

Jazz & Improv by Andy Hamilton

Mino Cinelu & Nils Petter Molvær *SulaMadiana*

BMG Modern CD

The title *SulaMadiana* is an amalgam of Nils Petter Molvær's home, the Norwegian island of Sula, and Madiana, synonym for Martinique, where Mino Cinelu's father comes from. This studio session was recorded in Oslo and Brooklyn, and post-production occurred separately. Percussionist Cinelu is best known for his work with Miles Davis – *We Want Miles* and *Decoy* – as well as Weather Report and Gong, and trumpeter Molvær is a master of the Nordic bucolic. It's unsurprising, therefore, that many tracks have a Miles feel, and I'm again reminded how Davis's melancholic sound, once so distinctive and unusual in jazz, has become dominant.

Coffee Faith & Mathias Preuss *Coffee Faith & Mathias Preuss*

10PM Project CD/DL/MP

Mathias Preuss is a German free improviser who lives in Lemgo near the Dutch border, and plays tenor and soprano saxophone, mostly solo. Rio Nurkholis Syaifuddin aka Coffee Faith is a drone/ambient/noise artist from Yogyakarta, Java. A barista, his moniker is a wordplay on kopi pait, Javanese for bitter coffee. It was a chance encounter – Coffee Faith contacted the saxophonist after being intrigued by his work on Facebook – and these two tracks were recorded separately in Germany and Indonesia. "The experimental scene in Java is growing, and all cities have a strong connection," Coffee Faith tells me by email. "In Yogyakarta, almost all music scenes are here." For the eerie, haunting "Bebaya" ("Danger"), Preuss recorded his mournful tenor, and Faith responded with blasts of noise and industrial interjections. On "Pangkur", a saxophone dialogue between tenor and soprano becomes more expressive, while Faith's noise stylings morph into a haunting Javanese song about preparing for death.

Sylvain Darrifourcq *Kaiju Eats Cheeseburgers*

Hector CD/DL

Improviser and composer Sylvain Darrifourcq studied classical percussion, and as an improviser he has worked with Joëlle Léandre and Tony Malaby. This is the second release for his Franco-Belgian trio of Manuel Hermia (tenor, alto and soprano

saxophones) and Valentin Ceccaldi (cello). Their muscular approach is an amalgam of rock, jazz and chamber approaches – French jazz seems to exclude the impressionist tradition of French classical music. But the standout track, for me, is at once the longest and most ambient: "Disruption" by Manuel Hermia.

London Jazz Composers Orchestra *That Time*

Not Two CD

The Kraków based label celebrates LJCO's 50th anniversary with these remastered live recordings from its poorly documented early years, 1972–80. Kenny Wheeler's punning "Watts Parker Beckett To Me, Mr Riley" is the jazziest track, with the album's only swing groove. More abstract is Barry Guy's gritty "Statements III", created for the austere modernist Donaueschingen Festival. Trombonist Paul Rutherford's "Quasimode III" features personalised electronics. The names include Derek Bailey and Evan Parker, while Howard Riley is a wonderfully fertile improviser on piano. Trevor Watts (alto saxophone) and Harry Beckett (trumpet and - I think - flugelhorn) also impress.

Ralph Peterson *Onward & Upward*

Onyx CD/DL/2xLP

One of my most unforgettable gigs was Art Blakey at London's Ronnie Scott's, with Terence Blanchard and Donald Harrison. I was sitting at a table right in front of the drummer. Those horn players don't appear on this tribute album – nor do the Marsalis brothers or Wayne Shorter – but 14 former Jazz Messengers do. Drummer Ralph Peterson celebrates his mentor, mostly featuring a sextet chosen from a cohort including Kevin Eubanks, Craig Handy, Lonnie Plaxico and Jean Toussaint. Blakey required his musicians to keep the repertoire alive by composing, and *Onward & Upward* features entirely new Messengers-style material by band members. There's a high standard throughout, with the Latin "El Grito" a standout.

Polwechsel & Klaus Lang *Unseen*

ezzthetics CD

Free improvising ensemble Polwechsel are currently the Austro-German quartet of Michael Moser (cello), Werner Dafeldecker (bass), Martin Brandlmayr and Burkhard Beins (percussion) – joined here by composer Klaus Lang on the church organ of St Lambrecht's Abbey. Polwechsel work with "compositions, improvisation and the ambiguity of these methods", says Beins on his website. They also make acoustic instruments sound deceptively electroacoustic. Lang calls himself, drily, an observer of tones – "I think of nothing and I don't want to purport any meanings" – but he nudges them into a beautifully meaningful structure on his iridescent "Easter

Wings". Michael Moser's "No Sai Cora-M Fui Endormitz" – named after a poem by troubadour Guilhem de Poitou – opposes string harmonics and organ. Dafeldecker's "Redeem" begins with organ and bass at what sounds like the lower limits of human hearing; its complex structure features a glorious efflorescence of sound and air.

