



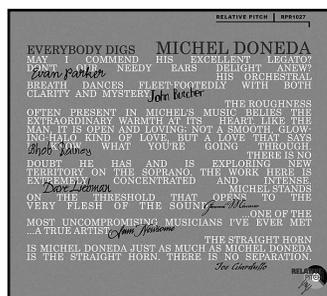
From The Attic of My Mind
Sam Most (Xanadu-Elemental Music)
 by Ken Dryden

Flute players have rarely gotten their due. The late Sam Most, who was born 85 years ago this month and passed away in 2013, made it even harder to gain recognition by his reluctance to promote himself. Although he played tenor saxophone and occasionally clarinet, Most was known for his work on flute while being one of the first to sing as he played. Following a number of records in the '50s, he didn't make any new albums under his own name until approached by Don Schlitten of Xanadu Records in the mid '70s.

This 1975 session features a strong supporting cast: pianist Kenny Barron, bassist George Mraz, drummer Walter Bolden and percussionist Warren Smith. The set focuses exclusively on Most's potent originals, all excellent blowing vehicles. There are plenty of fireworks in "What Is, Is", a fast-paced opener featuring frequent song quotes, ranging from the operas *Carmen* and *Pagliacci* to jazz and pop favorites. The sensuous samba "Breath of Love" finds Most switching to the deeper sound of alto flute, enriched by spacious, dreamy piano. The spry, upbeat ballad "You Are Always the One" is a treasure awaiting discovery, in which flute practically sings a vocal line; it would be perfect for a vocalist with an added lyric. "Child of the Forest" is a peppy bossa nova marked by the leader's pronounced vibrato and Barron's contrasting laidback solo. The bittersweet "One Forgotten Yesterday", Most returning to alto flute, is an emotional ballad played as a duet with Barron in a strong supportive role. "Keep Moving" is an unexpected detour into funky blues accented by off-center percussion at unpredictable moments, along with Most's sung lines as he plays.

Like other CDs in Elemental Music's Xanadu reissue series, no expense has been spared in restoring the Hurricane Sandy-damaged master tapes while reproducing both the original cover and liner notes, in addition to new notes and reissue producer Zev Feldman's comments. This unjustly neglected recording will hopefully make flute fans aware of Most's contributions.

For more information, visit elemental-music.com



Everybody Digs Michel Doneda
Michel Doneda (Relative Pitch)
 by Stuart Broomer

In 1959, Riverside Records released *Everybody Digs Bill Evans*, hoping to garner attention for the relatively unrecognized pianist's second LP with a cover devoted to accolades from Miles Davis, Ahmad Jamal and Cannonball Adderley. Relative Pitch has wittily adapted the title and design for this solo recital by Michel Doneda, covering it with quotes from fellow soprano saxophonists including John Butcher, Sam

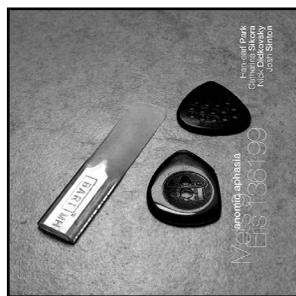
Newsome and Dave Liebman, beginning with Evan Parker's acrostic "May I commend his excellent legato? Don't our needy ears delight anew?" The homage is fitting, not only as tacit declaration that history does belong to the experimenters, but to emphasize Doneda's stature: a significant voice in Europe for over 30 years, he is relatively unknown in America.

Doneda applies an array of techniques to create a highly personal vision. The music was recorded at La Chapelle De La Planques, an ancient stone church in the town of Tanus in the French Pyrenees, but while the church undoubtedly contributes to the resonance, there's more here than the delay provided by its Romanesque architecture.

Exploring the nooks and crannies of his horn as much as those of the church, Doneda creates a labyrinth of air, breath passing through the horn in various densities, sometimes creating more than one phantom pitch, sometimes simply a series of pitch shifts in air. Pad slaps can signal ominously in what appears to be a vast echo chamber. At times his sound is flute-like, achieving the effect of both a monk's shakuhachi and the mountain that echoes it. At other times it's a wind tunnel and the insects, birds and animals that have found their way inside. So profound is Doneda's involvement in the interior, almost secret, life of his horn that it comes as a shock when it suddenly blares forth as a saxophone.

While Doneda brings a host of techniques to his work, the music is never simply about that. He simultaneously creates both the perspective of the explorer and the world through which he moves.

