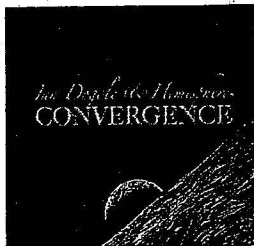


ciently and so quickly that one wonders why he and his friend Norvello didn't do it years ago. But now it's done, and the Bonge no longer remains unheard by listeners interested in traditional jazz piano playing assertively stated.



## Ian Dogole

**CONVERGENCE**—Jazzheads JH1152. [www.jazzheads.com](http://www.jazzheads.com). *Nostalgia; Mistura E Manda; John Coltrane; Hijaz Oyun Havasi; Jungle Jive II; House Party Starting; Smiles For Billy*

**PERSONNEL:** Ian Dogole, udu/cymbals/cajon/global drum set/dumbek/African talking drum/hang; Sheldon Brown, soprano, tenor sax, clarinet, bass clarinet, flute; Bill Douglass, bass/bamboo flute; Paul McCandless, soprano saxophone/bass clarinet/oboe/pennywhistles; Frank Martin, piano.

By Dan Bilawsky

The music of Ian Dogole and Hemispheres is a blend of traditional jazz with different ethnic influences spicing up the mix. Dogole and his musical companions have created a strong album, which puts an emphasis on stylistic difference during each of the seven tracks performed here. Sheldon Brown's "Nostalgia," which opens the album, features the composer on soprano saxophone. Dogole's udu playing, and the steady bass playing from Bill Douglass, help to anchor the music while Brown and Paul McCandless solo over the rhythm duo. McCandless, who was blending jazz and world music with Oregon long before it was commonplace, is impressive with his fluid soloing on bass clarinet in the second half of this piece. Dogole and Hemispheres move down to South America for "Mistura E Manda." Sheldon Brown's arrangement of the piece maintains a strong Brazilian influence and mixes in a little bit of New Orleans second line.

"John Coltrane" opens with a mystery laden bass solo from Bill Douglass. This Bill Lee composition, while featuring five performers on this particular performance, really captures the spirit of Coltrane's classic quartet. The piece, which is waltz-like in feel, features some great saxophone work from McCandless and Brown. Frank Martin sprinkles McCoy Tyner-isms throughout the piece and Dogole, while not as loose and pliable as Elvin Jones, maintains the overall percussive arc that Coltrane's music had. "Hijaz Oyun Havasi," a traditional Turkish tune arranged by Hemispheres, begins with some strong ensemble playing. This gives way to a clarinet cadenza from Sheldon Brown. To his credit, Brown never gets anywhere near a musical cliché during this piece. The solo clarinet performance becomes a

duet with Dogole's udu. The music continues until the baton is handed to McCandless on soprano saxophone. Douglass gently moves behind the soprano saxophone during its freely played solo section of the piece. I can't say that I have encountered many duo performances, like "Jungle Jive II," that feature talking drum and pennywhistles! While this vehicle could threaten to become aurally tedious, the overall fun spirit in the piece and the short running time help to make this musical dialogue very enjoyable. "House Party Starting," by Herbie Nichols, is a slick tune that evokes images of a smoky late-night club with a small, but attentive audience. Douglass anchors the music in this medium paced performance and contributes his best solo on the album. Dogole's focus, while occasionally moving across the drums, is on his ride cymbal. The piece simmers throughout and, while never exploding, always maintains a sort of tension from start to finish. Billy Higgins influenced countless musicians and Dogole dedicates the album closer, "Smiles For Billy," to the drumming legend. The hang, a "steel-pan hybrid instrument," is the centerpiece of this "multi-episodic composition." After an impressive solo from Dogole, the ensemble begins to play long notes, which overlap to create some floating, hypnotic sections of music. This leads to a section of music with more rhythmic stability and flute and oboe solos from Brown and McCandless, respectively. The piece, and album, concludes as the music fades away and we get a last glimpse of the hang from the leader. Ian Dogole and Hemispheres have created an album that is strong in variety and cleverly fuses jazz and many "world music" styles.



## Monika H. Band

**BRIGHT**—Bog Walk Music, 2006.

[www.monikah.com](http://www.monikah.com). *Organs; Somebody Special; Details; The Race; Bright; Keep On; Written in my Dream; Art*

**PERSONNEL:** Monika Heidemann, voice; Matt Moran, vibraphone; Massimo Biolcati, bass; Khabu Doug Young, guitar; Take Toriyama, drums.

By Margot Elizabeth Meyers

There are many good singers performing today but few are as interesting as Monika Heidemann and for almost as many reasons. She represents an emerging new group of intelligent singers who are also musicians and who approach the music from a compositional perspective. Her 2006 release *Bright* artfully demonstrates her ability to produce a commercially appealing creative CD (an oxymoron in many

mediums with an understanding of how to fit them together to form a cohesive whole with its own identity—this is a well-conceived project that appeals on many levels and holds your attention with its compelling blend of various textures and voices. The coupling of music and poetry is not a new concept but Heidemann finds a fresh and intriguing way of approaching both and delivering an infatuating hybrid of eight song/poems as vignettes that weave in and out of one continuous stream of consciousness. The selections include six of Heidemann's original compositions, two Steve Lacy compositions and poetry contributed by Heidemann, Allen Ginsburg, Herman Melville, Brion Gysin, and Mark Riorden respectively.

Heidemann produced this project with an international cast of remarkable, bright, young, exciting musicians and vocalists—many of who have affiliations with the New England Conservatory of Music and who are among those making new inroads into the world of creative music. They bring a diversity of cultures, sounds, techniques and approaches that span many genres and do so in the context of a real band and not just a group of musicians who got together to do a recording. This diversity is what keeps the music moving in many different directions—a product of cross-pollination and cross-generational mixtures of pop, symphonic rock, alternative, classical, free and experimental jazz and choral music—a kaleidoscope of influences that induce originality as well. However, Heidemann's approach to the music is not as much groundbreaking as it is explorative. She manages to find something new in the familiar and something familiar in the unknown. Spiked with stark contrasts, introspections and insightful psychic poetry, these are not songs anyone of us will be humming soon nor are they meant to be, and that is what makes *Bright* so refreshing and leaves the listener feeling as if they've just had a musical experience.

You've got to love a singer who refers to her bodily organs as friends. Her composition "Organs", the first cut on the CD, immediately alerts you that this isn't going to be your typical jazz-singer-singing-standards CD. The superb drumming of Take Toriyama on this cut inspires the soloing of vibraphonist Moran and guitarist Young then lays back to give space for contrapuntal vocal interplay. "Details" the second original Heidemann composition, is a transcendental moment put to music while "The Race" which follows snaps you back to reality with a vocal scatting and drum introduction that alternately changes color and mood with a melodious interpretation of an obtuse poem by Marc Riorden.

The astute use of the voice and strings brings a classically sacred dimension to the overall sound of this enterprise and the well placed choral arrangements on the title track "Bright", another Heidemann original, is an unexpected delight to the ears. The last original composition on the disc "Keep On" is a lesson about controlling needs and desires to avoid being fooled. The message is aptly conveyed over a space-age chamber music backdrop where the sound of