, 'This is all too lightweight. There's no real substance,' your ear is arrested by the rippling piano and fiddle of 'Scarlet' or 'The Broken Pledge' (an instrumental that is surely the opening for a great jam). And then in a flash, like Keyser Söze, they're gone. But it was good while it lasted.

NATHANIEL HANDY

TRACK TO TRY *Scarlet*

Omer Kringel

Okan Project

Omer Kringel (41 mins)

★★★★★

Israeli keyboardist takes a musical journey



Israeli keyboardist Omer Kringel took his recording equipment on the road for five weeks, from Spain to South America, Angola and the US, then back home, capturing multiple artist contributions en route. This debut album features all-original works, sometimes penned as collaborations, its dominant style arriving from Latin music, with most songs sung in Spanish. The line-up sprawls across brass, reeds, guitars, bass, drums, percussion, *oud*, *ney*, violin, *bansuri*, *kemenche* and marimba, featuring several vocalists.

The tracks are mainly glitzy and bombastic jazz-pop, with bloated cabaret salsa infusions, tightly negotiated, but frequently in poor taste. Massed elements are churned around in an overcooked and overcrowded mix. 'Freedom' sounds like pomp-rock trio Rush in the Caribbean, but the prime number is 'Distancias no Separan', a flamenco styling with acoustic guitar, *palmas*, a spirited duo vocal performance, and some welcome space hanging between the players. It's a shame to be negative about such an ambitious project,

but this glossy showbiz realisation will doubtless make most *Songlines* readers feel slightly queasy.

MARTIN LONGLEY

TRACK TO TRY *Distancias no Separan*

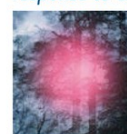
Kumee Sound

Real Music for Unreal Times: Vol 2

Future Rust Records (38 mins)

★★★★★

Hang in there: a handpan response to crazy times



Limitations can spark creativity and the global lockdown necessitated by COVID-19 has been

nothing if not a limit to musicians.

Finnish *hang* (handpan) artist Kumee Sound decided to navigate the difficulties by producing an album from his bedroom, broadcasting a message of comfort and contemplation to an isolated world.

Listeners will certainly receive a message about the quality of home recording. The record sounds pure and professional. Opener 'Everywhere' summons a sense of strife through cascading *hang* patterns answered by angsty strings. On 'A River in a River' collaborator Ilkka Heinonen wields a *jouhikko* (Finnish bowed lyre), deepening the sense of unease through its primeval twang. The record offers beauty and hope too. 'Spring Melody' is an uplifting tune that hints at the environmental benefits that have accompanied the pain of the pandemic.

Instead of hiding under his bed from the global tumult, Kumee Sound recorded his instrument beneath it. The results are impressive in execution but also in emotion. There will doubtless be much more beautiful music that emerges from this adversity.

LIAM IZOD

TRACK TO TRY *Spring Melody*

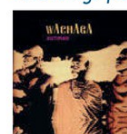
Kutiman

Wachaga

Siyal Music (40 mins)

★★★★★

Israeli DJ reworks field recordings from Tanzania



Kutiman has a perceptive vision that transforms the everyday into something remarkable. His

ThruYou video series cleverly interspersed lo-fi bedroom videos of ▶