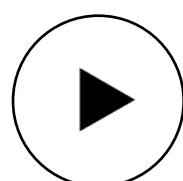
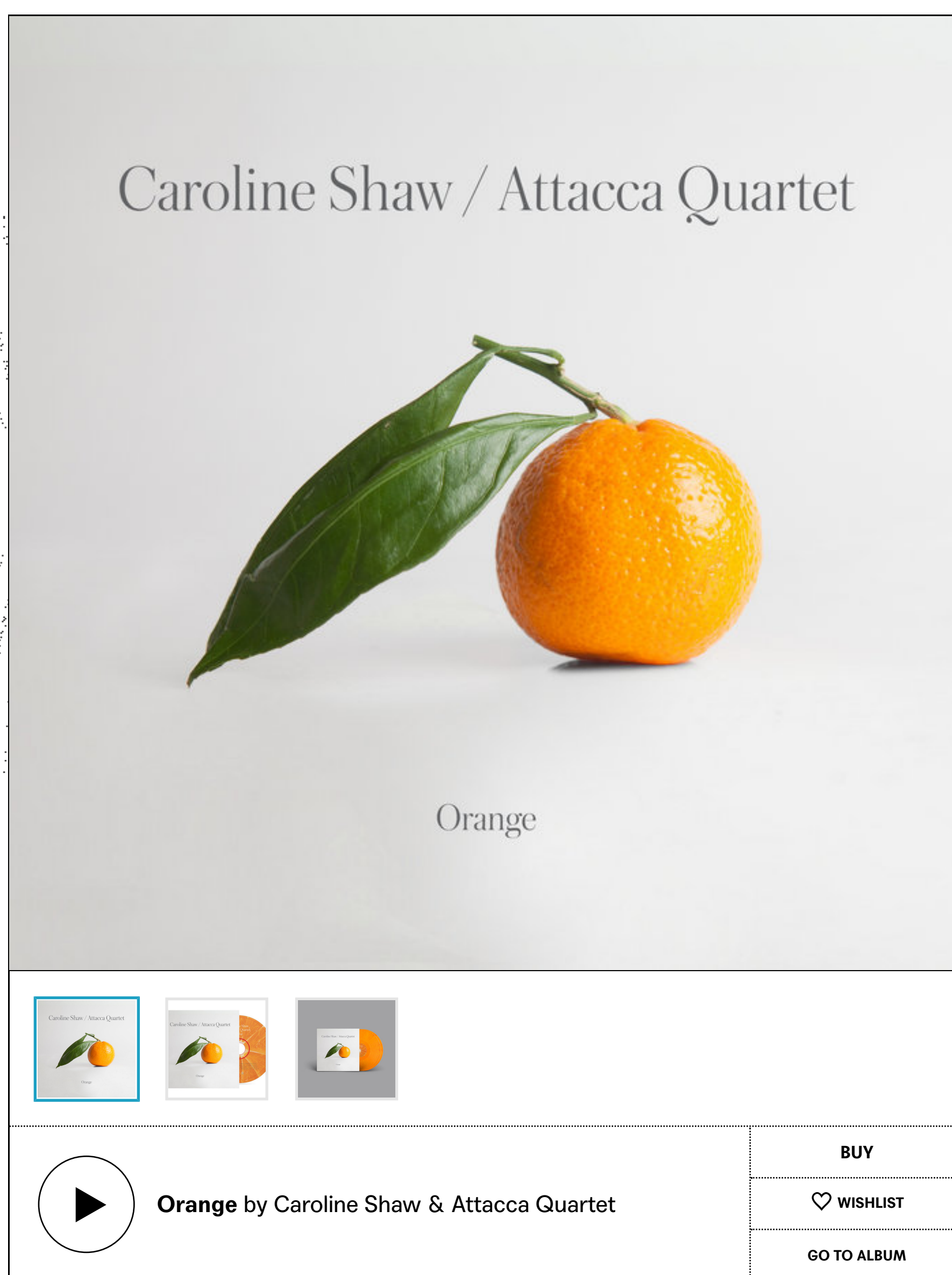
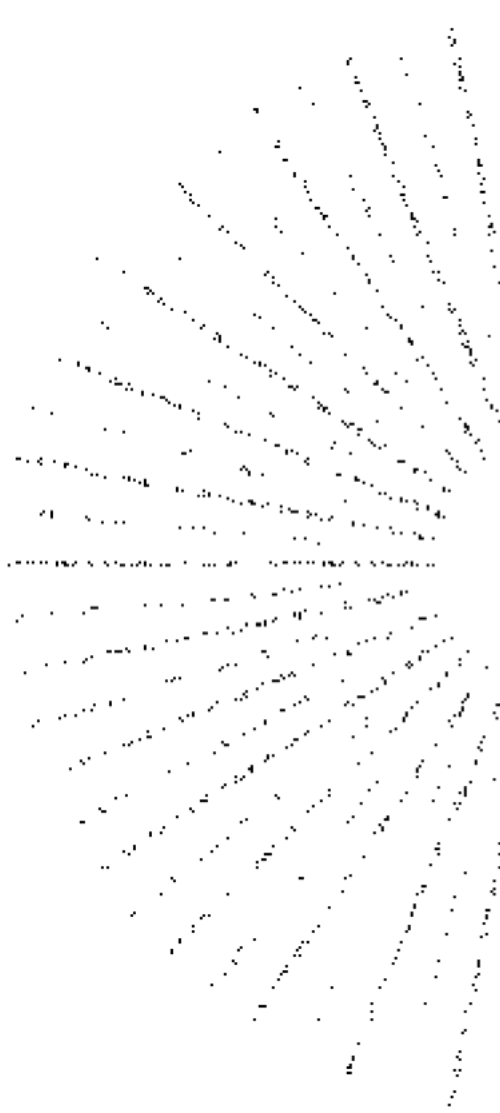


