

Record Reviews



OR BAREKET

OB1

Patience; Snooze; Shosh; Elefantes I; Elefantes II; Misdronoth; Joaquin; La Música Y La Palabra; Shir Lelo Shem (47.23)

Bareket (b); Shachar Elnatan (g); Gadi Lehavi (p); Ziv Ravitz (d); Vitor Gonçalves (acc); Keita Ogawa (pc). Roselle, New Jersey, 21 & 22 December 2015.

Fresh Sound New Talent FSNT 527

★★★★

Or Baret was born in Jerusalem, raised in Buenos Aires and Tel Aviv but has been a resident of New York City since 2011 and in that year won first prize at the International Society

JJ CONTENT

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of Bassists' jazz competition. Having performed and recorded with a wide range of musicians including Leon Parker, Chris Potter and Cyrille Aimee, his compositions are informed by Mediterranean, South American and North African folklores and mediated by his thorough grounding in jazz. OB1 is Bareket's wryly titled debut album.

Patience opens with a guitar-led heavy blues head, not dissimilar to early Larry Coryell. But the relatively raucous opener belies the tenor of succeeding numbers which are generally more cerebral, meticulously crafted and often steeped in sensitive lyricism. The music is mainly, but not exclusively, dominated by guitarist Shachar Elnatan who plays in a fluid, glissando-rich Pat Metheny-esque style. But there's another virtuoso here too in the shape of pianist Gadi Lehavi who was discovered by Ravi Coltrane, and invited by him to play at the Village Vanguard and Birdland. Lehavi's presence is keenly felt on the elegant *Elefantes I* and *Elefantes II*. Bareket's resonant double bass provides a solid backing throughout, contributing some strong solos too, such as is heard on the elegiac *Jacqin*.

La Música Y La Palabra (Music And The Word), the first of two tracks not composed by Bareket, has a gentle Latin touch with accordion to the fore. The final number, *Shir Lelo Shem*, written by Israeli rock singer Shalom Hanoch, opens with a short written bluesy melody, but is, in effect, an opportunity for a three-minute, satisfyingly rich and sonorous final bass solo.

Roger Farbey

TIM BERNE'S SNAKEOIL INCIDENTALS

(2) *Hora Feliz*; (1) *Stingray Shuffle*; (2) *Sideshow*; (1) *Incidentals*
Contact; Prelude One/Sequel Too (64.11)

(1) Berne (as); Oscar Noriega (cl, bcl); Ryan Ferreira (elg); Matt Mitchell (p, elec); Ches Smith (d, vib, pc). Rhinebeck, New York, December 2014. (2) as (1) but add David Torn (g).

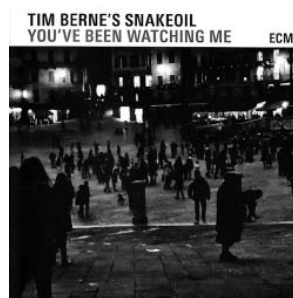
ECM 576 7257

★★★★

As with *You've Been Watching Me*, recorded during the same set of sessions, this album expands the basic line-up of Snakeoil with guitarist Ferreira. In addition, producer Torn joins in on additional guitar on the introduction to *Hora Feliz* and the final part of the 26-minute *Sideshow*.

Hora Feliz seeps into consciousness with a chamber-music-like opening passage, gentle and intricate, gradually building in density and volume, until it suddenly lurches into tempo and an angular ostinato prefacing free improvisations. With Berne's music the powerful immediacy of the playing never overwhelms the carefully wrought material, and this sometimes alarmingly precarious balance is maintained throughout the album. For me the rangy, meandering *Stingray Shuffle* conjured up, weirdly, visions of the tripods from *The War Of The Worlds* – had they been merely inquisitive rather than aggressive. Textures are brittle yet organic, and as the piece develops the sounds of the interweaving instruments, augmented by subtle electronics, resolve into a keening ensemble and a final theme.

