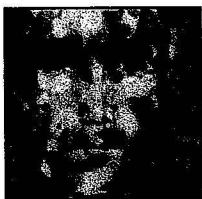


the bass singers. Alex Acuña on the percussion puts it deeply in the pocket bringing the mojo for which he is well known and the alchemist Roger Trece, transmutes the sounds into pure gold with his percussion/synthesizer programming. The piece builds up to a strong finale in a 7/4 riff with Bobby doing a lot of fills with the percussion.

The CD ends with a composition that is pure celestial magic. "Brief Eternity" rolls in like a moon lit tide awash in wonderment and revelation. It is the resolution to all that came before, a peaceful reflection of pure understanding and appreciation for life. It is the wisdom that comes out of pain and suffering, from having reached a higher level of consciousness where the beauty of living is continuously unfolding in the moment before your eyes. The addition of a boy's soprano choir is like a sprinkling of fairy dust. Featuring the remarkable vocal work of Lisa Fischer which is also present throughout the CD and superb wind work by Pedro Estouche. This piece is dedicated to Alessandra Montano and the music was written by Roger Trece and based on a motif by Bobby McFerrin. The absolutely glorious lyrics were written by Don Rosler.

If ever there was a musical messiah, it is Bobby McFerrin and he has blessed us once again with this beautifully made CD, a phenomenally majestic vocal and rhythmic sound architecture that will take you as close to heaven as one can get without physically leaving the planet.



MARC MOMMAAS

LANDMARC – Sunnyside SSC 1249. www.sunnysiderecords.com. *Landmarc; Folksong; Brush on Canvas; Legend; Little One; Orbit; Patience; Cassavetes Caravan; ASAP.*

PERSONNEL: Marc Mommaas, tenor saxophone; Tony Moreno, drums; Nate Radley, electric guitar; Vic Juris, electric guitar; Rez Abbasi, electric guitar, electric sitar.

By Matt Marshall

Emerging as the first recorded product from an endeavor started five years ago, *Landmarc* finds Dutch saxophonist Marc Mommaas working with a trio of guitarists and drummer Tony Moreno, with whom the saxophonist has been playing since 2001. Nate Radley is the most prominent of the guitarists here, appearing on each track, while Vic Juris joins in on three numbers and Rez Abbasi (another longtime Mommaas cohort) lends a hand on two pieces.

The album has an intellectual feel, which is not to say it lacks feeling. Quite the contrary: its minimalist, well-delineated structure and unique instrumental partnering releases an emotional expressive-

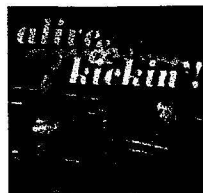
ness hinged on the project's very concept and its wise execution. Mommaas often opens in tandem with a guitarist (usually Radley), the two playing a song's melody in tandem, note for note, creating a sax sound with a fringe of electric buzz and spark. After a chorus, the two might split to explore their own paths of a field still held as one by harmony and counterpoint, before rejoining to form a single out theme. This process is by no means odd in jazz (in fact, one could easily argue it as the norm), but there's something in the sax/guitar setup here that pares the fat from the normal in such a manner as to allow us to hear (or see sound) in microcosm, as if the opening and closing of many tunes represent a single entity, that, when inspected at closer range, reveals the bouncing, individual particles that make up the whole.

Mommaas sticks mainly to a smooth, if road-weary, tone, fashioning friction-free, rolling statements, held in check only by their weight. It is noticeable, and thus nicely jarring, when he squawks briefly on "Orbit." His turn is pitch-perfect on "Cassavetes Caravan," working most noticeably with Abbasi on electric sitar, creating a dragging, almost sleepy, piece that nevertheless pulses with an undercurrent of forlorn dread befitting the mood of the titular filmmaker's work (which, I assume, is the intent).

