



In My View

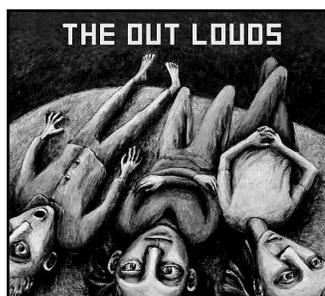
Michael Gibbs & The NDR Big Band (Cuneiform)
by Mark Keresman

Michael Gibbs, composer, arranger, conductor and educator, has long been one of jazz' most prized assets. That lovely song "Sweet Rain" from the Stan Getz album of the same name? His tune. He's also collaborated with Gary Burton and The Mahavishnu Orchestra and while based in the UK Gibbs' orchestras featured the cream of British jazz (and occasionally rock) talent. *In My View*, Gibbs directing the estimable NDR Big Band of Germany, is an album split almost evenly between Gibbs originals and choice (and none too obvious) standards.

In My View is in the tradition of Toshiko Akiyoshi-Lew Tabackin, Gil Evans, late-period Duke Ellington and Woody Herman circa 1970-75—a swinging modern big band with a brassy style, imaginative arrangements and concise but inspired soloing. But Gibbs keeps it fresh and unpredictable. His "'Tis As It Should Be" opens with a Latin-tinged cha-cha-cha rhythmic lilt, bright, yearning brass lines and the buttery swagger of Claus Stötter's flugelhorn. Carla Bley's "Ida Lupino", an elegant homage to the late actress and director, evokes a J.S. Bach chorale, then the soundtrack to a film noir (such as Lupino directed) thanks to the moody, blues-hinted piano solo by Vladyslav Sendek and warm, fluid clarinet of the recently passed Lutz Büchner. Monk's "Misterioso" gets a sumptuous Ellington-like treatment until it takes a punchy, darting tone, followed by burlesque-like orchestral backgrounds over which the trombone section goes to town with aggrieved growls, mock-tortured wails and suavely agreeable bluster. Gibbs maintains Ornette Coleman's "Ramblin'" country and blues undertones while adding some off-kilter old-school riff-heavy swing à la Count Basie.

Attention, big band fans—Gibbs finds a middle path between the creative approaches of Evans and Bley and the visceral drive of Thad Jones-Mel Lewis and Herman and traverses that path with plenty of distinctive class and top-shelf technique.

For more information, visit cuneiformrecords.com. Gibbs is at The Stone Jun. 14th with Hal Willner. See Calendar.



The Out Louds

Ben Goldberg/Mary Halvorson/Tomas Fujiwara
(Relative Pitch)
by Stuart Broomer

The Out Louds is a new formation of three accomplished improvisers: clarinetist Ben Goldberg, guitarist Mary Halvorson and drummer Tomas Fujiwara. While improvising ensembles usually work within a style, The Out Louds seem to be living up to their name, literally "thinking out loud", seeking different ways to meld their musical thoughts.

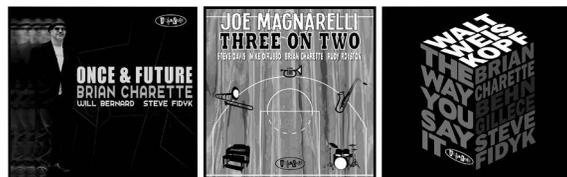
Distinct approaches arise everywhere here, whether it's a lead voice establishing a distinctly odd tack or supportive bits that wander far afield, sometimes almost

immediately. It's apparent from the first track, as Goldberg initiates "Starry/False" with an ascending phrase around which Halvorson begins to present lines that initially agree then diverge. "False Goat's Beard" covers tremendous ground, ultimately arriving at mere wisps of evanescent sound when Goldberg lowers the volume to the point where his clarinet seems to be whispering secrets. "Yellow Queen" has Halvorson playing tentatively, sounding like she's literally looking for something she hasn't heard yet; when Goldberg enters, his sound is so liquid as to suggest the sound may be found underwater and Fujiwara's distinct taps seem to be measuring depths.

