

BLACK, BROWN AND BEIGE REVISITED • GEORGE ADAMS-DON PULLEN QUARTET

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BASS SPOTLIGHT

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Building from the Bottom

MARTIN WIND brings bassists—and musical worlds—together

Those who are only familiar with bassist Martin Wind's jazz credentials—both as a leader and as a first-call sideman for Bill Mays, Dena DeRose, Ken Peplowski, Ann Hampton Callaway, and numerous other A-listers—may be surprised to hear him showcase Baroque bona fides on the bookends of his latest release: two different performances of J.S. Bach's "Air." But a broad embrace of classical music is of a piece with his background. A onetime student of Wolfgang Güttler, former bassist with the Berlin Philharmonic, Wind played under legends like Gidon Kremer and Mstislav Rostropovich; built his sterling technique by approaching orchestral opportunities and jazz work with equal measures of enthusiasm; and later used his pen to marry both passions, bowing to Bill Evans with a quartet and the Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana on 2014's *Turn Out the Stars*

and constructing his own *Legacy*, a concerto for double bass and orchestra.

Now *Air*, arriving on the heels of 2021's quartet date *My Astorian Queen*, underscores that history with greater depth than ever. It also sees Wind merging musical worlds while fronting a very different type of quartet: an all-bass foursome featuring Jordan Frazier, Gregg August, and Sam Suggs. The idea for the group sprang from his work at Long Island's Hofstra University. "I'm the teacher for the classical basses, jazz players, and electric bass players," Wind explains. "And rather than only see them individually, I wanted to create a forum, or bass scene, where I could see all of my students together and where they could learn from each other." Writing music to aid in that endeavor, Wind would go on to fine-tune and present his arrangements with Talking Hands—an all-star bass outfit placing him alongside

ON THE RED CARPET

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OCTOBER

Jazz Music Awards (Atlanta, GA): This inaugural event will recognize national and international jazz creators, from soloists and ensembles to composers. Online submissions are welcome through April 30; go to jazzmusicawards.com for more.

John Clayton, Rufus Reid, and Lynn Seaton. Then, when COVID-19 quieted the scene, he realized it was time to take a step in another direction. "I thought, 'Let me try to get these three guys here in New York who have more of an arco or classical background than John, Lynn, and Rufus,

and see if I can document some of those arrangements.'"

The results of that gathering—nine tracks that showcase a richly resonant blend—speak to Wind's catholic tastes and highly developed skills as a performer, composer, and arranger. On both versions of "Air," the first by the quartet and the second being one of a handful of numbers with multi-instrumentalist Gary Versace and drummer Matt Wilson in the mix, he evinces supreme taste as an accompanist (version one) and a soloist (version two). Elsewhere, Wind and company display a fondness for surprise. On "(Give me some) G-String," as the two-drummer team of Wilson and Lenny White drive the train, strings shift from far-out fiddle territory to a bluesy breakdown and back. With a Beatles medley, allowing Wind to indulge in melody painting, one fab four salutes another. Eschewing electric bass for "Birdland," and bringing White back for the hit, the collective personnel offer a different slant on Weather Report. And while developing an eight-bar progression into a stunning eight-minute take on Charlie Haden's "Silence," Wind demonstrates the true powers of progress.

A wonderfully nuanced trip through Pat Metheny's "Tell Her You Saw Me" and a pair of second-act originals—shapeshifter "I'd Rather Eat" and the alluring "Iceland Romance"—make up the balance of the program and further illustrate the beauty and versatility at play within the rightly named New York Bass Quartet. "They're all really great arco players, but they also have these wide musical backgrounds," Wind notes. "I thought they would form an A-team [with me] and I believe it turned out that way. I'm extremely happy with the results."

—DAN BILAWSKY