



Bill Anschell *Improbable Solutions*

ORIGIN

★★★★

There's an irony to how the music on Bill Anschell's *Improbable Solutions* comes together. The album demonstrates patience and careful rumination more than instant gratification. Moreover, knowing that these nine pieces were selected from more than 20 emphasizes how *Improbable Solutions* is about taking one's time, and it's in that spirit that the record is best enjoyed.

"Ambulator" makes this point well. The

core piano trio builds around an intriguing piano motif at the start: a mischievous hook with a raised sixth, ending on a minor third. Here and throughout the song, the melody drips with distortion and overlapping layers most audible on the decays of notes at the ends of phrases. "Nimbus" ups the electronic ante as the keys deliver an outright crystalline timbre: an interesting choice given the track's title. Amusingly, it's the pattering on the kit that gives the music its breeze-like qualities: light, consistent and continuous as a cloud moving across the sky. "Is This Thing Even On?" nods to the prog-rock lovers. Its angular qualities, thick tones and quick tempo prompt thoughts of a high-stakes car chase, teasing what's to come.

"Abandoned" provides a respite with more organic-leaning tonality in its melody, before KJ Sawka's drumming propels the band forward with captivating agility and Anschell unleashes the final "Outburst" of his musical vision with a flourish of synth sounds and a surge of rock-powered adrenaline.

—Kira Grunenber

Improbable Solutions: Ambulator; Nimbus; Gentle Persuasion; Naked Truth; Is This Thing Even On?; Hidden Nobility; The Following Week; Abandoned; Outburst (feat. KJ Sawka). (50:43)

Personnel: Bill Anschell, piano, electronics; Chris Symer, acoustic bass, electric bass (5, 9); Jose Martinez, drums; Brian Monroney, guitar (1, 3, 4, 6, 9); Jeff Busch, percussion (2, 4, 8); KJ Sawka, drums (9).

Ordering info: billanschell.com