

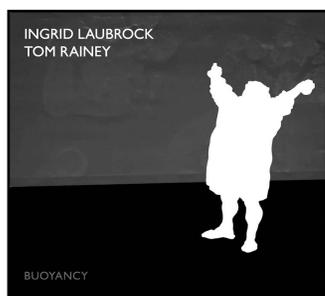
Elektrotropizm
Zbigniew Chojnacki (ForTune)
Lungfiddle
Adam Matlock (Off)
by Clifford Allen

While accordion has a lengthy history in jazz, it's far from a common instrument. Indeed, it probably has far more detractors than supporters, which is unfortunate because the accordion is an incredibly versatile axe. The most visible contemporary practitioners fall squarely in the avant garde realm, building on expanded palettes and a clear understanding of the instrument's rich preexisting vocabulary.

On the young Polish accordionist Zbigniew Chojnacki's unaccompanied debut *Elektrotropizm*, he supplants a grimy Hammond B3-like insistence with an array of pedals and a laptop (as well as occasional wordless vocals). The music ranges from bright, folksy melodies, like the closing "Tuwim", to the fantasia of measured blurts and sine-abetted darts that begins the four-part "Suite" central to the disc. By its third section, Chojnacki's deft keyboard work and supple bellows are in full view, creating intricate chordal patterns advancing and receding in relation to dramatic melody fragments, halting in curtailed blows as he builds an emphatic slink into the lengthy fourth part's honking minimalism. *Elektrotropizm* is a flawless, vast exploration arrived at through singular means.

Accordionist, vocalist and composer Adam Matlock is based in New Haven and is mostly known for his work in the Tri-Centric orbit of composer Anthony Braxton and related ensembles (Broadcloth; Dr. Caterwaul's Cadre of Clairvoyant Claptraps). *Lungfiddle* is his latest acappella effort, a seven-tune outlay of driving button-flecks, chewy particulars and whirling drone. Matlock is a harried technician with frenzied clarity and, unlike some of his peers, he avoids electronics entirely. In hearing the controlled panoply exhibited on this set, it's hard to believe this constant amalgam of breath and finger motion is unadulterated — yet the music shouldn't be entirely prized for physique, as out of pure, shapely emotion and breathtaking runs occasionally emerge fully realized structures. In the pantheon of solo recordings of any stripe, accordion or otherwise, *Lungfiddle* is a stunning achievement.

For more information, visit for-tune.pl and off-recordlabel.blogspot.com. Matlock is at *Soup & Sound* Jun. 25th. See Calendar.



Buoyancy
Ingrid Laubrock/Tom Rainey (Relative Pitch)
by John Sharpe

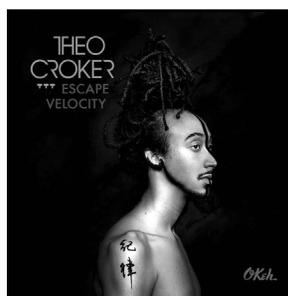
It should come as no surprise that a duet by a husband and wife team may be described as deeply personal. What may be less of a given is the freshness of response saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock and drummer Tom Rainey conjure from their extensive experience, both together and separately. Recorded live at the end of a 17-date North American tour, *Buoyancy* finds the pair in relaxed but still vigilant mode. The album comprises four jointly

extrapolated confections. Each takes the listener on a journey distinguished by the principals' fondness for twists in the road.

There's often a bracing sweetness to Laubrock's progressions, perhaps reflecting the intimate context. Both are masters of textural invention, allied in the drummer's case to an expansive rhythmic wit. That's demonstrated by the considered exchange that opens the title track, where tenor banter conversationally against pulsing cymbals. Charged animation comes when an episode of staccato saxophone prompts martial drum cadences, ramping up the intensity, until a return to the initial gambit. And both know how to defy expectations as exemplified by "Twenty Lanes", which generates a more discursive trip than most. After a start of pattering percussion like lapping waves against barely audible soprano tones, Laubrock's foghorn blurts shatter the mood. In empathy Rainey's abrupt drumbeats erupt from a low-volume crackle. An unforced evolution common to each of these pieces finally leads to a sprightly folk dance, illuminated by skronk over a snappy tattoo.