## ALBUM OF THE DAY



## Album of the Day: Caroline Shaw & Attacca Quartet, "Orange"

By [David R. Adler](#) · April 23, 2019



On *Orange*, composer [Caroline Shaw](#) shares new works for string quartet: a stirring program built around the five-part “Plan & Elevation” suite. Dealing imaginatively with the traditional string quartet format (much as she did with the choral tradition on her Pulitzer Prize-winning *Partita for 8 Voices*), Shaw offers a tour of what she calls her “garden.” *Orange* is a reference to the fruit, not the color, and the ways we find wonder in endless encounters with the same object. As Shaw puts it in her liner notes, “the thousandth orange that you eat is just as extraordinary as the first.”

The virtuoso performers of the Attacca Quartet capture these qualities in sound on “Valencia” and “The Orangery,” dealing with fine details of timbre, duration, and dynamic contrast in Shaw’s writing. Among the sumptuous bowed passages and inspired uses of pizzicato (a recurring motif throughout the suite), Attacca achieve more radical effects of texture and tone. There are the visceral pops and slaps of the finale “Limestone and Felt”; the slurring portamento (slides between notes, what she describes as “pre-school fingerpaint”) in “The Herbaceous Border”; and the gentle non-pitched brushing of bows against strings on “Entr’acte” (somewhat akin to the breath effects in her vocal partita).

At times Shaw will establish a clear tonality, in spacious, elongated phrasing, only to dismantle it and send it scattering away. Her forward-thinking tendencies carry the day, but her engagement with the classical past is deep. “Ritornello 2.sq.2.j.a” is her personal investigation of baroque ritornello aria form as evidenced, she explains, in the “Prologue” of Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*. Similarly, “Punctum” slides into a brief quotation from Bach’s “St. Matthew Passion.” From a place of deep knowledge, Shaw creates moments of yearning beauty, billowing intensity, and well-conceived strangeness.