Of the guitarists, Juris may command the darkest tone, with Radley a notch brighter and widely (sometimes wildly) versatile, and Abbasi plucking tightly wound, shimmering notes. Heard throughout, Radley, as mentioned, serves both as partner and foil for Mommaas, and he handles both duties with aplomb. Favoring a clear, unadulterated sound, like the leader, Radley does unleash a tough, gritty solo on, ironically enough, "Patience," and bluesy jumps and bends on "ASAP."

Not to be discounted, Moreno nevertheless stays mostly to the rear, keeping masters clicking along and jumping in with nice splitting statements when warranted. His intro to "Patience" spreads a wide, layered canvas for the others to inhabit, while his emphatic, rolling drumming on "Legend" helps propel the piece up a precipitous track.

Mommaas and crew also flirt with smooth pop on "Folksong" and "Little One." But the underlying human weight that manifests itself in each member's playing, saves these pieces (or any others) from ever blowing away into triviality. This is an intense, challenging, heartfelt and intelligent work of adult art. And, as its title predicts, it is sure stand not only as a landmark in Mommaas' career, but also in the recorded twining of acoustic and electric instrumentation.



ORGANISSIMO

ALIVE & KICKIN' – Big O Records. www.organissimo.org. *Stomp Yo' Feet; Senior Buffet; Smokin' Section; If Not Now, When?; Jimmy Smith Goes To*

Washington; Clap Yo' Hands; Groovadelphia; Blessed Relief; Pumpkin Pie.

PERSONNEL: Jim Alfredson, Hammond-Suzuki XK3/XK system, Leslie 3300 and synthesizers; Joe Gloss, guitar; Randy Marsh, drums.

By Layla Macoran

Alive & Kickin' is a live set recorded in 2009. Hammond lovers will find plenty to satisfy the need. The nine-track CD is full of the monster organ, with room left for Gloss and Marsh to thrive.

The strength of this jam trio is in the seeming balance of power. There is space to breathe and expand a solo or play off someone's riff without overpowering each other. That is a finely developed skill set that some bands never quite achieve. Here, it is evident that unity comes in the form of democracy.

Standout tracks include "If Not Now, When?". It moves easily in and out of their space for a meditative journey. Ideally, when a song is titled "Jimmy Smith Goes to Washington", you expect good organ work – Alfredson delivers. Mr. Smith would approve. The highlight is a cover of Frank Zappa's "Blessed Relief". Not surprisingly, it is a rich, complex trip into other worlds, which seems to be a theme for Organissimo. Gloss transcends the idea of solo and just glides over the groove.

This album was recorded on separate occasions in different venues. The trio does not fail to keep each audience pumped and hungry for more.



STEVE POUCHIE

EL PUENTE (THE BRIDGE) – Latin Jazz Alive Records. www.stevepouchie.com. *Journey Into Outland; Picadillo; Take Five; Watch Ur Wallet; Montana de Suenos; Green Dolphin Street; The Ghanan Trail; Manha De Carnaval; Sands Of Outland; The Shores of Summer; Naomi's Fantasy*

PERSONNEL: Steve Pouchie, vibraphone, arranger; Little Johnny Rivero, congas, bongos, cowbell, hand percussion; Solo Rodriguez, upright and electric bass; Jotan Afanador, drums (1,3,6-9,10); Adan Perez, piano, keyboards (1,2,3,4,5,9,10,11); Andrea Brachfeld, flute (4,7); Julio Botti, sax (1,3,6,9,11); Ivan Renta, sax (2,5); Ariel Santiago, flute (11); Pete Nater, trumpet and trumpet arrangements (1,2,8,10); Ronnie Puente, marimba (2); Sam Barrios, piano and keyboards (6,7,8); Jeffrey Lopez, timbales (4); Erik Piza, timbales (2,11);

By Herbie Y. Gamura

El Puente represents for Steve Pouchie, "a bridge or transition into a bolder style of Latin jazz vibe playing." As someone unfamiliar with his previous work, I feel this disc leaves nothing lacking, so I will say that

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