A similar trajectory holds sway on the briefer "The Museum Of Human Achievement", where a gentle ruminative opening suddenly pivots on a contorted phrase to take a darker turn with rumbling toms and overblown squawks. "Thunderbird" shows some of the unexpected destinations where such capers can lead. It features droney tenor and furtive percussive rustlings, set amid lots of space. Rainey contributes an emphatic unaccompanied flourish, before the piece finishes with a steady pulse fading to silence.

For more information, visit relativepitchrecords.com. This project is at *Barbès* Jun. 15th and *Zürcher Gallery* Jun. 30th. See Calendar.



Escape Velocity
Theo Croker (OKeh)
by George Kanzler

Trumpeter Theo Croker and his band DVRK FUNK bring a decidedly pop-funk electric orientation to his sophomore recording, one not quite as eclectic as his debut *AfroPhysicist*. The 15 tracks range from just over the two minute mark to a couple that barely broach five. With heavily layered rhythms and textures and emphasis on ensemble themes over improvised solos, many of these tracks resemble funk-jazz tunes suitable for commercial radio stations.

Croker is front and center as trumpet lead and soloist, often layering his playing with reverb and/or overdubbing lines from open trumpet and wah or Harmon-muted trumpet. His open sound is tart and low vibrato, capable of growls and clean high, long notes as on "Meditations", one of the few acoustic (sextet) tracks, a recollection of hardbop with an elongated tag finale. He displays creative flair on the duo track "A Call to the Ancestors", soloing over African percussion with open trumpet reminiscent of Hugh Masekela, but layered with bleats from trumpet mouthpiece. At the center of the album is a pair of tunes with Black Lives Matter inspiration: "We Can't Breathe" evokes the killings of Trayvon Martin and Eric Garner, powered by churning rhythms and emotive organ and tenor saxophone solos, followed by "It's Gonna Be Alright", an upbeat response over chattering beats, which includes a vocal chorus of the title phrase.

A highlight is "Love from the Sun", featuring Dee

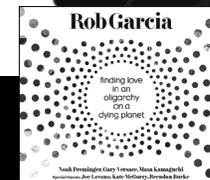
Dee Bridgewater, Croker's early mentor, wherein the earnest vocal and echoing trumpet triumph over the synth-heavy backgrounds. However, other tracks seem too abrupt or unfinished. "Because of You" is a promising power ballad, which, despite being one of the longer tracks, ends before any soloing really starts. And although just over two minutes long, the closer, "Rahspect (Amen)", resonates as a completely satisfying duo (trumpet-piano) ballad.

For more information, visit okeh-records.com. Croker is at *Jazz Standard* Jun. 7th-12th with Dee Dee Bridgewater and *Herbert Von King Park* Jun. 29th as part of *SummerStage*. See Calendar.

Rob Garcia

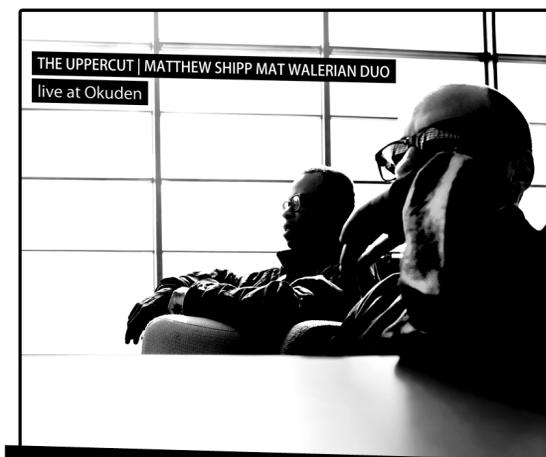
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