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Album Review

Eva Slongo: Souffle

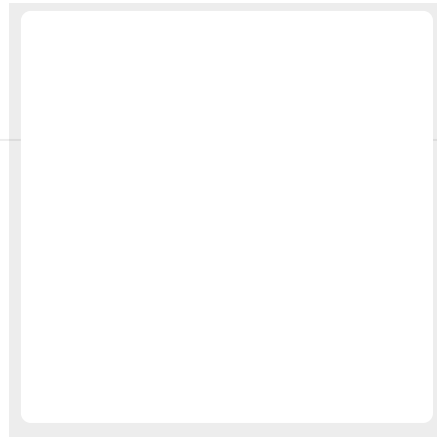


By Ian Patterson
July 14, 2022
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Improvisation was once a norm for classical musicians, and not just for geniuses such as Bach,

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composition. On *Souffle*, her second album following *Inspirations* (Unit Records, 2016), Swiss-born, Paris-based violinist Eva Slongo breaks a few metaphorical eggs in bringing the worlds of classical music and jazz together. Of the nine tracks, six are originals, with Slongo's arrangements of Fauré, Beethoven and Satie rounding out the set.

Whilst a whole album of jazz arrangements of classical music might have made for a greater conceptual statement, in fact, Slongo's vocabulary draws in a very natural way from both jazz and classical worlds. And that should come as no surprise. Classically trained, Slongo turned her back on a classical career upon discovering jazz and the thrill of improvisation. Her courage was vindicated when she won the Best Improvisation at the Stéphane Grappelli International Violin Competition in 2011.

Slongo's musical hybridity



John Clayton

drums



JAZZ MENAGERIE



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...the
aforementioned illustrious
trio of classical composers.
The classical formalism of
Slongo's melodies—often
delivered with voice and
violin in unison—is
juxtaposed against her
free-flowing scatting that
pulls the violin along for the
ride.

Jazz and classical idioms
apart, there is a rootsy
quality at the heart of
Slongo's improvisations.
This is maybe par for the
course for one au fait with
the gypsy jazz vernacular,
having collaborated with
guitar greats Birelli Lagrène
and Josef "Wawau" Adler
soon after arriving in the
French capital. Hers is an
intriguing language, and if
not unique, by no means
common or garden either.

The success of Slongo's
jazz-classical recipe is due
in no small part to the
impeccable rhythm section
of pianist
[Giovanni Mirabassi](#), bassist
[Francois Moutin](#) and
drummer Lukmil Perez.
They inject real swing on

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 1 | Shaw 'Nuff
Pasquale Grasso | 4:01 |
| 2 | Cleopatra's Dream - Remastered ...
Bud Powell | 4:23 |
| 3 | Anita
Marco Pacassoni | 5:01 |
| 4 | Quite Place
Ron Carter, Jack DeJohnette, Go... | 4:45 |
| 5 | Disco Ears
Joshua Redman, Brad Mehldau, ... | 6:21 |
| 6 | Finger Buster
Emmet Cohen | 4:11 |
| 7 | Summer Risina | 5:56 |

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Arabic-tinged reading of

Satie's "Gnossienne." On the latter, soprano saxophonist

[Baptiste Herbin](#) makes a dashing cameo, dovetailing with Slongo over Moutin's lithely inventive bass lines.

Slongo is also a singer. Her wordless legato is seductive, her scating a bold extension of her violin. On the tender lullaby "Petite Douceur," sung in French, Slongo reveals a more intimate side to her musical personality, with piano and violin in turn expressing what words cannot. And, in the Grappelli-inspired lyricism of "Rue de Genêts" and the Vivaldi-esque swagger of "Energía," Slongo bridges seemingly disparate cultures with elegance and passion.

Slongo knows that the musical ley lines between past and present, between so-called old music and new, run deep and straight. *Souffle* is a handsome testament to that truth.

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Souffle, Pierre Boulez,
Grossienne; Rue de Genêts;
Energía.

Personnel

Eva Slongo: violin; Giovanni
Mirabassi: piano; Francois
Moutin: bass; Lukmil Perez:
drums.

Additional Instrumentation

Baptiste Herbin: soprano
saxophone (1, 7).

Album Information

Title: [Souffle](#) | Year
Released: 2022 | Record
Label: Continuo Jazz

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About
Eva