



*Arba*  
**Itamar Borochoy (Greenleaf Music)**  
 by Marco Cangiano

With *Arba*, his fourth album, trumpeter Itamar Borochoy confirms he is a force to be reckoned with in today's jazz scene. He is a compelling player, with full control of the instrument's range, from an almost breathy sound at the lower range to scintillating trills and runs at the opposite end. It is also worth noting that Borochoy performs on a custom-made Monette 4-valve quarter-tone trumpet, to further emphasize his sound.

Such ability as a player matches his flair as composer. Many of his tunes take the form of songs inspired by the Jewish Sephardic tradition with an added impressionistic twist. In a piece like "Wasabi", based on a repeated pattern, a modal approach can also be heard that derives from the *maqams* or modes found in the music of North Africa and the Middle East. Although the use of his voice is an element of novelty in this album, it comes across as a natural and integral development of Borochoy's musical vision and tradition, adding a sense of drama that undoubtedly also reflects the pandemic period around which the bulk of this music was composed. Further, he has an innate capacity to assemble empathic and congenial partners very much at ease with his musical palette – all of them were present on his 2018 *Blue Nights* album. Rob Clearfield (piano) sounds at times majestic and parsimonious, while Rick Rosato (bass) is the true anchor to this complex yet greatly enjoyable music, freeing up Jay Sawyer (drums) and his supple rhythms to fill up and complement the space left by the others. The addition of Borochoy's brother Avril (oud) in "Ye Sahbi" brings back dense atmospheres à la Omar Avital.

The result is a set of compositions of rare intensity ranging from the inspired opening "Abraham" to the tense "Dirge" and the more jazz-inspired "Bayat Blues", where Clearfield's Chicago roots and rhapsodic style take over, with Rosato and Sawyer setting a nerve-racking pace. Borochoy's whispering trumpet can be fully appreciated in the poignant "What Broke You?" and the medium-tempo ballad "Truth", where Sawyer's inventive hand drumming can also be savored. "Who Shall Give Me Flight" is a delightful duo between the leader's wordless singing and the pianist's delicate arpeggios. "Farewell" appropriately rounds off the album with its gospel-like feel.

One hopes there is more to come from Borochoy and his partners.

*For more info visit [greenleafmusic.com](http://greenleafmusic.com). Borochoy's album release concert is at Joe's Pub Nov. 7. See Calendar.*