



Catherine Russell *Alone Together*

DOT TIME 9083

★★★★

With her 2016 album, *Harlem On My Mind*, released when she was 60 years old, Catherine Russell completed the challenging journey to the spotlight that's the focus of the film *20 Feet From Stardom*. Her Grammy nomination for the album signaled that she no longer was just the voice behind artists ranging from David Bowie to Rosanne Cash; she had arrived on her own.

With her follow-up, the vocalist moves further into the space previously dominated by Cécile

McLorin Salvant. Like the younger singer, Russell mines a trove of forgotten torch songs from the early 20th century, as well as more recognizable standards. Wisely, Russell chose not just to select a mixed bag of songs; rather, *Alone Together* pulls together a baker's dozen that forms a cohesive narrative with the singer as the lead character.

On a bluesy "I Wonder," "Early In The Morning" and "Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby?" she's the wounded lover, unsure of whether her partner is being true. But Russell's steely delivery, reminiscent of a young Dinah Washington, makes clear she's not playing the victim. On the spicy "He May Be Your Dog But He's Wearing My Collar," recorded by Rosa Henderson in 1924, she takes things into her own hands in a scenario that Henderson passed through the decades to salty-tongued successors like Millie Jackson and Meshell Ndegeocello.

With an unerring ear for great material and a voice that sounds timeless, Russell is making up for lost time. —James Hale

Alone Together: Alone Together; You Turned The Tables On Me; When Did You Leave Heaven?; Early In The Morning; Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby?; You Can't Pull The Wool Over My Eyes; Shake Down The Stars; I Wonder; He May Be Your Dog But He's Wearing My Collar; Errand Girl For Rhythm; How Deep Is The Ocean?; I Only Have Eyes For You; You're Not The Only Oyster In The Stew. (51:27)
Personnel: Catherine Russell, vocals; Jon-Erik Kellso, trumpet (1, 4-8, 11); John Allred, trombone (1, 4-8, 11); Evan Arntzen, tenor saxophone (1, 4-8, 11); Dana Lyn, violin (3); Eddy Malave, viola (3); Marika Hughes, cello (3); Matt Munisteri, guitar; Mark Shane, piano; Tal Ronen, bass; Mark McLean, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: dottimerecords.com

Marilyn Crispell *Dream Libretto*

LEO 849

★★★★

On Marilyn Crispell's newest album, musicians mold a temporary sonic realm of the unconscious, and traverse through it with dedication and curiosity. The first half of *Dream Libretto* is a set of five *Memoria* pieces, Crispell's suite of personal reflections on loss. Her fallen relatives from World War II exist together with deceased family and friends from recent years in this temporary space that Tanya Kalmanovitch (violin) and Richard Teitelbaum (electronics) create along with the bandleader. This is a sonically rich and textured reality—Teitelbaum's electronics vast and nuanced. Warm bells flower into faded and jagged violin lines, dense layers of distorted sound and echoing piano formations that reverberate in overtones. The narratives within the pieces are miraculous nonlinear threads of the unconscious, unfolding gently to offer inexplicable turns or to fade into darkness. Such are the sharp dissonances of Kalmanovitch's bowed violin against the speckles of Crispell's glimmering voicings in "Part III" of *Memoria*.

The second half of *Dream Libretto* consists of seven shorter improvised piano-violin vignettes. Here, Kalmanovitch and Crispell respond to the

