

# Editors' Picks

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BY FRANK ALKYER

## **Bret Higgins' Atlas Revolt, *Bret Higgins' Atlas Revolt* (Tzadik)**

Bret Higgins is a take-no-prisoners bassist hailing from Toronto. He lays down rock-solid grooves, then sends his bandmates out to do the serious damage. In this case, it's his new band Atlas Revolt, which includes Tom Juhas, a guitar superhero, Aleksandar Gajic, a crazy cool violinist, Robbie Grunwald, meteoric on electric and

acoustic piano, and Joshua Van Tassel, a power drummer. This is music with jazz roots and heavy rock overtones. "Atlas Revolt," the opening tune, clearly states this group's intentions. It's a powerful punch to the gut with Higgins and Van Tassel driving the beat for Gajic and Juhas to soar over. "El Metate" takes the group into a Latin groove, with Juhas doing his best Dick Dale-inspired surf guitar. "Meat For Dogs" would be perfect on a soundtrack for a spy movie. Grunwald's understated Rhodes-like piano perfectly punctuates the tune, with Gajic and Juhas playing some inspired parallel lines. There are also some terrific space-jam moments, like "All About A Starry Night" and "Vorticism." "Starry" takes it slow, letting Juhas squeeze every ounce of sound from each note. "Vorticism" takes the tempo up with some great interplay between Juhas, Gajic and Grunwald. In all, this is an amazingly entertaining album, full of drive, humor and tight grooves. Higgins' strength is his knack for writing great tunes, then giving his band the space to make them shine. It wouldn't be fair to categorize this album as a great "bassist's" album. It's simply a great album.

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