"Obedience" is a gentle tangle of overlapping repeating phrases that eventually becomes a throbbing field of dense, buzzing guitar and drums. "Pink Home Run" demonstrates Goldberg's knack for pure spontaneous melody, setting it in a woody lower register suggesting Jimmy Giuffre; cymbals and snare provide a frame while the guitar's pitches bend off into space. Sometimes consistent patterns emerge and strong continuous play develops, presenting another dimension. "Trout-Lily" begins as a kind of free 'cool jazz' only to become increasingly chromatic and agitated; Goldberg and Fujiwara generate intense free jazz on "Nearly Wild".

Those titles are the names of flowers ("False Goat's Beard" is a species of astilbe common in woodlands; "Pink Home Run" is a rose) and it's an inspired match for music that seems to be playing with its own genetic codes, from things as they are to mixes of unconscious patterns, new hypotheses and sudden interventions.

For more information, visit relativepitchrecords.com. This project is at Cornelia Street Café Jun. 14th. See Calendar.



Once & Future
Brian Charette (Posi-Tone)
Three on Two
Joe Magnarelli (Posi-Tone)
The Way You Say It
Walt Weiskopf (Posi-Tone)
by Ken Dryden

Brian Charette has been a rapidly rising star of the Hammond B3 organ for the past few years and his latest CD is a salute to his fellow players, ranging from greats of the Swing Era to current players. Well accompanied by guitarist Will Bernard and drummer Steve Fidyk, Charette is interested in modernizing vintage tunes while putting his stamp on them. Starting with Fats Waller's "Jitterbug Waltz", Charette swings but the peppy rhythm section gives this jazz favorite a new flavor. His funky take of Larry Young's blues "Tyrone" downplays John Coltrane's influence on its composer and turns it into a percolating number for partying. The band engages in shout-outs of the title to Jack McDuff's engaging funky blues "Hot Barbecue", though Charette's keyboard fireworks merit the real attention. Bud Powell's "Dance of the Infidels" isn't commonly heard on organ, but this imaginative treatment may open the door for others to conduct further explorations. Charette wraps the session with his hip "Blues For 96". The future of Hammond B3 is in great hands.

Trumpeter Joe Magnarelli relocated from Syracuse to New York City in the mid '80s and has steadily built a solid reputation as a leader and sideman. On *Three on Two*, his ninth CD, he is joined in the frontline by trombonist Steve Davis and alto saxophonist Mike DiRubbo, with the "two" being Charette and drummer Rudy Royston. This release has an engaging vibe that makes it sound like a working group rather than musicians who rehearsed a few tunes for a record date.

Magnarelli's powerful opening title track is postbop at its best while Davis' "Easy" has the laid-back feeling of a walk on a spring day. With its many twists, DiRubbo's "The Step Up" is infectious, with terrific call-and-response and tight harmonies. The quintet is up to tackling two Coltrane works, a boisterous rendition of "26-2" and a thoughtful treatment of "Central Park West", showcasing expressive trumpet and creative organ. French Impressionist Claude Debussy's music has been explored by jazz groups though rarely as focused as Magnarelli's swaggering arrangement of the ballad "My Reverie". This consistently high performance practically demands a follow-up session.

With over three-and-a-half decades in the New York jazz scene, beginning with Buddy Rich and Toshiko Akiyoshi, Walt Weiskopf is long established as a hard-blowing tenor saxophonist and creative composer. Accompanied by Charette, up-and-coming vibraphonist Behn Gillette and Fidyk, most of *The Way You Say It* focuses on Weiskopf's potent originals, starting with the percolating blues "Coffee and Scones". The catchy unison theme of "Blues Combination" is negotiated with the confidence of a working band, Fidyk providing a strong undercurrent. Alex Kramer-Joan Whitney-Mack David's "Candy" was long favored by soul jazz saxophonists and this understated interpretation pays homage to past greats, with sublime organ and soft brushwork supplying the perfect backdrop. There's a change in direction with the dramatic setting of Weather Report's "Scarlet Woman", then an effortless galloping through Charlie Parker's bop gem "Segment" before cooling off the listener with the lush title ballad.

For more information, visit posi-tone.com. Charette, Magnarelli and Weiskopf are at Club Bonafide Jun. 24th with the Posi-Tone Allstars. See Calendar.

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