



**Octagon**  
**Ivo Perelman (Leo)**  
**The Industry of Entropy**  
**Brandon Lopez/Matt Nelson/  
 Andria Nicodemou/Gerald Cleaver**  
**(Relative Pitch)**  
 by John Sharpe

It's a truism in free jazz that gifted bassists feature on everyone's speed dial list. If that's the case then it's no surprise that Brandon Lopez is one of the most in-demand practitioners on the scene. Born and raised in rural New Jersey, he's staked out a claim at the adventurous end of the spectrum since moving to New York City in 2013. In addition to recording solo and with his trio Mess, his creative approach has found fertile soil in the company of Peter Evans, Ingrid Laubrock and Dave Rempis and has been recognized by his 2018 tenure as Artist-in-Residence at Issue Project Room.

Brazilian saxophonist Ivo Perelman has also called on Lopez' talents. Although the former has waxed an unfathomable volume of discs in recent years, they've tended to focus on a small coterie of collaborators. But *Octagon* uncharacteristically pairs him with a second horn, trumpeter Nate Wooley, in whose quartet Lopez also appears, as well as more regular drummer Gerald Cleaver.

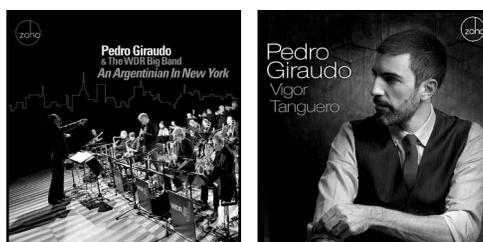
The novel environment created by the Wooley/Lopez axis tugs Perelman further from his customary Albert Ayler-inspired melodicism and more towards improv sonorities and the disc is all the better for the ensuing tension. Nowhere is that more obvious than on "Part 4" where, after the garrulous dialogue between the horns subsides, Lopez redirects the trajectory with abrasive ticking and groaning sound generation. He's quickly matched by Wooley, enticing Perelman into an edgy textural exchange. However, Lopez also demonstrates an affinity for Perelman's freewheeling expressionism. On "Part 1", which comprises an explosive tenor/bass duet, Lopez first blends wavering bow work with Perelman's lyrical upper register falsetto and then forges a contrast by plummeting down to a deep legato. With his unconventional timbres and phrasing Wooley similarly proves a challenging foil, offering unexpected gambits against which Perelman must react. Such challenges drive the close listening prevalent throughout this session. "Part 6" provides perhaps the most conventional episode, proposing a four-way jazzy stroll with Lopez almost walking against Cleaver's shuffle. Here Wooley reinforces rather than contradicts, extrapolating conversationally on a honeyed phrase from Perelman. The overall result is one of Perelman's most rounded and satisfying dates.

Again in the company of Cleaver, Lopez shares *The Industry of Entropy* with saxophonist Matt Nelson and vibraphonist Andria Nicodemou. The four check egos at the door in favor of keen group interplay across four pieces, which oscillate around the porous improv/free jazz border.

Although the initial combination of saxophone drone, plinking bass and percussive tinkling on "Not" conjures a processional image, Lopez becomes an almost subliminal presence among the dense churning activity that follows. At this point you might suspect that abstraction holds the upper hand, but as the 23-minute plus "Now" proceeds in choppy pulses, Lopez fashions a rough-hewn lurching momentum in tandem with Cleaver, which suggests a form-seeking improviser at work. That confirms

something hinted at earlier in the piece, where he wields his bow to enjoy a wheezy liaison with searching tenor. Although Nelson's circular breathing, overblown lines and skittering squeals imply a persona steeped in advanced saxophone technique, his breathy tenor musings on "Yet" retain distant echoes of Ben Webster, even when set among Nicodemou's percussive shimmer and Lopez' scratchy sawing. Lopez steps out in his unaccompanied introduction to "Again", careening between woody thwacks and plush resonance until, after a drum roll from Cleaver, both slip into loosely felt time. Nelson's dissonance curdles into near lyricism once more and the album ends in much more familiar territory than would have been anticipated at the outset. With such flexibility at his fingertips, Lopez' schedule seems likely to be full for some time to come.

For more information, visit [leorecords.com](http://leorecords.com) and [relativepitchrecords.com](http://relativepitchrecords.com). Lopez is at Roulette Jun. 21st. See Calendar.



