

## Gretchen Parlato *Live In NYC*

OBLIQSOUND 114  
★★★★½

Often praised for her subtlety, Gretchen Parlato is a singer-arranger of consummate control and slow-burning intensity. The L.A. native lives at the crossroads of sensuous and spiritual, singing from deep within hypnotic grooves with enormous rhythmic sophistication. Her approach, inspired in part by early exposure to João Gilberto, might be summed up as “sing softly and carry a killer rhythm section.”

She is equally comfortable with jazz standards, Brazilian tunes, her own compelling songs and r&b-based material from the '80s and '90s (“Holding Back The Years,” “Weak”), which she utterly transforms with complex harmonic ideas, shifting rhythms and offbeat accents. In recent years, she has become a critical darling and a favorite of such jazz artists as Esperanza Spalding, Terri Lyne Carrington and Kenny Barron, among dozens of others with whom she has recorded. In concert, Parlato seems almost to go into a trance when she sings, which is part of what makes this new live set so compelling. The album and 30-minute DVD, recorded over two nights at New York’s intimate Rockwood Music Hall, is a summing-up of her career to date, showcasing the staples of her repertoire; the grooves have only deepened over the years, as arranged by Parlato (sometimes with Robert Glasper) and performed



by two exceptional trios, both featuring the prodigious Taylor Eigsti on piano and keyboard.

Parlato shines with her solo—a wordless, modal exploration—on Wayne Shorter’s “Juju,” a tune to which she wrote lyrics when she was a student of Terence Blanchard at the Monk Institute. “His footprints will lead us to find/ Our own voices in our own time,” she sings. This beautiful album is further proof that she has found hers. —Allen Morrison

**Live In NYC:** Disc 1 (CD): Butterfly, All That I Can Say; Aló Aló; Within Me; Holding Back the Years; Juju; Weak; On The Other Side; Better Than. (61:13) Disc 2 (DVD): Weak; Butterfly; Aló Aló; Better Than.

**Personnel:** Gretchen Parlato, vocals, percussion; Taylor Eigsti, piano, keyboard; Alan Hampton, bass, vocals; Mark Guiliana, drums; Burniss Earl Travis II, bass, vocals; Kendrick Scott, drums.

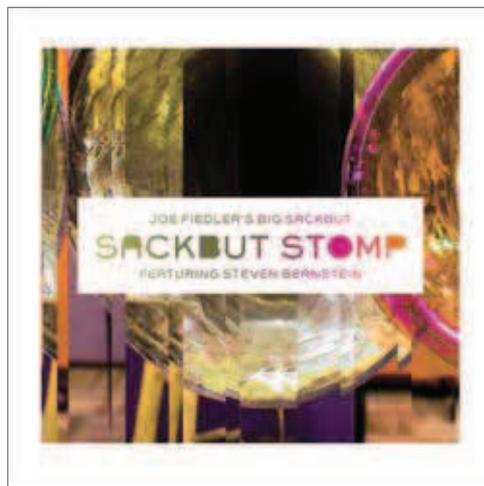
**Ordering info:** [obliqsound.com](http://obliqsound.com)

## Joe Fiedler’s Big Sackbut *Sackbut Stomp*

MULTIPHONICS MUSIC 001  
★★★

Joe Fiedler’s Big Sackbut brass quartet (augmented here on several cuts with slide trumpeter Steven Bernstein) seems to be having a blast throughout this disc, the second recording of the ensemble. The band obviously takes its music seriously, but there is nary a pedantic or overbearing note here. Instead, there are many moments of whimsy and delight. Fiedler also works as a music director for “Sesame Street,” so he knows how to make music fun. Any band that spends more than seven minutes blowing on a version of Roger Miller’s “King Of The Road” is having a good time. There is a zany attitude here. On tunes like “The Attic” and “Feet And Breathe,” Fiedler’s group sounds like the World Saxophone Quartet-meets-Raymond Scott. At certain points, they veer to the abstract side. In a band of five brass instruments, that is to be expected, and such abstraction is a nice contrast to the more standard riffing.

Each of the players—Fiedler, Ryan Keberle and Luis Bonilla on trombones, Marcus Rojas on tuba and Bernstein—are expressive on their instruments, mimicking the human voice and using the entire tonal range and timbres, though sometimes it feels a little over the top. The drums are barely missed as the band has a great sense of tension-and-release, which gives the music a push



and a pull on Fiedler’s original “The Schlep.” There are pretty melodies and beautifully tight ensemble playing on the Fiedler original “Pittsburgh Morning” and the Gil Fuller/Chano Pozo Afro-Cuban standard “Tin Tin Deo.”

Fiedler’s Big Sackbut has produced an album with great range and a sound that is simply fun to listen to—yet still serious about the music.

—David Kunian

**Sackbut Stomp:** Sackbut Stomp; King Of The Road; Eight Page Bible; Tin Tin Deo; Pittsburgh Morning; Feet And Breathe; The Schlep; The Attic; Solo For Quartet. (55:48)

**Personnel:** Joe Fiedler, Ryan Keberle, Luis Bonilla, trombone; Marcus Rojas, tuba; Steven Bernstein, slide trumpet (2, 4, 8).

**Ordering info:** [joefiedler.com](http://joefiedler.com)



## EDWARD SIMON *VENEZUELEAN SUITE*

SSC 1382 / IN STORES 1/21  
[iTunes.com/EdwardSimon](http://iTunes.com/EdwardSimon)

The music of Venezuela has yet to gain the wider renown of many other beloved musical traditions in Latin America, but renowned jazz pianist-composer Edward Simon aims to change that.

Simon leads *Ensemble Venezuela*, which features such jazz stars as saxophonist Mark Turner alongside virtuosos of the Venezuelan folk tradition. Drummer Adam Cruz is one of Simon’s longstanding musical associates, and he joins bassist Roberto Koch, flutist Marco Granados, cuatro player Jorge Glem and maracas ace Leonardo Granados, plus guests Edmar Castañeda on harp, Luis Quintero on percussion and John Ellis on bass clarinet.



## LIVING LOVERS BRANDON ROSS & STOMU TAKEISHI *REVEALING ESSENCE*

SSC 1351 / IN STORES 1/21  
[iTunes.com/BrandonRoss](http://iTunes.com/BrandonRoss)

The inspiring collaborative duo for Living Lovers features guitarist Brandon Ross and bassist Stomu Takeishi in moving musical dialogue. The duo has worked together for some time and in many settings. Their language has become unique to them, though there are elements of jazz, classical, and folk music. *Revealing Essence*, the duo’s first recording, is a marvelous view into their sound world, one built with a focus on space as much as sound.

