

## Jessica Pavone

### *Army of Strangers*

Porter CD

Violinist/violist Jessica Pavone is one of the leading lights of the NYC/Brooklyn music scenes where the lines “between” composition and improvisation get all blurry (and meaningless). Yet her latest disc as a leader, *Army of Strangers*, is a bit of a surprise. This set, to put it mildly, ROCKS. Guitarist Pete Fitzpatrick plays with a clanging, grungy tone that would not be at all out of place on albums by Neil Young (especially with his use of judicious, wrenching feedback) or the Swell Maps. Drummer Harris Eisenstadt is known for his free jazz work, but here he plays with a solid, driving beat (mostly). Pavone merrily saws away in the manner of the late great blues-rock violinist Sugar cane Harris—she doesn’t have his blues factor, but she plays with slashing, rock ‘n’ roll panache, with a touch of John Cale (rock’s premier violist). Among the highlights: “There Won’t Be Walking in the Daylight,” an achingly beautiful, elegiac, country-tinged near-waltz; “Timid Soul,” which sounds like a parody of Led Zeppelin’s “Kashmir”; and the loping, rustic, blues-oozing “April Is Over,” rich with undertones of Captain Beefheart (it sounds like an outtake from *The Spotlight Kid*). There is an undercurrent of melancholy to the march of this Army—maybe Pavone’s been listening to Young’s Tonight’s the Night. Hardcore fans of her improv work might be nonplussed, but those appreciating folk-flavored rock ‘n’ roll catharsis will be on clouds nine and ten. **Mark Keresman**