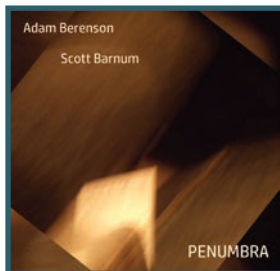


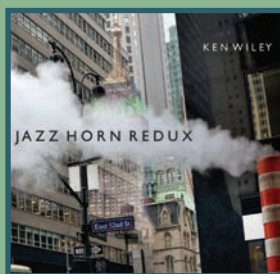
Adam Berenson

11. Occupying the space between avant-garde jazz and classical music, the work of Philadelphia area pianist and composer **Adam Berenson** defies easy categorization. Berenson follows up his 2014 double-album chamber-music release *Lumens* with the duo album *Penumbra*, issued on his own Dream Play label. During the course of 13 varied tracks, the pianist engages in free-form conversation with bassist and frequent collaborator **Scott Barnum**. Each track is preceded by the word “lekton,” a term that Berenson has defined as “logical reasoning, as distinct from learned reasoning.” The description fits the improvised pieces, which contain a multitude of sounds, from piano and various keyboards and synthesizers to bass and prepared bass. Still, the organic resonances of hands on keys and strings



remain throughout, to greater and lesser degrees, but perhaps nowhere more so than on “Lekton 8,” our selection. Berenson’s moody, mysterious piano rings and sustains with crystalline clarity, both in contrast and in perfect concert with the rough articulation of Barnum’s thumping, thrumming bass strings.

12. French horn player **Ken Wiley** boasts a résumé that reads like a savvy jazz fan’s record collection. The veteran studio musician has performed with the Charlie Rouse Quintet, Charlie Haden’s Liberation Music Orchestra, John Patitucci and Grant Geissman, while earning acclaim as a leader in his own right. For his 2014 release *Jazz Horn Redux* (Krug Park Music), Wiley recruited top-flight West Coast musicians to help him realize his first all-acoustic-jazz album. He exhibits exceptional taste in his selections, offering textured, nuanced reads of classics such as Freddie Hubbard’s “Little Sunflower,” Miles Davis’ “Freddie Freeloader,” John Coltrane’s “Equinox” and Sonny Rollins’ “Oleo,” among others. For our selection, Wiley takes a relaxed stroll through the Milt Jackson



stroll through the Milt Jackson classic “Bag’s Groove,” as pianist Wally Minko, bassist Trey Henry and drummer Kendall Kay maintain a bluesy lope throughout. Wiley’s mellow brass is bolstered by Gary Grant’s superb flugelhorn, the pair synching up on the sinewy outro.

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Ken Wiley

13. In the early ’70s, burgeoning jazz vocalist **Fred Farell** began studying with pianist Richie Beirach in New York City, developing his ear and his chops as an improviser. Beirach encouraged his student to write lyrics to jazz compositions, and before long Farell was diving into works written by Beirach and his colleague Dave Liebman. Farell penned heartfelt, evocative words that added context to Beirach’s and Liebman’s dramatic music, but after a religious awakening, decided to leave the jazz world in 1980. More than 30 years later, Farell revisited the lyrics he had written and found that they still spoke to him. Thus inspired, he contacted Beirach and Liebman and proposed that they finish what he had started. The subsequent trio album *Distant Song* (Whaling City Sound) was well worth the wait. Farell’s yearning vocals float and drift over the stark and moody terrain of Beirach’s piano and Liebman’s saxophone and flute, the lyrics wistfully introspective. On “Leaving,” included here, Farell’s voice rises and falls like a wind-blown leaf, the music and the lyric sketching a bleak landscape. Beirach, who composed the piece, sets the stage with a gorgeous, heartbroken solo passage that’s later echoed in Liebman’s soprano sax and wooden flute. Farell’s voice is filled with regret as he sings about a painful parting. However, by song’s end, he’s on his way back to the place where his heart lies, an apt metaphor for his return to this music.



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