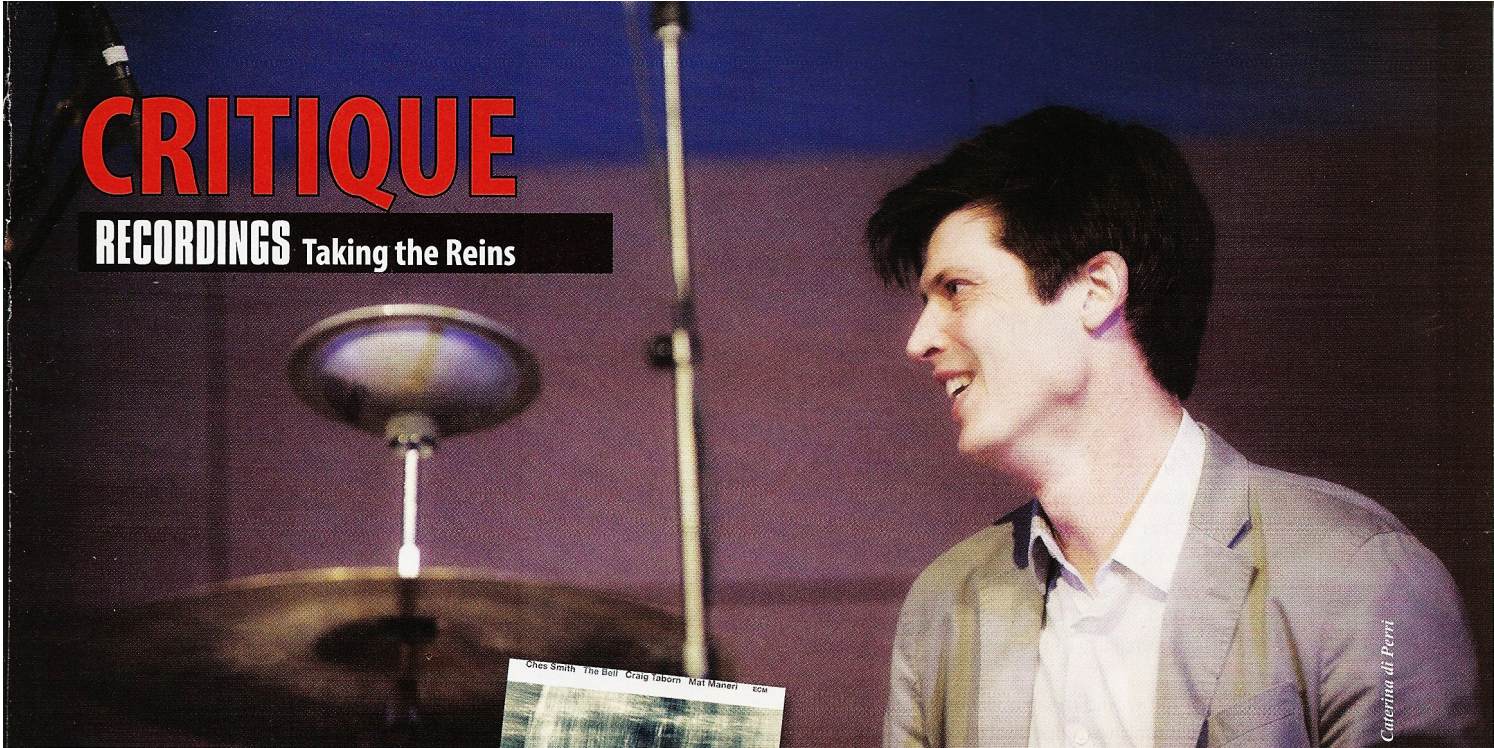


CRITIQUE

RECORDINGS Taking the Reins



Caterina di Bert

Ches Smith *The Bell*

The drummer has made numerous recordings that wonderfully straddle avant-jazz and out-rock. His latest might just be his greatest yet.

Drummer/composer Ches Smith has worked with '60s electronic maestro Terry Riley, Marc Ribot's Ceramic Dog, and his own groups Congs for Brums and These Arches. But his trio with violinist Mat Maneri and pianist Craig Taborn is his most ambitious project



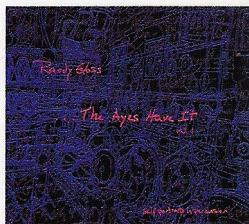
to date. These musicians prefer the vibes to rise and fall organically. When eruptions pour forth, the racket is intense. The opening title track creeps along until Smith begins attacking his timpani to the point where you expect Wagner to appear. Soup gets stirred in "Barely Intervallic," as Smith whips the brushes with extreme power. "I'll See You on the Dark Side of the Earth" includes squealing cymbals, a crashing thunder sheet, and jabbing drums. A mad musician with a beautiful mind, Smith nearly does it all. (ECM) **Ken Micallef**

Randy Gloss

The Ayes Have It, Vol. 1: Self Portraits in Percussion

A ride through rhythm, texture, and mood.

Essentially a solo percussion record with few overdubs, Randy Gloss's debut works as a study piece for the different instruments he uses as well as a soothing collection of music to relax to. His technical skill with a frame drum is evident on "Suburban Desert Oasis," on which he works the seven-beat pattern with lyricism and control. On the multipart "From McBean to Hasley Cyn," Gloss employs a pandeiro (Afro-Brazilian tambourine) to great effect, mimicking the kick drum and backbeat and using the jingles to fill the space orchestrally. There are improvisations for electronic drumkit ("Experiment on the Nature of Water #1"), hypnotic gong pieces ("Warmer Waters"), and an extended tabla performance ("In a Cycle of Nine"), so you get to experience diverse styles and Gloss's accomplished execution. And if the one-man percussion vibe isn't your thing, you can simply chill to this on Sunday morning. (Orenda Records) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



Chris Parker Trio *Blue Print*

No stranger to the hip stuff, the eternally cool New Yorker returns with more attitude and interplay on his latest record.

Veteran jazzier and session ace Chris Parker knows a thing or two about groove, so his new trio disc gives him ample room to lay down his pocket and swing across a set of pleasing, well-played material. Whether it's the lilting Latin brush pulse of "First Days" or the New Orleans flavors on "Filthy McNasty," Parker plays with precision and concision, letting his bandmates shine until it's his turn. Dig the laid-back funk of "Opus de Toph," where the drummer floats over the barline, takes some hip breaks, opens up on his ride for the piano solo, and comps with sensitivity and big ears underneath the bass. The decision to pan the drums to mostly one side is a curious one, but it does give the sound field a vibe like you're watching a live show from three tables back. (NuNoise Records) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



Other Drummer-Leds to Check Out

Karsh Kale UP /// **The Michael Lauren All Stars** Once Upon a Time in Portugal /// **Fred Beato and David Pack** Beato Band /// **Robby Ameen** Days in the Night /// **Ari Hoenig** The Pauper and the Magician /// **Thomas Strönen** Time Is a Blind Guide /// **Henry Brun and the Latin Playerz** In Ritmo We Trust /// **Dan Weiss** Sixteen: Drummers Suite /// **Jemal Ramirez** Pomponio /// **The Damon Grant Project** Prevailing Melodies /// **Matt Kane and the Kansas City Generations Sextet** Acknowledgement /// **Herlin Riley** New Direction

