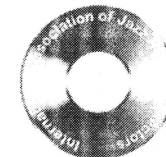


# The IAJRC Journal

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The Jason Kao Hwang/Edge quartet is back with *Crossroads Unseen*. This provocative unit melds Hwang's strings and Taylor Ho Bynum's brass with the dancing rhythm team of bassist Ken Filiano and drummer Andrew Drury. Hwang's five multi-sectioned compositions are played at lengths ranging from ten to twelve minutes, allowing ample time for development, elaboration, and solo statements. All the musicians are skillful soloists, but on these particular days, bassist Filiano truly stole the show. Sometimes it takes just one passage to make a session essential, and here it's Filiano's magisterial solo on *The Path Around The House*. The piece opens in a swirl of strings bouncing among a few notes until Bynum breathes his way into the music with some hollow flugelhorn sounds. The second theme is Filiano's, then Hwang and Bynum take over for a boppish section. After Hwang's impressively jazzy and rhythmically adept solo, stoked by Drury's impassioned drumming, Bynum takes over in a similarly buzzing style, riding the waves of rhythm set up by the bass and drums. A brief duet passage for flugelhorn and violin leads into Filiano's unaccompanied solo. The emotional weight of his notes and the sheer beauty of his lines are products of formidable control and technique, and when he's really *on*, as he is here, he inspires his associates into deeper engagement with the material. Listen to what he does on *Transients*, which starts out as a solemn exercise in a slow groove until Filiano's animated arco solo takes over around four minutes in to provide an element of warmth to the chilly proceedings. The track continues with more bounce to the groove and a melodic line voiced by violin and cornet. Brief solos by Bynum and Hwang continue to play with the warmth that Filiano brought to the fore, with Drury's dynamic drumming completing the picture. Like so much of Hwang's music, the careful ballad *Crossroads Unseen* relies on variations in texture and pacing. The solemnity of the piece is tempered by some

boldly emotional writing that has Filiano and Hwang phrasing together over deep rumbling by Drury. The bassist has another heart-felt solo at the halfway mark. *One Day*, the finale, is perky, built on a series of phrases taken up in turn by Hwang's viola, Bynum's cornet, and Filiano's bass while Drury rumbles underneath. The theme gives way to robust collective improvisation, a vivid manifestation of what Hwang describes as the "language of vibrations" that's the basis of his compositions. Among the track's delights are yet another powerful bass solo, snappy drumming by Drury, and the pure sweet cry of Hwang's viola. It's a satisfying conclusion to a beautifully realized and seriously recommended release.

Euonymus EU02: Taylor Ho Bynum (flg [1, 2], cnt [3-5]), Jason Kao Hwang (vln [1-3], viola [4-5]), Ken Filiano (b), Andrew Drury (d); Union City, NJ, June 13-14, 2010; 1. Elemental Determination/2. The Path Around The House/3. Transients/4. Crossroads Unseen/5. One Day; TT 54:37. [www.jasonkaohwang.com](http://www.jasonkaohwang.com)