

GLOBE UNITY



Haberdashery
Bones (Leo)
Happy Jazz
JR3 (Relative Pitch)
Réunion
Queen Mab Trio (Mikroclimat)
 by Tom Greenland

For some it was Eric Dolphy's 1961 live unaccompanied recording of "God Bless the Child", for others Bennie Maupin on Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*, which established the bass clarinet—heretofore mostly heard in classical or soundtrack music—as an important vessel for jazz expression. Three recent releases illustrate its continuing relevance.

Bones, an avant-jazz trio from Israel, is led by bass clarinetist Ziv Taubenfeld. *Haberdashery*, its second CD, sports a black and white cover photo of a pale sugarcube-shaped house with a thin dark door standing in a barren field—an arrestingly austere image. The music within is likewise lean, layered, striking in its restraint, a study in high contrasts and subtle shadings of gray. Taubenfeld is the clear leader, the music formed from his charts, though it's often difficult to discern his compositional parameters. Instead, one thinks of close colleagues sitting around a café table, offering observations and opinions, a wending conversation interrupted by sudden short departures before regaining the common thread. "Cello", the final track, easily the best, begins with Taubenfeld's low trilling calls, breaking dramatically into mid-register, later again even higher, expiring finally like a diva's swan song.

In contrast with the Bones cover, that of JR3's *Happy Jazz* is misleading: the men in the photo aren't smiling and their music, while certainly energetic, isn't really happy or jazz. JR3—guitarist Olaf Rupp, clarinetist Rudi Mahall, and bassist Jan Roder—is a Berlin-based outfit. Mahall, known for collaborations with Alexander von Schlippenbach and Aki Takase, switches between bass and soprano horns, his tone edgier (more Dolphy-esque) than Taubenfeld's, his attack more frenetic, his sonic palette more varied. Rupp has a unique approach to the guitar, holding it upright on his lap like a Chinese pipa and raking the strings with finger-rolls and other unusual techniques to produce dense clusters of indistinct tones. This lengthy live set is dense, mercurial and extroverted, requiring considerable stamina to endure in one sitting, but well worth a second try.

Canadian bass clarinetist Lori Freedman had worked since the mid '90s with countrywoman pianist Marilyn Lerner, exploring interzones between jazz and classical, composition and improvisation, before Dutch violist Ig Henneman joined them to form the Queen Mab Trio. *Réunion*, the group's third CD, documents their first completely improvised concert, recorded at Toronto's Gallery 345, the first time they performed as a trio in eight years. Like its Shakespearean fairy namesake, the trio plays pranks, delivering dreamlike fantasies to lull listeners, the music gathering then breaking in long, slow rolling wave-sets, with quieter waters intervening. The eight tracks are generally low pitched, unhurried, spacious, with astounding timbral variety within a delimited dynamic range. There is beauty in the details, surprise in the occasional abrupt climaxes.

For more information, visit leorecords.com, relativepitchrecords.com and mikroclimat.com



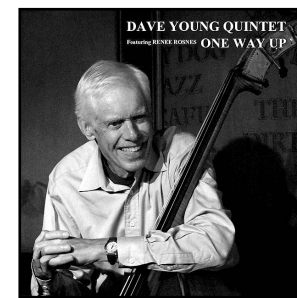
Embrace
 Roswell Rudd/Fay Victor/
 Lafayette Harris/Ken Filiano (RareNoise)
 New York-St. Johann
 ReDDeer (Evil Rabbit)
 by Robert Iannapolo

For the past 20 years, Fay Victor has proven herself to be an intrepid vocalist who won't be pigeonholed into one style: she can sing the traditional jazz songbook and make something new out of it; paid homage to her Trinidadian roots on *Kaiso Stories* with the avant garde ensemble Other Dimensions In Music; collaborated with the late Dutch pianist Misha Mengelberg on a program of Herbie Nichols tunes and the Ab Baars-Ig Henneman Duo in free improvisations; and has her own group that has recorded three albums of original material.

