

## GLOBE UNITY: FINLAND



*Duetstory*  
Erkki Joutseno (Karkai Mistika/Musapojat)  
*Oh, La Vie!*  
Olavi Trio (TUM)  
*Matka*  
Tapio/Tuomi Duo (Karkia Mistika)  
by Tom Greenland

Condense Finland's almost 90-year-old jazz scene into a brief article? Impossible. Three drum-centric recent discs, however, show its ongoing vitality.

Drummer Erkki Joutseno has been active in free improv for the last quarter-century, yet *Duetstory* is only his second project as a leader. Recorded in Kiiikala, it features Tapani Varis, Matti Riikonen, Riko Goto and Jari Hongisto, each pairing up with Joutseno on separate tracks. Hongisto appears on two versions of "Clean Water", combining muted, burbling trombone sub-tones with hypnotic toms and rain-like cymbal rolls. Varis plays folksy flute over a double-time march on "Now Try This", siren-like baritone saxophone over screeching cymbals on "Toing-and-Froing" and underwater motorcycle effects via ocarina on "Flowing Sound". On "The Mirror Dream" and "Gonglike Phrase" Goto's piano fills in wide-open spaces with ghostly echoes. Riikonen's muted trumpet flits over Joutseno's droning clarinet on "Alongside Three" and over his piano and dubbed-in drums on "Octopus Summer". The shifting of musical pairs makes for a satisfyingly varied program.

The Olavi Trio—so named because the members' middle names are Olavi and all share an admiration for Finnish vocalist Olavi Virta—is a multi-generational outfit: bassist/mentor Teppo Hauta-aho is in his mid 70s, trombonist Jari Hongisto in his mid 50s and drummer Niilo Louhivuori in his mid 30s. The gaping age difference doesn't seem to affect the parity of the partnership, however, for a highly democratic ethos is evident in the sharing of leadership roles and allotment of 'solo' space on *Oh, La Vie!*, the group's sophomore project on Helsinki's TUM, featuring fine cover art by Markus Konttinen. The title track extends to almost 11 minutes, but most are much shorter, either improvisations based on a just-learned theme or a free-for-all. In spite of the let's-think-on-our-feet approach, the results are cohesive.

Jorma Tapio and Janne Tuomi team up for *Matka*, their relationship graphically suggested by the cover photo depicting two slightly dilapidated, walrus-mustached elderly men holding hands, one leaning forward and gazing at his friend, the other leaning backward and gazing out at us. The music within is similar, both introverted and self-contained yet retaining an awareness of its intended audience. Like Joutseno's album of duets, these tracks vary in mood and mode, partly because Tapio often switches instruments, playing tenor saxophone, bass clarinet and several flutes (soprano, alto, wooden), adding further color by singing through the tube, and partly because Tuomi employs a wide palette of percussive colors. Electronic effects and light overdubbing thicken this otherwise spartan setting; a couple of brief tracks serve as interludes for the longer ones. Although Tapio and Tuomi don't sound nearly as timeworn as the men who grace the cover, their music obviously arises out of a well-seasoned friendship.

For more information, visit [hahmot.net](http://hahmot.net) and [tumrecords.com](http://tumrecords.com)



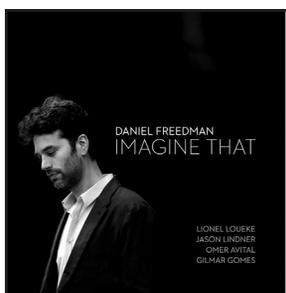
*Old Growth Forest*  
Harris Eisenstadt (Clean Feed)  
by John Sharpe

Drummer Harris Eisenstadt's *Old Growth Forest* was long in gestation, but finally became reality during his September 2015 residency at The Stone. It unites one-time neighbor, saxophonist Tony Malaby, with a trio born during the drummer's sojourn in Chicago, completed by trombonist Jeb Bishop and bassist Jason Roebke. While not a pure blowing unit, the quartet operates with a somewhat looser feel than some of Eisenstadt's other projects. His eight compositions nonetheless impart just enough structure to prime his seasoned collaborators to travel down some less frequented byways.

