



**Whatever Will Happen That Will Also Be**  
**Harris Eisenstadt (NoBusiness)**  
 by John Sharpe

Ever since Haydn's day the string quartet has been considered a prestigious form and as such has come to exercise an attraction on even those operating in what could loosely be termed the jazz arena. Drummer Harris Eisenstadt presents his first foray on *Whatever Will Happen That Will Also Be*, enlisting the Mivos Quartet, one of America's foremost new music ensembles.

Although the 35-minute composition contains some ten minutes of improvisation, such is the skill of the quartet that the transitions appear seamless. While the bright lyrical invention and rhythmic ingenuity one might recognize from Eisenstadt's groups such as Canada Day are under wraps, his love of overlapping layers and contrapuntal voicings is well represented. Eisenstadt meets the challenges inherent in the restricted instrumental palette of the strings by accentuating contrasts, juxtaposing dog-bothering violin whistles with longer deep tones in the viola and cello and plucking against bowing. However, the work sits firmly under the contemporary music banner, rather than indicating any sort of crossover.

Constant gear shifts create an unsettled feel overall. Eisenstadt first introduces then extrapolates the thematic material, starting with violins in the highest registers, pizzicato strings and somber sustains. Amid the angular shards and gritty attacks, "Movement II" opens out into a brief aching viola melody while "Movement III" furnishes slower passages, although even here there are episodes of dashing sawing, including an extemporized violin coda of extreme textures. The last movement unifies material from previous sections and heralds a reprise of the opening gambit, but the unresolved final notes lend an air of mystery in keeping with the title. While Eisenstadt remains one of the select band of drummers who compose, this set begs the question whether ultimately he will become known as a composer who drums.

For more information, visit [nobusinessrecords.com](http://nobusinessrecords.com). Eisenstadt is at *The Stone* Dec. 11th and *The Owl Music Parlor* Dec. 21st. See Calendar.



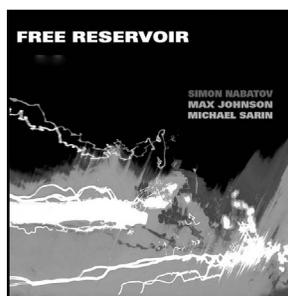
**Eponymous**  
**Ralph Bowen (Posi-Tone)**  
 by Phil Freeman

Tenor saxophonist Ralph Bowen got his start in the band Out Of The Blue, which made four albums for Blue Note between 1985-89. He made his solo debut on Criss Cross in 1992 and recorded for the label again in 2001 and 2003, but his career jumped into a higher gear when Posi-Tone signed him; since 2009, he's made six albums for them. This self-titled effort arrives after a three-year gap and is primarily built around a six-part suite of tracks named for animals: "A Rookery of Ravens", "A Leap of Leopards", "A Pandemonium of Parrots", "A

Flamboyance of Flamingos", "A Venue of Vultures" and "A Cast of Crabs". The album also includes one more Bowen original, a piece by bassist Kenny Davis ("Aye") and versions of Dave Liebman's "Piccadilly Lilly" and McCoy Tyner's "Search for Peace".

Bowen is a lyrical player who favors long lines and the middle of the tenor's range. It's a virtual certainty that his favorite Coltrane album was released on Atlantic. He's backed by a trio of players who get what he's going for 100 percent. Pianist Jim Ridl switches to Fender Rhodes for "A Flamboyance of Flamingos" and funky "A Cast of Crabs" and throws some jarring, almost Matthew Shipp-esque slams into "A Venue of Vultures", but mostly stays in the hardbop lane, laying down light but forceful chords and letting his solos unfurl with cautious exuberance. Davis and drummer Cliff Almond drive the music forward with a superb sense of swing and a hard, almost bouncing feel. Ridl returns to the Fender Rhodes for the album-closing "Search for Peace", perhaps unwilling to compete with Tyner on the legend's own piece. The quartet takes the beautiful ballad even slower than the original 1967 recording; Bowen cuts his usual long phrases in half, going bluesy and mellow, and Ridl's solo has a floaty, Bob James-ian energy. In fact, this track could almost have gotten radio play in the '70s.

For more information, visit [posi-tone.com](http://posi-tone.com). This project is at *Smalls* Dec. 15th-16th. See Calendar.



**Free Reservoir**  
**Simon Nabatov/Max Johnson/Michael Sarin (Leo)**  
 by Stuart Broomer

Russia-born, Germany-based pianist Simon Nabatov has developed a strong New York presence from early work in the quartets of Perry Robinson and Ray Anderson. That geographical relationship continues in this trio with bassist Max Johnson and drummer Michael Sarin. The music is collectively improvised, rooted in the traditions of both the jazz piano trio and harmonic and rhythmic expansions of the past century in jazz and European art music.

Nabatov is a piano virtuoso, but in the lineage of Bud Powell, not Oscar Peterson. His dense, rapid-fire keyboard adventures are complex inspirations rather than decorations, rich in the moment as well as past associations. Much of the group's potential is apparent in the title track, Nabatov's opening motifs first drawing a staggered line from Johnson, then insistent knitwork from Sarin. Within a minute they're in full flight, Nabatov developing contrapuntal parts between left and right hands with drum patterns exploding through the piano. Different tempos come and go, brief solos emerge and the three keep finding fresh ways to interact. There's an extraordinary moment when Johnson bows slow glissandi against the piano, the dissonance creating the impression of a quarter-tone piano. At the end, Nabatov launches a wild two-hand dance that sounds like a spontaneous relative of Maurizio Pollini's performance of Stravinsky's "Three Movements from Petrushka".

The opening movement (yes, there is sometimes that sense of structure) of "Slow Droplets" is as beautiful as George Crumb's "Night Music", full of bright sustained splashes of treble piano and a sonorous cello-like arco melody from Johnson. "Maracatu Askew" is propelled by powerful counter rhythms while "Tap Dance Inferno" has every instrument tap-

dancing at a very quick internal (and infernal) tempo, skittering piano runs in the upper register, rapid rattle of sticks and blazing pizzicato. The concluding "Short Story Long", the longest track at 18 minutes, is a wonder of sonic invention, from grinding bowed bass and a tiny Asian cymbal to long inventive piano lines.

This was apparently recorded a day after the trio's first performance; given that, the level of interaction—precise as well as spontaneous—is even more remarkable.

For more information, visit [leorecords.com](http://leorecords.com). Johnson is at *Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center* Dec. 14th with Yoni Kretzmer and *Bar Chord* Dec. 19th. Sarin is at *Bar Lunático* Dec. 1st and *Studio 312* Dec. 7th. See Calendar.

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