



*December Song*  
**Jakob Bro (Loveland)**  
 by Ken Micallef

Danish guitarist Jakob Bro is a musician for whom time, space and melody seem relative and related things. A luminous composer whose guitar is more a vehicle for cerebral exploration than for solo expressions, Bro's latest album, *December Song*, is the final in a trio of recordings that started and ended with drummer Paul Motian in mind. Bro was a member of Motian's Electric Bebop Band and the drummer played on Bro's *Balladeering* and *Sidetracked* albums. By the time the sessions for *December Song* began, Motian had passed. But Bro's music capitalizes on the late drummer's idea of the group as a collective organism, where solos rise and fall at will and directing improvisation is as often a collective determination as a single musician's effort.

Bro guides his group of guitarist Bill Frisell, bassist Thomas Morgan, alto saxophonist Lee Konitz and pianist Craig Taborn through ethereal, shimmering and even spectral, music, which floats, rises in intensity, then dissipates - calm, intricate ruminations gelling, then melting away. Performed without drummer, this collective breathes as one. That breath is at times a mist, other times a slowly undulating, delicate breeze. Konitz

blows soft sounds over the gently intertwining guitars; Taborn finds his place between them, practically disappearing in their harmonic flow. Opening track "Laxness" is representative, a fragmented, falling melody between instruments like sunlight touching various leaves on the same tree. "Kong Oscar" picks up the tempo, the combined rolling melody and plucked instrumentation recalling a large Thumbelina. Bro is definitely part of the Frisell school of guitar, the two at times sounding like mirror images. *December Song* advances slowly, as if disturbing the surrounding air might break the music's delicate spell.

For more information, visit [jakobbro.com](http://jakobbro.com). Bro is at Cornelia Street Café Mar. 13th. See Calendar.



*The Imagined Savior is Far Easier to Paint*  
**Ambrose Akinmusire (Blue Note)**  
 by Sean O'Connell

After a highly praised Blue Note debut, trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire has returned with an album that maintains a kitchen-sink embrace of styles and textures. He penned all but one of the tunes, collaborating with a handful of vocalists and adding the explosive guitarist Charles Altura. But with a few exceptions, this is an unquestionably somber record.

The driving "Memo (g. Iearson)" features brisk statements from tenor saxophonist Walter Smith III and Altura while jagged "Bubbles (John William Sublett)" gives bassist Harish Raghavan ample space to tangle with pianist Sam Harris' rapid-fire phrases over a hypnotic groundswell and drummer Justin Brown's skittering funk. Elsewhere, haunting textures creep like fog. Vocalist Becca Stevens appears on her "Our Basement (ed)". The sparse arrangement deals in silence with pulsating strings, heightening Stevens' impassioned quaver. The same strings weave a nearly Celtic palette for "The Beauty of Dissolving Portraits", allowing Akinmusire to sputter over a chamber group's long tones. Vocalist Theo Bleckmann continues that misty backdrop, accompanied primarily by solo piano on "Asiam (Joan)", his multi-tracked vocals spinning spectral dust over the bare landscape.

"Rollcall for Those Absent" is Akinmusire's most direct social statement. The tune features him glacially surveying on a Juno keyboard as a child recites the names of recent high-profile, unarmed murder victims like Amadou Diallo and Kendrec McDade. The repeated invocation of the names Trayvon Martin and Oscar Grant are particular reminders of the hostility young black men like Akinmusire can face without merit and without warning.

Not surprisingly, Akinmusire's return exudes confidence. He has a way with intervallic leaps that are uniquely his and shows great patience in embracing the more languid instincts of his pen, the same one that seems to relish cryptic song titles. He can blow like nobody's business but seems more intent on showcasing his way with emotion and instrumentation.

For more information, visit [bluenote.com](http://bluenote.com). This project is at Jazz Standard Mar. 13th-16th. See Calendar.

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the music of dexter gordon:  
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MAR 5-9

eliane elias

MAR 10

new york youth symphony jazz

MAR 11-12

joe farnsworth quartet  
featuring harold mabern

MAR 13

charles turner cd release

MAR 14-16

jazz meets flamenco:  
dani de morón & acaron diehl

MAR 17

music of the nat king cole trio

MAR 18-20

hugh masekela & larry willis

MAR 21 *newish jewish music festival*

anat fort

MAR 22 *newish jewish music festival*

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benny goodman

MAR 23 *newish jewish music festival*

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MAR 24

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