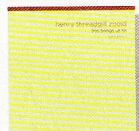


Henry Threadgill

Henry Threadgill Zooid This Brings Us To Volume 1

PI P131 | ★ ★ ★ ★

Henry Threadgill (fl, as), Liberty Elman (g), José Davila (tb, t), Stomu Takeishi (el b) and Eliot Humberto Kavee (d). Rec. 2008



The unfinished sentence of the title is perhaps one of the great leitmotifs if not explanations of Threadgill's aesthetic. A

piece ends abruptly, almost as if a car had suddenly gone over a cliff, but as effectively dramatic as this may be, what is even more gripping is the long and winding road to the precipice, a journey that is more or less in constant harmonic and rhythmic flux, as if key and time signatures were all in the bends rather than the straights mapping the composer's course. What Threadgill creates as a result is practically free form, free flow funk whereby Kavee's pulse has a near continual syncopation that glides with the sway and stutter of the rest of the ensemble, his clanging ride cymbal and cowbell acting very much as a frontline rather than accompanying voice such is their drive. Then again Threadgill groups invariably subvert traditional roles so that the focus of the listener is being pushed in a variety of directions, just as a vehicle might be when negotiating rough terrain. Hence Davila's trombone and tuba switch seamlessly from bass lines to themes and back again and Elman's guitar, with its tetchy flamenco dissonance, drops motifs so liberally that they often feel around rather than behind or in front of the horns. The geography of the instruments is a delicious puzzle. Because of this great movement, the band sounds, just as Mingus' ensembles did, much bigger than a small group. Technically, there is a huge amount of counterpoint being played but exactly who is playing counterpoint to whom is always left as a question mark. In parallel to this the whole leader-sideman relationship is also thrown into tasty ambiguity, with Threadgill playing with as much economy if not minimalism as ever, so much so that he doesn't have to play at

Mads Tolling The Playmaker

Madsman MT-01 | ★ ★ ★ ★

Mads Tolling (v), Mike Abraham (g), George Ban-Weiss (b), Eric Harland (d), Stanley Clarke (b), Russell Ferrante (ky), Stefan Harris (vib) and Jeff Morris (d). Rec. June 14-15 and July 15-16 2008

Here's a fresh, unpretentious treat that should appeal to a wide range of jazz and fusion fans. Tolling is young and confident enough to sweep heedlessly through silly notions like genre and applies his lyric skills to everything from a riveting cover of Radiohead's 'Just', to a swinging take on 'Blue Monk', a rhapsodic Danish folk song and climaxes it all with a romp through Led Zep's 'Black Dog'. All done with a tight, overdub free, "live in the studio" feel, *The Playmaker* mixes moods and musical tastes but underwrites it all with a sheer joy in playing. The album puns around on the notion of the playmaker in both sporting and musical contexts. For Tolling music is about teamwork sparked by individual genius and this sharing spirit suffuses the album. A three-piece suite is dedicated to three sporting geniuses, including a meditative piece for Zinedine Zidane (Tolling should hook up with Tom Cawley for a footie concept album). But there are also dedications to John McLaughlin (with Abraham outstanding) and Jaco Pastorius (a joyous take on 'The Chicken'). If you only know Tolling from the sound and fury of Stanley Clarke's *Toys For Men* band you'll be in for a most pleasant surprise. **Andy Robson**

Paul Townsend Newology

Keywork KWRC009 | ★ ★ ★ ★

Paul Townsend (as, ss), Paul Harrison (Rhodes), Steve Hamilton (p, Rhodes), Ryan Quigley (t), Mike Walker (g), Mark Hodgson (b) and Alyn Cosker (d). Rec. March 2009

Saxophonist Paul Townsend leads some of Scotland's fast emerging young post-bop jazz musicians on his fourth CD release as leader. But it's the veteran Mancunian guitarist Mike Walker who so often makes the difference on this second CD by Townsend's sextet. The extra horn from the previous sextet recording has been replaced by Walker whose always tastefully-played rugged riffs add an electric jazz dimension to the recording. Schooled in the US having won a scholarship to Manhattan School of Music, the saxophonist has the kind of meaty, scintillating chops that could hold his own in any straightahead cutting contest. A member of the Scottish Jazz Orchestra (as is the upcoming Cosker and Quigley), Townsend has something of the orchestra's artistic director Tommy Smith on the title track while his ballad 'The One' is tackled with an affecting use of sonic that Smith would no doubt approve of. 'Made in 78' features Paul Harrison's electric *Bitches Brew*-influenced Rhodes, Townsend's prog-bop harmony and trumpeter Quigley flexing his muscles on the retro bebop theme while 'Quirkafleeg' is prime time modal Coltrane. Nothing new going down here then. Nevertheless this is a masterpiece, not just because with more