The piano introduction to *Sideshow* folds in and around itself, before being joined by complementary lines from the reeds. Mitchell's rumbling left-



hand and restless, glinting right provide a strong backbone, and the piece is typical of Berne's compositions in its success at moulding the extreme complexity of its parts into a cohesive, heaving wave of ensemble sound. Noriega is especially fiery on *Incidentals Contact* and there are some nice, chiming ensemble passages by Berne, Mitchell and Ferreira leading to a sharp, startling stop. *Prelude One/Sequel Two* reverts to a chamber-music feel and engaging alto and bass-clarinet solos and sums up the album: complex, adventurous, sometimes forbidding but ultimately seductive.

Barry Witherden

PETER BERNSTEIN

SIGNS LIVE!

CD1: *Blues For Bulgaria; Hidden Pockets; Dragonfly; Jive Coffee; Pannonica* (76.08)

CD2: *Useless Metaphor; Let Loose; All Too Real; Resplendor; Crepuscule With Nellie/We See; Cupcake* (77.39)

Bernstein (g); Brad Mehldau (p); Christian McBride (b); Gregory Hutchinson (d). Lincoln Center, New York, 4 January 2015.

Smoke Sessions 1705

★★★★

This double CD brings together the four musicians who, 20 years ago, created *Signs Of Life*, the second album by guitarist Bernstein. That was a studio recorded but this outing was recorded

live at New York's Lincoln Centre. A prolific musician, over the years Bernstein has worked with Sonny Rollins, Lee Konitz, Lou Donaldson, Larry Goldings and Diana Krall amongst many others.

On offer here are a number of items from his discography plus two well-known Monk numbers, mostly extended performances, some around 15 minutes or more. The leader's technical brilliance is to the fore everywhere, for example on *Hidden Pockets* and *Jive Coffee*, which is based on *Tea For Two*. He has a positive, elegant approach to his instrument, no histrionics but not a great deal of fiery excitement either. The real attention-grabbing involvement on these discs comes from Mehldau's piano work, for instance on *Hidden Pockets*, *Pannonica* and his extended gymnastic solo on *All Too Real*. A bouncing *Cupcake* brings the concert to a close.

By the time the second disc was nearing its end a little tedium was beginning to emerge for this listener. A highly competent guitarist but for me Bernstein's playing on this showing did not really ignite. The positive playing interest is provided by Brad Mehldau's piano work. McBride and Hutchinson are exemplary in their rhythm roles.

Brian Robinson



BINKER & MOSES

JOURNEY TO THE MOUNTAIN OF FOREVER

CD1: [*The Realm Of Now*] (1) *The Departure; Intoxication From The Jahvmonishi Leaves; Fete By The River; Trees On Fire; The Shaman's Chant; Leaving The Now Behind* (38.48)

CD2: [*The Realms Of The Infinite*] (2) *The Valley Of The Ultra Blacks; Gifts From The Vibrations Of Light; Mysteries And Revelations; Ritual Of The Root; The Voice Of Besbunu; Echoes From The Other Side Of The Mountain; Reverse*

CRITICS' CHOICE

The 10 CDs JJ critics most wanted to hear from this month's review pile

Tim Berne's Snakeoil	Incidentals	ECM 576 7257
John Benson Brooks	Folk Jazz U.S.A. & Alabama Concerto	Fresh Sound FSR-CD 937
Stanley Cowell	No Illusions	SteepleChase 31828
Bill Frisell/Thomas Morgan	Small Town	ECM 574 6341
The Herdsmen/The Kentonians	Paris Sessions 1954 & 1956	Fresh Sound FSR-CD 939
Dick Hyman	The Soulful "Mirrors" Sound!	Blue Moon 893
John Kirby	The Biggest Little Band In The Land	Retrospective 4312
Julie London	Calendar Girl	State Of Art 81183
Charnett Moffett	Music From Our Soul	Motéma 0227
Lee Morgan	Four Classic Albums	Avid Jazz 1255

Genesis; Entering The Infinite; At The Feet Of The Mountain Of Forever (42.56)

(1) Binker Golding (ts); Moses Boyd (d). (2) Golding (ts); Boyd (d); Evan Parker (ts, ss); Byron Wallen (t); Tori Handsley (h); Sarathy Korwar (tab); Yussef Dayes (d). UK, 2016

Gearbox 1537CD

★★★★

Binker & Moses, the London based sax 'n' drum duo, burst onto the scene in 2015 and they have been scooping up awards and followers ever since. From being a purely street-cred cult outfit they have already reached the dizzy heights of a TV appearance on *Later With Jools*. While that worked wonders for Ed Sheeran, it's unlikely that this hard-blowing semi-free pairing will go triple platinum... and yet, it's not every day that young people will look up from their phones and pay attention to real jazz music, which seems to be happening for B&M.