Embrace has many things to recommend it. It's nominally Roswell Rudd's date and Victor is recording with the trombone master for the first time. He's always been a great match for vocalists. It also finds Victor extensively exploring the standard book for the first time since 2002's *Darker Than Blue*. Rounding things out are pianist Lafayette Harris and bassist Ken Filiano. It's a good mix of players and there are a number of high points: the exchange of fours between Rudd and Victor on "Can't We Be Friends"; growling intro and scat chorus on Ray Noble's "I Hadn't Anyone Till You"; Charles Mingus' "Goodbye Porkpie Hat" using Rahsaan Roland Kirk's lyrics. Victor has an individual way of dealing with lyrics, maneuvering difficult melodies with ease, but she never swamps the material with over-ornamentation. Rudd is his usual magisterial self with assured complementary lines and deft usage of mute. At 81, he's still going strong on this session, matching players half his age phrase for phrase. Harris is a generous accompanist with a style that is full but never florid and Filiano is a rock-solid bassist who carries rhythmic and harmonic direction with ease. There's just one lapse that prevents this album from being perfect. Rudd has been one of the chief caretakers of Herbie Nichols' legacy since his death and Victor is one of the few singers who has tackled Nichols' material. It seems a missed opportunity not being able to hear these two handle some Nichols songs. Perhaps a full album's worth is in order in the future.

New York-St. Johann is something completely different, an improvised trio set with Austrian pianist Elisabeth Harnik and British bassist Dominic Lash. The three met at a residency at OMI International Arts Center in upstate New York and hit it off, leading to several live dates as a trio. It's clear all three are on the same wavelength. Some of Victor's texts were previously written and others were spontaneous. The humorous "Drip" arose from a previous conversation between Victor and Harnik. Harnik draws on the Cecil Taylor through Alexander von Schlippenbach tradition while Lash probes the deep recesses of the music. And Victor utilizes her complete vocabulary, from wild uninhibited shrieks and gentle cooing to recitations. It's an impressive performance but not for the faint-hearted. While *Embrace* is the more accessible way to hear one of the best current jazz singers, *New York-St. Johann* is well-worth hearing to get the full grasp of Victor's complete conception.

For more information, visit rarenoiserecords.com and evilrabbitrerecords.eu. Victor is at Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center Dec. 7th, Sistas' Place Dec. 16th and 55Bar Dec. 28th. See Calendar.



One Way Up (featuring Renee Rosnes)
 Dave Young (Modica Music)
 by Ken Dryden

Bassist Dave Young has led a distinguished career, which included a long working relationship with the late Oscar Peterson and a five-year stint with guitarist Lenny Breau. But over the past two-plus decades, Young has stepped out more frequently as a leader and recorded a number of small-group CDs. The bassist intended for this to be his last studio recording and, if that remains the case, he has finished with a flourish. His quintet includes two old friends with whom he has often played, trumpeter Kevin Turcotte and tenor saxophonist Perry White, along with veteran drummer Terry Clarke and pianist Renee Rosnes.

Young's choice of material focuses mainly on lesser-known songs by jazz greats, starting with a snappy interpretation of the late Marcus Belgrave's "All My Love". The leader's "Love For Scale" is an engaging and deliberately transparent reworking of Cole Porter's "Love For Sale", showcasing Rosnes' bluesy side. Young steps to the forefront in Milton Sealey's brilliant jazz waltz "Black Diamond", following Roland Kirk's 1965 arrangement. The fireworks get underway in the quintet's energized setting of Freddie Hubbard's "Intrepid Fox", a hardbop masterpiece fueled by an extended drum solo.

Dramatic arco bass is prominent in the introduction to Cedar Walton's gospel-infused "The Holy Land", then the band settles into an infectious groove that would sway any audience. Young's melancholy "Night is Long" has a bluesy air enhanced by Rosnes' emotional solo and Turcotte's expressive playing, though the composer's understated single chorus proves to be equally effective. Cedar Walton's jaunty "NPS" is another hidden gem and the quintet's playful workout has a sassy air. Joe Henderson's "Inner Urge", one of the late saxophonist's signature songs, is often overplayed at too fast a tempo; this arrangement, which omits Turcotte, brings the jazz standard to a simmer without boiling over. Adept piano and searing tenor give way to Young's intricate solo before the band wraps the song in a rather subdued manner.

For more information, visit daveyoung.ca. Renee Rosnes is at Dizzy's Club Dec. 7th-10th. See Calendar.

SACHA

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 JAZZ IN 13 LANGUAGES

JAZZ AT KITANO
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 BORIS KOZLOV
 VINCE CHERICO

"What is it that sets her apart from the wannabes? Youthful spirit; spot-on intonation; phrasing, phrasing, phrasing; the ability to slightly alter a melody and not lose the intent of the composer; and, in the jazz world, that elusive "something" that separates a jazz singer from even a good pop singer."
 - George Fendel, Oregon Jazz Society



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