Stan Tracey Quartet Senior Moment

Resteamed RSJ 108 | ★ ★ ★ ★

Stan Tracey (p), Simon Allen (ss, as, ts), Andy Cleyndert (b) and Clark Tracey (d). Rec. 2008

This is the first new Stan Tracey recording I've heard in ages and deserves to be hailed as one of his best. The band is so relaxed. Sounds just as though they were on a gig. Quite a few first takes? Stan really is a national treasure. In his eighties, he's playing better than ever. Maybe the choice of notes and chords are more mellow than dissonant these days. But everything sounds so right, especially in his comping. Clark and Cleyndert have played together so often with Stan, they seem of one mind and also make the most of the many solo spots they're given. Their swing is constant and uncontrived. Simon Allen is excellent, too. He has all the technical proficiency of his American counterparts, but sounds so much more human and emotional than most. He's equally strong on all his horns, with his alto particularly impressive. All four sound as though they thoroughly enjoyed themselves on the session. The titles include reworkings of some earlier Tracey tunes, plus a couple of previously unrecorded 'Grandad Suite' segments. Best for me include 'Afro-Charlie Meets the White Rabbit', 'Duffy's Circus', 'Dream of Many Colours', 'Stemless' and 'Zack's Dream'. Stan dedicates the record to wife Jackie, who recently passed away. A contemporary of mine long ago at Decca, she started as switchboard operator (with Sir Edward Lewis among her fans), progressed to promotion, then shortly after producing his classic 'Li'l Klunk' for Tempo, left to manage Stan. Always feisty, to put it mildly, she gave up everything for Stan and will be missed. **Tony Hall**

Les Triaboliques Rivernudtwilight

World Village 468088 | ★ ★ ★ ★

Justin Adams (g, v, perc), Lou Edmonds (saz, g, v, cimbus, bow-bus), Ben Mendelsohn (g, banjo, man, kacoby, harizoul, lauto, khomuz), Rob Keyloch (perc, v) and Salah Dawson Miller (perc). Rec. date not stated

The plucked-string triumverate of Justin Adams, Ben '3 Mustaphus 3' Mandelson and Lou Edmonds is cause for much excitement round these parts. It seems only logical that these three respected musicians should come together: all have been major players on the UK scene for decades, collaborating with the great and the good from punk, blues, jazz, rock, roots and world. On their debut album of self-proclaimed "dusk-core" music they wield everything from Hawaiian guitar and mandolin to saz and cumbus (the Middle Eastern lute) to create a mesmerising mish-mash of old and new, borrowed and um, blues. No matter that the vocals are a little downbeat. Musicianship – varied, adventurous, exemplary – is the key here. That, and a lot of dark humour. Highlights include the Cuba-flecked 'Gulagujira (I, The Dissolute Prisoner)'; the frenetic Balkan ragtime of 'Ledmo' and the... (text continues on next page)

trioVD Fill It Up

Babel | ★ ★ ★ ★

Chris Sharkey (p, voc) and Chris (b, voc)

In the last... been built... the hottest... their reput... has become... anticipated... Ladyland... Supersilen... bit more a... with turnin... have been... of the albu... too extren... improvisat... fast, loud... other. The... assured th... encompass... the compo... Chris Bus... preposter... with a ton... fill any sta... Vicious, wh... this is wh... when the... you have... Daniel Spicer

Variou Kind - The Song

HighNote H

Mark Murphy... Person, Boon... Blythe (as), R... Sparks (g), R... Lawrence (vib... Reed, Orin E... Dwayne Burn... Dwayne Dolph... Coleman, Vito... Rec. Jan 200



labels, an... that woul... hip bar o... two versi... by tenori... one by th... Pianist E... 'Flamenc... Freeload... John Del... trumpet... vehicle fi... and All E... guitarist... Mark Mu... - nice to... Stewart... like this... naff resu... into it th... the playe... their sen... the mys... Prince