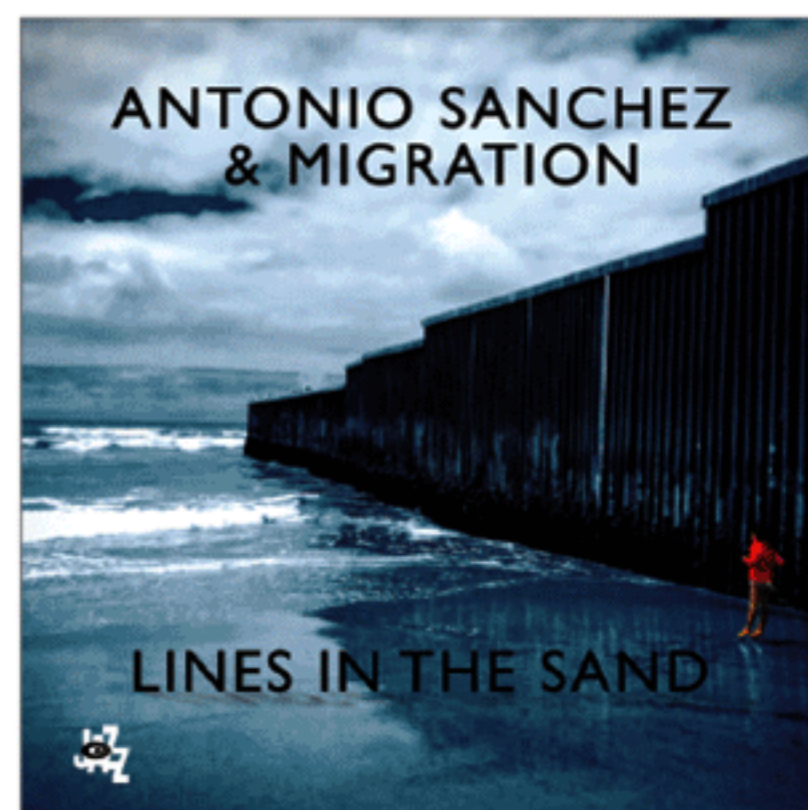


richness of the mournful dreamspace unfolded before them with a playful calmness, exploring whispers, silences and stillness. The two propel one another into creating the many captivating melodic moments that form each piece, like the inquisitive line of "Unburying The Silences" that insists and repeats in search of resolution, and the enrapturing counterpoint that unfolds throughout "Where Water Moves." —Tamar Sella

Dream Libretto: Memoria (Parts I-V); Climb To A Whisper; Unburying The Silences; Dark Reflection; Where Water Moves; Stones Remain Still; Walked Through To Sleep; Stars Visible And Invisible. (47:51)

Personnel: Marilyn Crispell, piano; Tanya Kalmanovitch, violin; Richard Teitelbaum, electronics (1-5).

Ordering info: leorecords.com



Antonio Sanchez & Migration *Lines In The Sand*

CAM 7940

★★★★

With *Lines In The Sand*, Antonio Sanchez sounds a call not only to action, but also about action. Fortified by the talents of his Migration band, the drummer/composer analyzes revolution as the heartbeat of jazz, deploying sonic avatars across a montage of police brutality and protest. Over a delicate bed of John Escreet's Fender Rhodes, the three-part suite *Travesía* unravels its politics into a patient groove. Like a thickly canopied forest, it affords only occasional shafts of light to mark the way. As drums announce themselves as being fully present, tenor saxophonist Chase Baird and vocalist Thana Alexa cut through the foliage, fulfilling a promise of a clearing.

At the other end of the album is the two-part title track: an epic testament to memory, given photorealistic depth by Alexa's wordless brushstrokes. Cell by cell, it builds from the ground up, anchored by bassist Matt Brewer. Before that, the band travels a "Long Road," along which Sanchez's tenure with Pat Metheny comes to bear. While it shares the album's feeling of travel, here a darker shadow blankets the way ahead. Rather than idealize the landscape, Sanchez finds corruption in it and turns it like a stone in a river, until it's smoothed into something beautiful and humane. In the tracks that follow, he finds greater urgency, drumming with narrative purpose. The song "Home," set to lyrics by Alexa, plants hope amid the tectonic harmonies. She crafts a sense of belonging in solitude, and seems to understand that the body is both a beginning and an ending. If only it can survive the night, she seems to say, it can greet the day, renewed.

—Tyran Grillo

Lines In The Sand: Travesía Intro; Travesía (Parts I-III); Long Road; Bad Hombres Y Mujeres; Home; Lines In The Sand (Parts I-II). (69:43)

Personnel: Antonio Sanchez, drums, vocals, keyboards; John Escreet, piano, Fender Rhodes, Prophet synthesizer; Matt Brewer, bass; Thana Alexa, vocals; Chase Baird, tenor saxophone, EW; Nathan Shram, viola (2); Elad Kabilio, cello (2, 3).

Ordering info: camjazz.com