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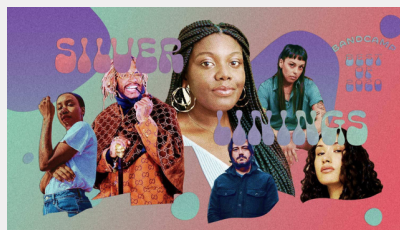
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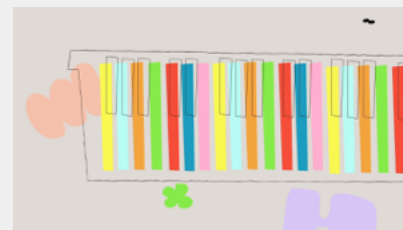
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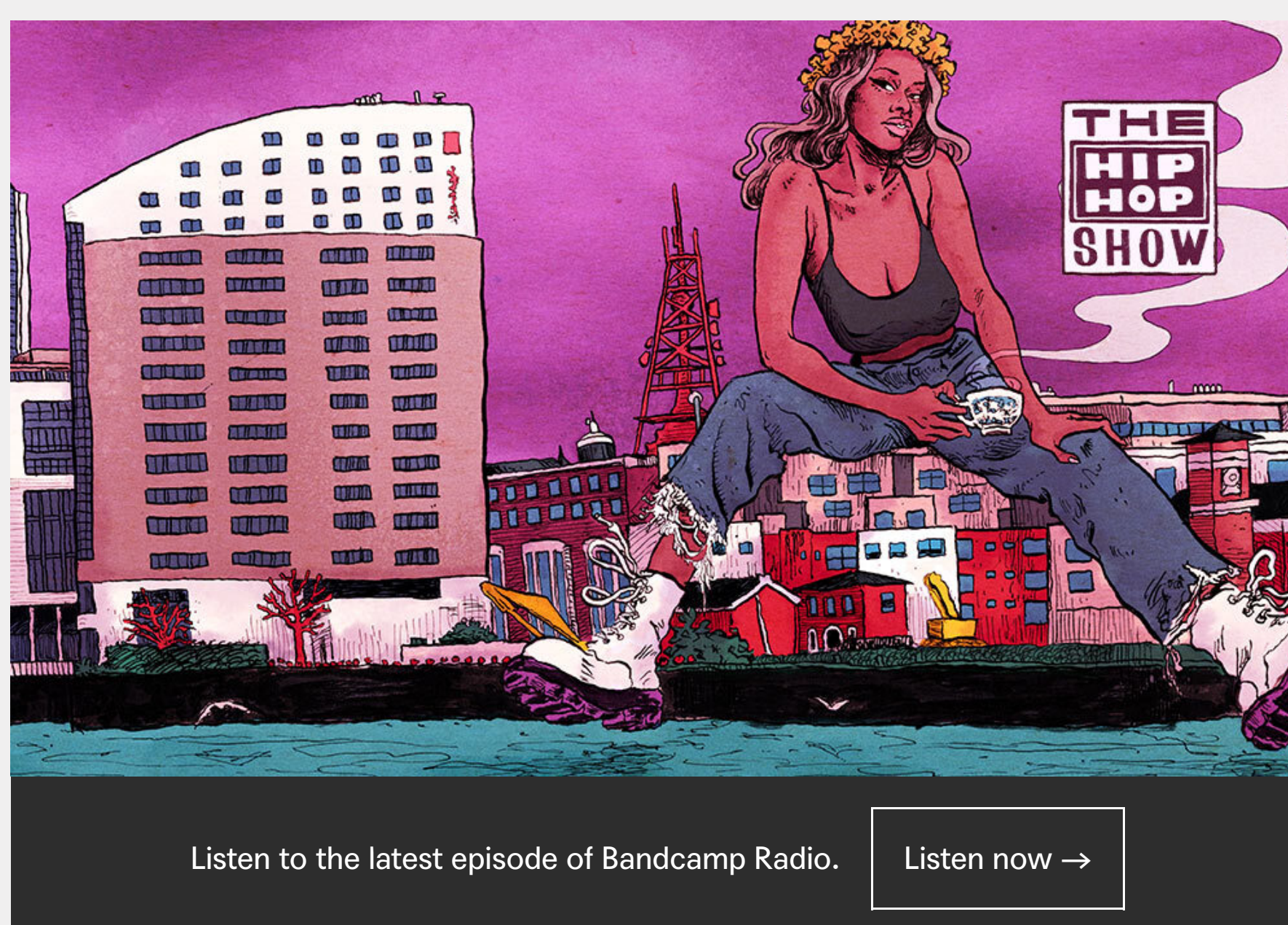


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