Rudy Royston *PaNOptic*

Greenleaf DL

Drummer jokes form a leitmotif of Matt Brennan's excellent history of the drum kit, *Kick It*. They're unlikely to be cracked by serious listeners to this beautifully conceived and ambitious solo album, full of melody, colour and texture – a worthy successor to Max Roach's *Drums Unlimited*, foundation for solo percussion in jazz. Rudy Royston grew up in Denver, where his father worked in a musical instrument factory. From his classical percussion training – he explains in an online interview – he learned the medium's incredible subtleties, so that "a pianissimo cymbal roll is barely audible, but it means everything". Unlike Roach's album, this is entirely solo, though on some tracks – notably the moving "deferred", featuring Langston Hughes's inspirational poem *What Happens To A Dream Deferred?* – Royston vocalises.

Emma-Jean Thackray *Um Yang*

Night Dreamer DL/LP

Yorkshire born Thackray's project features a septet, expressing a Taoist philosophy, with a stylistic influence from Miles Davis, *Bitches Brew* era. But this short 19 minute album transcends its jazz basis, as the trumpeter, beat-maker, singer and DJ draws on wider influences. Since debuting in 2016, she's directed The London Symphony Orchestra and played Glastonbury, collaborating with Makaya McCraven and Junius Paul. Both Thackray and saxophonist Soweto Kinch provide effective solo interest, but the results aren't always totally individual.

Ways & Simon Toldam *Fortunes*

Lorna CD/DL/LP

Ways are the Toronto based duo of Brodie West (alto saxophone) and Evan Cartwright (drums) who've worked together since 2012. Their first release is a collaboration with Danish pianist Simon Toldam, best known for his work with Han Bennink. On some tracks he plays prepared piano, while Cartwright's drum kit is idiosyncratic. Two spontaneously improvised tracks aside, the music arose during a week of rehearsal. The stuttering "Fame" gets two interpretations, with saxophone and piano dominant plus a contrasting percussion interlude. The more freely rhythmic "Money" gets three, each following recognisable general contours. A deeply thoughtful and absorbing release. □

Modern Composition by Julian Cowley

Beth Anderson *Namely*

Other Minds CD/DL

Though a longtime New York resident, Beth Anderson's instrumental compositions often have a distinctly pastoral feel. Patchwork forms, conceived as musical quilts or laid out like meadows, convey real joy in making and shaping. By way of comparison her early explorations in the field of text-sound, compiled on *Peachy Keen-O* (Pogus 2003), are high spirited and playful. On *Namely* Anderson returns to creative wordplay in order to celebrate other artists she enjoys and admires. She simply extracts spoken music from their names. There's no processing, aside from that accomplished by her imaginative juggling of letters and phonemes. All 65 tributes, arranged alphabetically from John Adams to Pamela Z, are artfully patterned and performed with rigour, plus Anderson's sparky humour.

Anthony Braxton & Jacqueline Kerrod *DUO (Bologna) 2018*

I Dischi Di Angelica CD/DL

At Bologna's Angelica Festival in May 2018, Anthony Braxton performed his *Composition 189* as a dialogue with harpist Jacqueline Kerrod. In the course of five movements the saxophonist moves between alto, soprano and soprano, cultivating for the most part a lyrical and even tender mood, interrupted here and there by flurries of turbulence. Braxton had never previously played in a duo with acoustic harp, but Kerrod is so finely attuned to the nature and requirements of his music that they seem throughout to be running off a shared circuit, intimately synchronised and reacting with sensitivity to each other's gestures and movements. In Braxton's vast catalogue there can be few recordings that communicate so appealingly the sense of a particular occasion grasped and fulfilled.

Kyle Bruckmann *Triptych (Tautological)*

Carrier CD/DL

Habit, as Samuel Beckett noted, is a great deadener. California based oboe player Bruckmann is an artist wary of habit's anaesthetic effect. Sensing that his identity as composer, improviser and interpretative performer had frayed into increasingly independent strands, he designed these pieces to deliver a corrective jolt. He positions himself as