

## Editors' Picks

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BY BRIAN ZIMMERMAN

**Laszlo Gardony,**  
*Life In Real Time* (Sunnyside)

Hungarian pianist and composer Laszlo Gardony adds a vivacious live performance to his impressive discography with *Life In Real Time*, recorded at the Berklee Performance Center in Boston with Berklee stalwarts John Lockwood on bass and Yoron Israel on drums. The album mixes inventive originals with fresh, exciting

takes on standards, maintaining a thread of inspired improvisation and calibrated group interplay throughout. Gardony enlisted three of New England's finest saxophonists to enliven this set: Stan Strickland, Don Braden and Bill Pierce each lend a distinct voice, but their greatest accomplishment is bringing to life the voice of Gardony, whose arrangements are the real gems of this album. A sensitive composer with an affinity for mood, Gardony is known primarily for his trio and solo outings, but this performance with a sextet allows for greater flexibility and stylistic range. On the horn-driven "Bourbon Street Boogie," he nods to the bouncy rhythms of New Orleans r&b, while on the gauzy ballad "New Song," he pays tribute to the folk music of West Africa. A funky interpretation of George Shearing's "Lullaby Of Birdland" finds Israel and Gardony locked into a groovy rhythmic showdown, while a swirling take on the spiritual "Motherless Child" (which the pianist previously recorded with the jazz-meets-bluegrass band The Wayfaring Strangers) allows for a powerful exchange between the rhythm section and Strickland's haunting clarinet. Gardony's roots in European classical music, prog-rock, blues, gospel and post-bop are all reflected in this high-energy album, united and interwoven in singable melodies and infectious grooves. A tremendously skilled accompanist with the voice and vision to become a great leader, Gardony has shared stages with Art Blakey and Abdullah Ibrahim, and this album makes clear why he is deserving of such company.