**An Argentinian In New York**  
**Pedro Giraudo & The WDR Big Band (ZOHO)**  
**Vigor Tanguero**  
**Pedro Giraudo (ZOHO)**  
 by Marco Cangiano

Pedro Giraudo must be one of the busiest musicians in the NYC area. He leads a sextet, orchestra, tango ensemble and, lately, a tango quartet. Besides being a much sought after bassist, he conducts, composes and arranges for all of these bands. In his rapidly growing list of recordings, his compositional skills stand out. His heart is deep into his native country and Córdoba in particular, with its unique geography in between the sierras and las pampas. His music has been pigeonholed by some under Latin jazz—and as such has received important awards—but this is a rather limiting label as these recordings clearly show. His impassioned Argentinian roots combine tango and its many rhythmic variations, such as *milongas*, *valses* and *zambas*, with the American jazz tradition, thus providing an unusually wide palette of colors. These albums also provide a singular parallel as quite a few of Giraudo's compositions are executed in completely different settings.

*An Argentinian In New York* is a live recording with the Cologne-based WDR Big Band. It continues Giraudo's explorations with his orchestra begun on his very first recordings *Desconsuelo* and *El Viaje*. Giraudo's style of composing and arranging for his orchestras are clearly influenced by Gil Evans by way of Maria Schneider.

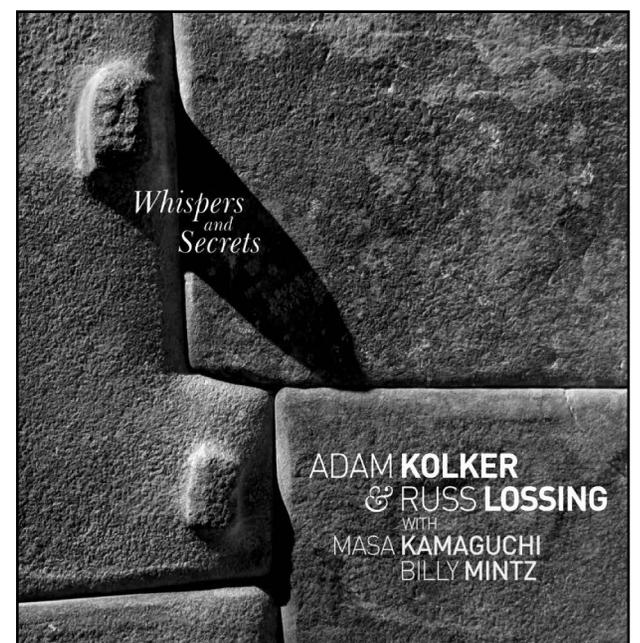
The arrangements are sumptuous, with various sections supporting and playing off each other. The impression is that soloists are largely directed while still leaving room to their individual creativity; as a result they all seem to excel against the background of such complex yet eminently musical arrangements. As a further testimony of his musical growth and ongoing explorations, Giraudo does not shy away from reinterpreting quite a number of the compositions he has already recorded with different bands over the years. Most tunes take the form of self-contained suites, even if only "Desconsuelo" is formally built on four distinct movements: listen for instance to the recurring yet changing theme of "Mentiras Piadodas"; the two apparently contrasting themes of "Lapidario"; many moods of "Desconsuelo", dramatically introduced by the "Preludio de Bombo Legüero"; and

the richness of "La Bronca", in which Mozart's requiem conflates with the blues form. It is a greatly rewarding music executed by the WDR musicians with expected gusto and precision but also, somewhat unexpectedly, deep passion.

*Vigor Tanguero* is Giraudo's first explicitly tango-inspired recording, although he has been directing a tango ensemble for the last few years. The cuarteto—in its typical piano (Emilio Teubal), bandoneón (Rodolfo Zanetti), violin (Nick Danielson) and bass formation—delivers a very emotional performance in trying to combine the tango tradition with its future.

As such, the music covers a whole range of emotions, although an overarching melancholy seems to dominate the mood, much in the tango tradition of Carlos Gardel and later Astor Piazzolla. The sound of the bandoneón characterizes the overall sound of the well-integrated band, carrying most of the tunes while leaving ample space to the other instruments to weave in and out of the melodic lines. "Con un Nudo en la Garganta", the third movement of the "Desconsuelo Suite", "Chicharrita" and "Lapidario"—all present in the live album—here get a much more intimate, essential and yet dramatic treatment by the cuarteto, revealing fully the beauty of these melodies. While finding all the compositions quite exquisite, the best are the dramatic dedication to Octavio Brunetti, delicate tango waltz "Desavenencias" and closing, suspenseful "A Campo Abierto". The music portrayed in this album is a very moving, passionate, even daring statement, building a bridge between tango's glorious past and its even brighter future.

For more information, visit [zohomusic.com](http://zohomusic.com). Giraudo is at Joe's Pub Jun. 29th with the *Vigor Tanguero* project. See Calendar.



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