Although lacking in great age, the outfit does share some other characteristics of the titular ecosystem in its multiple layers and diversity. Poised as ever, Eisenstadt generates a rustling understory in which his rhythmic shifts and embellishments subtly prompt and push his colleagues. Roebke presents a melodic but meaty presence in the middle level while Malaby and Bishop create a canopy not only full of overlapping forms, but also the gaps that permit illumination of what goes on beneath. Malaby's unpredictable delivery and love of unconventional texture in particular keeps the ears pricked while Bishop's garrulous yet honeyed trombone affords a fine foil.

With most cuts hovering around the seven-minute mark, Eisenstadt allows space to stretch out but not to sprawl. Engaging horn interplay emerges from the Anthony Braxton-like repetition of "Redwood" and also precedes the open exchange of "Big Basin". By contrast, "Pine" is warily conversational, as growling trombone percolations give way to a dialogue spiced by animal-like shrieks and outbursts from tenor and Roebke's bow work. Roebke takes a prominent role on "Hemlock" as his pizzicato introduction presages a gentle minor key wistfulness maintained by smoky tenor. On the upbeat hymnal of "Fir", Eisenstadt himself enjoys an elegant timbral investigation within a pulsing framework. But, as in all natural habitats, it is the interactions between the constituent parts that produce the web-like, life-affirming complexity.

For more information, visit [cleanfeed-records.com](http://cleanfeed-records.com)



*Imagine That*  
Daniel Freedman (Anzic)  
by Donald Elfman

Right from the start of this dynamic and appealing set, a listener can hear that the musicians, led by Daniel Freedman, veteran drummer for the world-music outfits Third World Love and Pharaoh's Daughter, have locked in to celebrate diversity and a global approach to making music.

Opener "Determined Soul" (composed by keyboard player Jason Lindner) features a classic soul-

jazz groove, complemented by an African beat. It pulses ever forward with drums, keyboards, Omer Avital's bass and Gilmar Gomes' percussion stating the simple theme and then guitarist Lionel Loueke and Lindner soaring out above the insistent rhythm. The infectious pulse continues to throb straight through to a section towards the end that incorporates the feel of Indian music.

"Baby Aya" is another hybrid, this time more unusual. There's the simple chant-like sound of a lullaby—it was, indeed, sung by Freedman to his baby daughter—but the rhythm gives it the buoyancy of an African dance. Loueke translated the words into the West African Fon language and Freedman and guest vocalist Angélique Kidjo (in whose band Freedman plays) sing the lyrics. The tune closes with some beautifully original batucada, a kind of Brazilian rhythm, supplied by Gomes.

In a recording full of lovely surprises, along comes a Lindner/Freedman quintet arrangement of a song by indie-rock band Radiohead. "Codex" is a lesser-known tune but it works here thanks to Loueke's gorgeous guitar playing, Lindner's electronic effects and the subtle and expressive pulsing from the entire band.

Loueke contributed one tune to the session. "Mindaho" opens with Freedman and Gomes working together to establish the groove, delicate chording from Lindner and then stunningly elegant guitar and vocal sound painting from the composer.

Daniel Freedman has succeeded in creating an environment for the players that allows them to speak in their own sensitively expressive languages but also complement each other to become that most special thing—a group with a voice.

For more information, visit [anzicrecords.com](http://anzicrecords.com)

## interpretations 27



ADAM RUDOLPH  
MAREK CHOLONIEWSKI

APR 14, 8PM

Percussionist/composer Adam Rudolph presents two World Premieres: *Morphic Resonances* (2013, revised 2016) & *Syntactic Adventures - in Memoriam Yusef Lateef* (2016), featuring the Momenta String Quartet, plus *ORBITS I & II*, featuring the Oberlin Percussion Group (with Rudolph as guest). Krakow-based composer Marek Choloniewski presents a retrospective program of interactive solo and ensemble works involving video, brainwaves, facial movements, and other re-imaginings of musical performance.

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