For more information, visit relativepitchrecords.com. Doneda is at *Cornelia Street Café* Dec. 20th with *Dave Liebman and Soup & Sound* Dec. 21st. See Calendar.



Anomic Aphasis
Han-earl Park Quartet (SLAM)
 by Ken Waxman

Guitarist Han-earl Park joins those improvisers who conceive of a playbook for interactive tactics—his is called Metis 9. He uses what he calls "focused complexity" to formulate strategies alongside tenor and soprano saxophonist Catherine Sikora throughout *Anomic Aphasis*, as well as baritone saxophonist/bass clarinetist Josh Sinton on three tracks and guitarist Nick Didkovsky on two others.

Like a plucky heroine faced with rebellious robots in a sci-fi flick, Sikora's vocally inflected timbres, especially on the nearly 27½ minute "Monopod", add necessary human-sourced harmony to the complex jangles and static interference from the guitars. As the guitarists clip staccato whines with ingot-like density from below the bridges and along the necks, her wistful soprano saxophone variations preserve the linear form, eventually making common cause with offbeat folksy strums from one string player. Hear Sikora's final unaccompanied cadenza as potential human triumph over, or coexistence with, the widening machine-produced tremolo pumps. A folk-like overlay also makes its appearance on the concluding "Stopcock", although the tenor saxophonist's concentrated upwards snarls and magnetic near-string-tearing pops from guitar strings make the track so atmospheric as to become almost frightening.

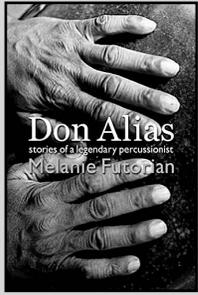
The wailing vigor of Sinton's bottom-pitched horns adds to the reeds' aleatoric strategies on the other three

tracks. Nearly verbalized reed tones are so euphonic on "Flying Rods" that the subsequent layered lines nearly move into songbook territory. But Park's parallel flanges and hard thumping keeps the results electronically plugged in as well as pointedly blended.

Sardonically printing a faux questionnaire about Metis 9 application in the CD booklet shows that Park champions music over theory. With associates like Sikora, Didkovsky and Sinton, it appears he can have it both ways.

For more information, visit slamproductions.net. Park is at *New Revolution Arts Dec. 12th and Delroy's Cafe and Wine Bar Dec. 14th*. See Calendar.

IN PRINT



Don Alias: Stories of a Legendary Percussionist
 Melanie Futorian (s/r)
 by Russ Musto

Despite the collaborative nature of jazz, sidemen rarely receive media coverage commensurate with the importance of their musical contributions. The prototypical sideman, percussionist Don Alias (pronounced a-lie-us) appeared on numerous record dates and concert performances during his 50-year career, playing drums, congas and bongo with many of the music's most important artists.

To honor the memory of Alias, born Christmas Day 1939 and who passed away suddenly in 2006 at the age of 66, Melanie Futorian has assembled a brief but engaging narrative of the life of her longtime companion, culled from their many conversations and his own journal entries. The resultant tome offers an illuminating glimpse not only into a life of the first-call percussionist, but the various music worlds of which he was such an important part.

Alias recounts tales of growing up in a West Indian household in '40s Harlem, first hearing and then playing AfroCuban music in his multicultural neighborhood, prior to his first professional gig playing for Eartha Kitt dance performances, including one at the 1957 Newport Jazz Festival with trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie that introduced him to the jazz world. He tells how a stint with pianist/vocalist Nina Simone brought him to the attention of Miles Davis (on whose *Bitches Brew* date he played) after which he became the 'go-to' percussionist on the burgeoning fusion scene of the '70s.

Anecdotal tales of work with jazz drum masters Tony Williams and Elvin Jones and popular music icons Lou Rawls and Trini Lopez testify to the broad range of his experience. His brutally honest accounts of working with jazz-rock outfit Blood, Sweat & Tears and mercurial bassist Jaco Pastorius are most telling, as is a chapter regarding his period as songwriter/vocalist Joni Mitchell's significant other. There are plenty of tears and laughter along the way, with remembrances of many tours with saxophonist Dave Sanborn and others that took him around the world many times, giving keen insight into the thrills and travails of life on the road. Futorian's photos and Yoko Yamabe's artwork offer a compelling visual complement to the revealing chronicle.