B&M's USP is full-on, live improv performed in small venues, so that everyone, including them, benefits from the energy created. The duo disc (CD1) goes some way to reproducing that live-show appeal - only to a point, however. There are pockets of intensity, akin to musical rutting, that grab the attention but the overall effect is one of attrition.

I prefer the second set where the duo is joined by veteran free man Evan Parker, horn player Byron Wallen and others (though still no bass). *The Valley Of The Ultra Blacks* is an Afro-Arabian melée, Parker involved in a dervish dance as Golding digs in; *Gifts From The Vibrations Of Light* is more thoughtful and moved further east by the addition of Tori Handsley's harp and Sarathy Korwar's percussion. *Ritual Of The Root* is a fast and loose bluesy drag with

Byron Wallen seemingly summoning drunken ghosts from New Orleans past, bustled along by B&M. I'm hoping there will be further collaborations with these guys at the core.

Garry Booth

LENA BLOCH & FEATHERY

HEART KNOWS

Lateef Suite; Heart Knows; Three Treasures; French Twist; Esmeh; Counter Clockwise; Munir; Newfoundsong (70.39)

Bloch (fs); Russ Lossing (p); Cameron Brown (b); Billy Mintz (d). Hampton, New Jersey, 27 July 2017.

Fresh Sound New Talent FSNT 531

★★★★

Leader Lena Bloch describes this set as "spontaneous collective composing and instant musical communication", an apt description of the collective empathy on display over what is a lengthy set of songs.

Bloch is of Russian origin and emigrated to Israel in 1990, later studying with Lee Konitz. His cool minimalism is evident in her breathy, wistful delivery, notably on the sensitive title track and the eloquent *Counter Clockwise*, but there is also a dark intensity to her playing that adds drama to proceedings when required. Likewise pianist Russ Lossing, whose urgency in places hides a romantic streak that comes well to the fore on *French Twist*. Cameron Brown is a superbly mobile force throughout, drummer Mintz offering discretion and support in equal measure.

What really stands out is the unity of this set, a uniformity of feeling and performance, of contemplation and occasional regret, that lasts the entire set. For a debut, Heart Knows is excellent.

Simon Adams



JOHN BENSON BROOKS

FOLK JAZZ U.S.A. / ALABAMA CONCERTO

[*Folk Jazz U.S.A.*] (1) *The New Saints; Venezuela; Black Is The Color; Betsy; Randall My Son; Turtle Dove; Shenandoah; Joe's Old Folks; Saro Jane; Scarlet Town; Wayfarin' Stranger; Darling Corey; [Alabama Concerto]* (2) *First Movement: The Henry Jones Story/Some Lady's Green, Green Rocky Breasts (Nature!)/Job's Red Wagon; Second Movement: Trampin'/The Loop/Trampin'/The Loop; Third Movement: Little John's Shoes/Milord's Calling; Fourth Movement: Blues For Christmas/Rufus Playboy/Grandma's Coffin* (75.18)

(1) Nick Travis (t); Zoot Sims (ts); Al Cohn (bar); Barry Galbraith (elg); Buddy Jones (b); Osie Johnson (d); Brooks (p on 2, 8, 9). NYC, November 1956. (2) Art Farmer (t); Julian "Cannonball" Adderley (as); Barry Galbraith (elg); Milt Hinton (b); Brooks (p on *Third Movement* only, arr). NYC, July & August 1958.

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 937

★★★★

While jazz has (more or less) comfortably negotiated with rock, with Latin dance forms and even with classical composition, its relations with Anglo-American folk have been unpredictable and uneven in quality. Jimmy Giuffre was dabbling in similar areas at around the same time, but Brooks probably went fur-