

parabolate their way forward but ultimately bring the music right back to its starting point, an astonishing take on the permeable boundaries between form and structure capped by delectable deep double-bass rumbles. The other relative miniature, "Rarefaction", deals in near-octaves and fifths, though never quite in the way tradition-oriented ears might expect. Intervals either grind and pulse or resonate with a mystical purity beyond description—until the most exquisite third imaginable (4:28) sweeps all ahead of it to the side and becomes a major component as the piece nears its conclusion.

To suggest that the two longer works follow a similar developmental pattern is to sell their originality short. There is no adequate encapsulation of the first five minutes from "On Axis": it is a marvel how an octave can birth so many interregistral overtones and how monumental that succeeding interval switch sounds. Similarly, the ascending harmonic centers forming the glacial trajectory of "Double Cross" need to be experienced, primarily for the unity in their execution—which is what this music is about, despite its moment-to-moment diversity. The two players sound as if they were playing a single instrument or even drawing shared breaths. These are hauntingly beautiful explorations of the place where tone and overtone meet, with better travel guides impossible to find.

For more info visit [relativepitchrecords.bandcamp.com](http://relativepitchrecords.bandcamp.com). Pavone is at Brooklyn Museum with Sally Gates and Nava Dunkelman May 9. See Calendar.



**Dance of the Mystic Bliss**  
Michael Blake and Chroma Nova (P&M)  
by Jim Motavalli

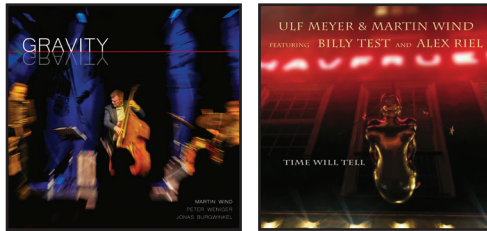
Where has Michael Blake been all my listening life? Shame on me, because this is his 15th solo album, following last year's Bob Stewart/Marcus Rojas double tuba frontline heard on *Combobulate* (Newvelle). The entirely Blake-written-and-arranged *Dance of the Mystic Bliss* features the leader on flutes, tenor and soprano saxophones, and is a deeply warm, melodic and humanistic record dedicated to the artist's late mother. Working with two Brazilian percussionists (Mauro Refosco and Rogerio Boccato), Skye Steele (violin), Guilherme Monteiro (guitar), Christopher Hoffman (cello) and Michael Bates (bass), Blake has created a unified, almost cinematic work that is both elegiac and emotionally compelling.

"Le Coeur de Jardin" features Blake on soprano, evoking Coltrane's work on the instrument without sounding remotely like him, though the search for transcendence is a shared trait. With great work from Hoffman, the number builds on an appealing circular melody before Blake enters with just two minutes left and channels the proceedings skyward.

The edgier and funkier "Little Demons" takes full advantage of the strings, which serve as a unique atmospheric foil to the two percussionists. There's a certain "Naked City" vibe that John Zorn would presumably like. "Love Finally Arrives", with Steele featured out front, dances sympathetically with the leader's breathy, yearning tenor. "The Meadows" features the leader on first-time-recorded flute, operating over a near-drone that suddenly breaks into a bouncy folk-influenced melody that, thanks

to Monteiro, evokes the best of a Bill Frisell-ian influence. "Prune Pluck Pangloss" builds an earworm martial beat, catnip for the percussionists, as Blake switches from sax to Rahsaan Roland Kirk-esque flute. The African highlife feel of "Sagra" is joyous and features great sawing from Steele. The compact "Merle the Pearl" is an upbeat, celebratory portrait of his mother, with great writing for the ensemble and the leader's tenor, with not a second wasted. This sentiment could be said of the whole album, which is all about serving the song. There are no grandstands and no meandering solos that outlast their welcome. It's hard to avoid being overly effusive about this wonderfully arranged record, but it's just that special. There's a lot going on in each track, so much so that additional rewards are surely to be had with headphone listening.

