

Juritz (both South African), German harp player Antonia Ravens and Swiss guitarist and 'sonic explorer' (musician?) Beat Keller. The album 'documents and reimagines a warm summer's evening in Basel, Switzerland.' The A side works through warm and folksy violin melodies and driving lamellophones into more avant-grade dissonances, using a host of predominantly string instruments to create a nature-inspired soundscape. The B side is a set of remixes from other collaborators, moving between more overt dance tracks ('Set'), glitchy ('Ehrfurcht'), meditations ('LTG'). Stacey finishes the record with a more organic take on her rework ('Fluss').

The A side displays a vast array of instruments from around sub-Saharan Africa, including those from Mozambique and Uganda, which are celebrated within the music itself. It is a shame that they were unable to collaborate with musicians from these regions, which could have enabled a richer plurality of sonic and rhythmic textures and perhaps a deeper cohesion between the voices.

MAREK TYMKÓW

TRACK TO TRY *Like the Grass*

Leni Stern

4

Leni Stern (39 mins)

★★★★★

The fruit of a decade of research



The product of a decade of musical research and cross-continental collaboration, 4 is the fruit of Leni

Stern's forays into West African groove and pentatonic melody, Latin American rhythms and lyricism, and Indian melodic ornamentation. Her band consists of Leo Genovese on keys, Mamadou Ba on bass, Alioune Faye on percussion, with a guest appearance from Mike Stern on guitar in 'Habib'.

Opener 'Lambar' is a great representation of her West African influence. The percussion remains highly syncopated throughout, and Stern isn't afraid of embracing some cheesy synths and gospel-style harmony. On 'Amadeus' she sings with a ghostly, thin tone reminiscent of bossa nova or Brazilian psychedelia. She sings with the same energy on 'Chartwell' an mbira-led lullaby. Ultimately, 'Japalema' stole the show for me. It's the song with the most rhythmic tension and the fullest exploration of the band's jazz chops. Mamadou Ba pushes and pulls the



Transglobal Underground Walls Have Ears

Mule Satellite (54 mins)

★★★★★

Collective come full circle and invite back some old friends



Veteran collective Transglobal Underground have morphed and changed in the years since this writer followed their Pied Piperish lead from festival to festival, happening to happening in the 1990s. Touting a cosmic mix of dubtronica, soul, and rap alongside Asian, African and Eastern European grooves, they've been a band, a production team and a set of DJs, identity shifts that have kept them fresh, in flux, ever creative and agitating. Here, once more a band, they come full circle, reclaiming original members – vocalist Natacha Atlas and bassist Dubulah (aka Nick 'Dub Colossus' Page) – and stoking the flame that has burned through a wealth of acclaimed albums. Themes are both serious and

joyous; tripping from London to Paris, for example, has never felt so exhilarating. Like the special guests, stand-out tunes are many. 'Ruma Jhuma' features the inspired pairing of Egyptian-British Atlas and UK-based singer and *sitarist* Sheema Mukherjee, both improvising, the former's crystalline Arabic curlicues vying and blending with the latter's sweet, high pitched Hindi. 'Stand Up (Nifhamou)' combines North African trance with on-the-fly vocalese from Atlas, with features from Algerian singer Sofiane Saidi and Moncef Hakim from Lyon-based Oriental scientists Mazalda. 'Mind the Gap', a tribute to the Central Line, is a whirl of upbeat vibes and fizzing possibility. Another under-the-radar gem.

JANE CORNWELL

TRACK TO TRY *Stand Up*

time beautifully, his bass line sounds like something you might hear from a Buika or Esperanza Spalding tune, and Leo Genovese's piano solo is stellar, audibly more enjoyable than his synth performances elsewhere on the album. A solid album displaying expert musicianship and sensitive combinations of disparate styles.

CHARLOTTE ALGAR

TRACK TO TRY *Japalema*

Touki Right of Passage

Captain Pouch Records (47 mins)

★★★★★

American and Wolof vibes



Franco-American guitar and banjo player Cory Seznec and Senegalese guitarist-turned-kora player

Amadou Diagne first met while busking on the streets of Bath – a musical rapport came easily and, over the next decade or so, blossomed into a fully-fledged collaboration and now a debut album recorded at the renowned Real World Studios.

This set is full of easy Americana and Wolof vibes, taking blues from both sides of the Atlantic as starting points for extended tours around the music of both regions. Layers of strings build up rippling, twinkling patterns, out of which blossom forth Diagne's light, high-pitched voice, or maybe Seznec's throaty fretless gourd banjo or palmwine guitar. Guests including Ethiopian *masenqo* player Endris Hassen and accordionist Michael Ward-Bergeman broaden the scope further and add different textures without sounding out-of-place. It is clear that Diagne and Seznec click musically, but

it also feels as though their repertoire lacks risks and the fireworks that can happen as a result. This goes along smoothly with several cool moments, but it stops short of having a 'wow' factor that would put it above the rest.

JIM HICKSON

TRACK TO TRY *Mbague!*

Waaju Grown

Olinda Records (40 mins)

★★★★★

All grown up: London quintet prove they can groove



Waaju are an innovative Afro-Latin quintet, led by drummer Ben Brown, who regularly performs with Newham's Alfa Mist. This project, though, is very much Brown's vision.

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