

Most Definitely - The first solo recording from drummer-composer Devin Gray, due June 9th from Rataplan Records

A wide spectrum offering packed with progressive electro-acoustic performances "An amazing percussionist, Gray's stunningly detailed playing sounds like a cross between Fritz Hauser and Roy Haynes." – All About Jazz

devin gray

Rataplan Records Release **40**

stereo / mono / solo

Most Definitely



New York City, New York Apr 14, 2023 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Brooklyn-Berlin-based drummer-composer Devin Gray made his widely lauded leader debut in 2012 with the release *Dirigo Rataplan*, which included a crew of heavyweight veterans Ellery Eskelin, Michael Formanek, and Dave Ballou.

JazzTimes said that Gray's debut represented "the work of a young artist who knows who he is." Free Jazz blog encapsulated the album this way: "...one of the best debut albums in years." In 2015 Gray released *Relative Resonance*, a band of close New York associates: Chris Speed, Kris Davis, and Chris Tordini. All About Jazz noted "...the questing, inquisitive, risky nature of the compositions is no less bracing than Anthony Braxton's finest work." In 2018 Gray reconvened his all-star group for *Dirigo Rataplan II*, with the establishment of the record label Rataplan Records. The album shines with rich harmony, and earworm melodies. Fans from Alice Coltrane and Henry Threadgill to Dave Holland and Craig Taborn will dig this organic, engrossing mix of composition and improvisation.

Now in 2023, he gives us *Most Definitely*, a first showcase of his solo performances. Years of bandleading and sideman experiences have led to his growth as a continually forward-thinking creative artist. This music is far from a standard solo project, offering a full-length adventure of vision from an artist committed to his craft's propulsion. The release date is congruent with his 40th birthday while internationally touring in support of the project.

Most Definitely is a rapid-paced listening experience presented on 23 tracks and clocking in at over an hour of music. As a whole, the record runs the gamut of energies, inspirations, and pure love of music. The tracks are grouped into three simple identifying themes, soft, medium, and loud; however, the tracklist delivers them in a mixed order of Gray's taste. Upon listening to standout tracks such as *Hunker Down*, *Pull to Refresh*, or *Soldier On*, Milford, you start to feel the precision that is brought to the forefront of the entire recording. *Hunker Down* creates an intimate safe space where you can easily let your guard down. *Pull To Refresh* questions your internet connection speed, while *Digital Nomads* relates to a common "on the fly" type of modern lifestyle. All throughout the tracks there are electric twists, twirls, and scrapes, which push the envelope of musical possibilities from a solo drummer setting. The record's strengths and successes lie equally in the eloquent orchestration of blended electronics balanced with Gray's high-level improvisational performances.

Gray thrives on not stating the obvious and through experimenting with percussive colors and improvised soundscape grooves. He explains some of his musical processes behind the work by stating, "My music is a result of deliberate experimental decisions which often obscure common musical practices, all the while trying to weave in spontaneous forms from the fringes." Individual track stories deliver unique musical moods such as: Blues (in the standard form), diverse textures such as ASMR, and hints of "A Night In Tunisia" mixed with industrial acoustic Autechre inspirations. Just listen to his ever-growing catalog of dizzying collaborative output; Gray is known for his musical convictions.

About inspiration, Gray says "I was obsessed with music at an early age through the power of non-tonal percussion, and therefore traditional harmonic and melodic structures have always come to my ears as an additional bonus." Also worth noting is that he pays historical respects by dedicating pieces to luminaries such as Milford Graves, Ed Blackwell, Jack DeJohnette, and Tony Williams, as well as close friends Daniel Levine and Jaimie Branch, who both passed during the making of the record. Other themes explored on the record include wit-filled relatable modern internet jargon. Track titles *Bad WiFi*, *Doom Scrolling*, *Crypto Punks*, and *Subscription Fatigue* share a reflection of progressive approaches to music making. A touch of Gray's humor as he tips his hat to many artists and current progressive lifestyles of 2023.

Gray's personality is delivered directly to the listener as if you are between the microphones and his drums. During many moments your ears are actually closer to the vibrating sounds than his. Further reflection led to him stating, "I love people, and I wanted to create a work of extreme detail where one can listen very closely to what it is that I am communicating through my playing. The electronic integration really ramps up the excitement of this music for me, making it an honest modern musical

offering, which it Most Definitely is.”

Devin Gray (1983)

Born and bred in Maine, a New Yorker since 2006 and currently living between Berlin and Brooklyn. He has performed and recorded with saxophonists David Liebman and Gary Thomas, and recently (2021) released a trio with the politically charged title Melt all the Guns, featuring Ralph Alessi and Angelica Sanchez. Other collaborations include the 2020 release of 27 Licks, a long-standing duet with close friend and master drummer Gerald Cleaver. Recent global appearances have been with Sylvie Courvoisier's trio with Drew Gress at the Berlin Jazz Festival, a new project with Tim Berne and Michael Formanek, and a trio with Zoh Amba and Micah Thomas. As a sideman Gray has worked with Nate Wooley, Tony Malaby, Andrea Parkins, Satoko Fujii, Marc Ducret, and Eve Risser among many more.

Devin Gray: Most Definitely (Selected 4 of 23 tracks)

1. Hunker Down (1:57)
2. Pull to Refresh (1:03)
9. Digital Nomads (2:03)
14. Solder On, Milford (18:49)

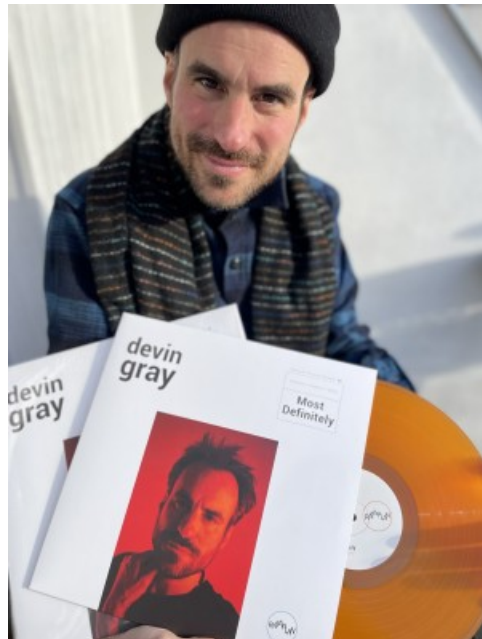
All compositions by Devin Gray (Voner Music, BMI) - Recorded by Chris Hill, Alex Jovanovic, & Nawras Haki - Edited, Mixed, Designed by Risto Pikkarainen - Gray plays Canopus drums & Zildjian cymbals and sticks

Most Definitely on Tour: Summer 2023, USA & Europe (Additional & Fall Dates TBA)
June 2nd Köln, Germany. June 3rd Athens, Greece. June 5th, Vienna, Austria. June 12th, Amsterdam, Holland. June 14th Lisbon, Portugal. June

17th, Berlin, Germany. June 18th, Brooklyn, NY. June 19th, Rochester, NY. June 20th, Fayetteville, AR. June 21st Kansas City, KS. June 22nd, Chicago IL. June 23rd Los Angeles, CA. June 24th Los Angeles, CA. June 25th, San Francisco. June 26th Denton, Texas. June 28th, Brooklyn NY. June 30th Pittsburgh, PA. July 2nd Cary, NC. July 7th, Baltimore, MD. July 8th, Portland ME.

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