

The Hot Box

Critics	Anthony Dean-Harris	Jim Macnie	J.D. Considine	Ivana Ng
Akinmusire/Halvorson <i>Slo-Mo Neon Luminare Hoverings</i>	★★★½	★★★★½	★★★	★★★
James Brandon Lewis Quartet <i>Omni</i>	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Brennan/Courvoisier <i>Talamanti</i>	★★★½	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★½
Barcelona Art Orchestra/ Zenón <i>Expressions</i>	★★★½	★★½	★★★½	★★★

Critics' Comments

Ambrose Akinmusire & Mary Halvorson, *Slo-Mo Neon Luminare Hoverings*

The daredevil aspects of this duet program always arrive with heart. There's a warmth to each, including those that juggle dissonance. But perhaps the biggest victory is the way any one of these pieces can share multiple emotions in a matter of minutes. The moods are many.

—Jim Macnie

As players, these two couldn't be better matched, perfectly complementing each other through sound, line and use of technology. But the tunes feel uneven, with some blossoming into full compositions while others seem like mere sketches.

—J.D. Considine

Akinmusire's soulful trumpet turns rough and unruly against Halvorson's introspective, multitextural guitar. The duo uses effect pedals not as embellishment but as third and fourth voice in a rich soundscape.

—Ivana Ng

James Brandon Lewis Quartet, *Omni*

Lewis continues to dazzle as he exhibits some of the most expressive, comprehensive, emotionally heady compositions in contemporary jazz today. How he achieves the soul in the midst of his dizzying complexity is a sound to behold yet again in what stands as one of the best albums of the year.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

Alternately gruff and lyrical, Lewis is a commanding presence, but it's the other three who take this up a notch. Brad Jones and Chad Taylor are relentlessly kinetic, while Aruán Ortiz's ability to zig when the rest of the band zags is a gift from heaven.

—J.D. Considine

Rooted in a driving blues groove that feels both familiar and freshly reimagined, Lewis' quartet drifts outward into cosmic, spiritual hymns yet never losing that grounded pulse.

—Ivana Ng

Patricia Brennan & Sylvie Courvoisier, *Talamanti*

Brennan's vibraphone and Courvoisier's piano find so many fascinating nooks and crannies around which to weave and meld.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

Instead of a confluence of contrasts (which can be intriguing enough) their esthetics neatly blend, doubling down on fluid motifs that blossom into melodies as the interplay nurtures them. It's about logic unfolding while yielding to poise at every turn.

—Jim Macnie

Brennan's vibraphone and marimba meet Courvoisier's piano in shared silences and arresting dialogue. It's a dreamy, cerebral work that explores space both physical and spiritual.

—Ivana Ng

Barcelona Art Orchestra & Miguel Zenón, *Expressions*

These four compositions are ample space for this group to shine all throughout, but it particularly feels engineered for Zenón to elegantly play some of his best music yet.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

The twists and turns of this extended piece lead the BAO to spots that revel in their machinations. That's tiring. The ensemble is tight, the soloist inspired, but the listening experience is flecked with tedium.

—Jim Macnie

With four composers contributing one movement each, this is hardly a typical concerto. But the orchestral palette is the perfect backdrop for Zenón's exquisitely expressive alto, allowing him to play at a scale small ensembles rarely afford.

—J.D. Considine

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bass



01. Post Tension	05:01
02. Wandering Timelines	10:48
03. Bones	08:44
04. Acceptance	04:57
05. One A.M.	11:26
06. White Knuckles	11:48
07. The Way Out	05:58

Total Running Time: 57:22

All pieces improvised and composed in the studio by Scott Sadlon, Rachel Eckroth, and Tim Lefebvre.

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