

TRUMPETER/COMPOSER ITAMAR BOROCHOV ADVANCES A SEARINGLY PERSONAL MUSICAL LANGUAGE ON HIS GREENLEAF MUSIC DEBUT **ARBA**

Produced by Matt Pierson

Release Date: September 8, 2023

*Itamar Borochoy (quarter-tone trumpet, voice, compositions), with:
Rob Clearfield (piano, organ, Rhodes), Rick Rosato (bass), Jay Sawyer (drums),
+ Avri Borochoy (oud, track 3)*



New York-based trumpeter and composer **Itamar Borochoy** is proud to present **Arba** (Hebrew: “four”), his fourth album as a leader and first for Dave Douglas’ prestigious Greenleaf Music label. While the quartet instrumentation mirrors that of his previous releases *Blue Nights* and *Boomerang*, *Arba* marks the first appearance of Borochoy’s earthy, expressive singing voice in a featured role on several tracks. It is also the fullest documentation to date of Borochoy’s use of a custom Monette quarter-tone trumpet with four valves.

Vocally and on the horn, Borochoy infuses his compositions with phrasing, inflection and ornamentation drawn from his deep study of *maqamat*, the scale system and musical language of traditional music of the Middle East and North Africa. The sound also stems from music he absorbed growing up attending a Sephardic synagogue in his native Jaffa (near Tel Aviv) Joining him on this vibrant all-original outing are pianist **Rob Clearfield**, bassist **Rick Rosato** and drummer **Jay Sawyer**.

Borochoy returned to Jaffa during the pandemic and laid the groundwork for an album that would “embrace elements that make up my own life path,” he writes in an album note. What we hear as a result, he continues, is “a musical language that originates from the stirring Middle Eastern sounds which have surrounded me since my childhood by the Mediterranean and traces my journey to the energy-infused streets of New York, studying the

teachings of Barry Harris and exploring shared truths of oral traditions across boundaries of genre and nationality on the way.”

Arba marks Jay Sawyer’s third appearance with Borochochov on record, and Rob Clearfield’s second. “These guys have pure hearts,” says the trumpeter. “We perceive music in a similar way, as a spiritual and emotional medium. What drives the music is a feeling, and Jay is an emotional player. Rob is well-versed in Western classical music, and the way he moves within a scale is more like a figured-bass type of thinking, which really works with the Middle Eastern modes in my music. Rob also has a strong blues and gospel background and that complements the music as well.”

New quartet member **Rick Rosato**, a colleague from Borochochov’s New School days, “brings something very special to the group,” the leader says. “The bass is such a powerful center for any band, and that sometimes gets overlooked, but when you’re playing you feel it so strongly. Rick is a phenomenal bassist and we’re very good friends, so something really clicked. This is my first album not to feature my older brother Avri on bass, but I’m happy that I could include him playing out on ‘Ya Sahbi,’ so there’s still that connection.”

The lyrics of “Ya Sahbi” form a kind of one-line poem: “Take your glasses off, my friend, take your glasses off.” It is the one song with lyrics on *Arba*. The intense 7/4 piece “Wabisabi” and the intimate, chamber-like “Who Shall Grant Me Flight” find Borochochov singing impassioned wordless melodies that convey what he calls “the steady radiance of a life force within.” On the leadoff track “Abraham” his voice is layered and set in the background, creating an alluring texture at the suggestion of veteran producer **Matt Pierson**. “When I compose,” Borochochov says, “most often I’m playing piano and singing at the same time. For me the first reference to a song is always me singing, and something can get lost when I transfer the melody to the horn. I felt that some of the melodies on *Arba* called for a voice and not a trumpet.”

At the same time, Borochochov’s searing lines make clear his investment in the hallowed trumpet lineage, from Louis Armstrong to Clark Terry, Miles Davis, Kenny Dorham, Lee Morgan and Booker Little through to Wynton Marsalis. (He cites the influence of Ben Webster for his assured yet wistful, warm and airy tone.) The charged interplay of the band, too, is born of the jazz tradition in all its richness and spontaneity. “Bayat Blues,” rooted in the scale sonority known as *maqam bayat*, is a case in point, with a surprising shift to fierce double-time swing to launch Borochochov’s solo.

Whatever a piece’s technical features and demands, Borochochov thinks in terms of the song at the heart of it. “A song has no genre,” he declares. “This is part of my intention: a song can be perceived in different ways, like a multi-dimensional holographic event. It could work as a traditional Middle Eastern song, a jazz tune, something more in a singer-songwriter vein — I’m trying to write something you can view from all these angles, with the song at the center.”

In addition to his work in jazz, Borochochov is the featured soloist on composer Shanan Estreicher’s *All You Shining Stars* (2023) for improvising quarter-tone trumpet and string ensemble. He also composed the seven-movement *Emergence Suite* for this configuration, premiering the work in Bryan, Texas in 2021. He was a co-founder, arranger and co-producer of Yemen Blues, appearing on four albums with the acclaimed world music group. He has toured across four continents, playing at many international festivals and in top venues including Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, SummerStage at Central Park, Blue Note NY, Ronnie Scott’s and Bimhuis.

www.itamarborochochov.com

ARBA RELEASE TOUR DATES

Bimhuis	Amsterdam, Netherlands	September 27th
Paradox	Tilburg, Netherlands	September 29th
Lantaren Venster	Rotterdam, Netherlands	September 30th
Hnita	Heist-op-den-Berg, Belgium	October 2nd
C-mine Jazz	Genk, Belgium	October 4th
Pizza Express Jazz Club	London, UK	October 5th
Pizza Express Jazz Club	London, UK	October 6th
Jazz Dock	Prague, Czech Republic	October 8th
Jazz Club Tibet	Olomouc, Czech Republic	October 9th
Joe’s Pub	New York, USA	November 7th
New Morning	Paris, France	November 13th
<i>More dates to be announced soon</i>		

TIMELINE

June 30	Single #1 "Abraham"
July 28	Single #2 "What Broke You?"
August 25	Single #3 "Who Shall Grant Me Flight"
September 8	Album release

ARBA TRACK LISTING

1. Abraham
2. Dirge
3. Ya Sahbi
4. What Broke You?
5. Wabisabi
6. Bayat Blues
7. Truth
8. Who Shall Grant Me Flight
9. Farewell

ALBUM DETAILS

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