For more info visit [michaelblake.net](http://michaelblake.net). This project is at Nublu 151 May 27. See Calendar.



**Gravity**  
Martin Wind/Peter Weniger/Jonas Burgwinkel  
(Laika)  
**Time Will Tell**  
Ulf Meyer & Martin Wind (Laika)  
by Jim Motavalli

It's unclear how much exposure *Gravity*, recorded and released in Germany, gets in the States, but it deserves a listen—especially from fans of the busy New York-based bassist Martin Wind. The focus may be on Wind—in the cover photo he's the only musician in focus, and his name is bold-faced. But this is a tight unit and the playing reflects the fact that Wind and tenor saxophonist Peter Weniger have known each other for 35 years (since their days with the German National Youth Jazz Orchestra). The leader's "Still Friends" initiates the album's proceedings. It's a lean, snaky, swinging tune and showcases Weniger's bright, dry sound: what Paul Desmond might have sounded like on tenor and if he had grazed in the avant-garde. The saxophonist's "Newborn" is introduced by the leader's bouncing bass. And drummer Jonas Burgwinkel, out of the Ed Blackwell school, is effectively as much a busy percussionist as trap drummer. Wind's "Inga's Waltz" slows the proceedings down, with the bassist on top, playing big-toned figures before the pace picks back up with a short but yearning tenor saxophone solo (someone should write lyrics for this number, as it has the feel of a standard in the making).

Al Cohn recorded Johnny Mandel's "El Cajon" in 1981, and here it is again—a reminder that Weniger has a touch of that West Coast cool sound in his playing. Dave Frishberg wrote lyrics to this one. Reaching back to an even earlier source, the trio interprets Beethoven's "Pathetique" as an elegant late-night jazz ballad. Wind's sprightly "Another Beer Please" has the noisy, drink-spilling atmosphere of New York clubs down pat, just like Frank Zappa's "America Drinks and Goes Home". His exceptional bass playing on this tune demonstrates why he's so in demand. For a complete change of pace, the album closes with a gentle reading of Gershwin's "Someone to Watch Over Me". Wind brings it down to a crawl, Weniger showing a personal flair for playing ballads.

*Time Will Tell*, recorded in Copenhagen (versus Berlin), is a completely different record. The bassist is joined by Ulf Meyer (guitar), Billy Test (keyboards)

and Alex Riel (drums). Meyer's delicate solo guitar introduces John Lewis' indelible "Django". The tread is so light that this reviewer had to double-check to see if the album is an ECM release. The bassist's "Solitude" is also somber. But then Meyer's lively "October Blues" shakes things up, taking us into Bill Frisell-ian territory. Guitar, bass and piano lock in tight. That's the tune—Meyer's swinging solo is more out of Wes Montgomery and Philadelphia-born Test, (who holds down the piano chair in Germany's WDR Big Band) swings handily on this one, too.

Wind's "Maya" is introduced by the composer's spare solo. Test trickles in until Meyer leaps into the fray two minutes in. He showcases the formidable melody, bringing in clear skies and a brighter tone, with both Meyer and Test taking shiny solos. Meyer's "On My Sofa" takes us into late night, clicking through Netflix and chilling, perhaps? Milwaukee-based Seymour Lefco was known as "the jazz dentist", and his "You Look Good to Me" (written with Clement Wells) was recorded by Oscar Peterson in 1964 before it made its way across the ocean and became popular among European musicians. The version here, the closest the album gets to a standard per se, is beautifully lyrical with the pianist's playing standing out. Meyer's "Do Di Dee" isn't a standard—yet, but it has that level of sophisticated yet accessible musicality. The guitarist has the lead, yielding for Test's shimmering solo. Meyer's title piece, the album closer, takes us back to the "ice storm in Copenhagen" mood of "Django". It's lovely.

For more info visit [Laika-Records.com](http://Laika-Records.com). Wind is at Mezzrow May 5-6 with Chuck Redd Trio and Blue Note May 7 with NYU Martin Wind Ensemble. See Calendar.

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