

recollections. There's some dissonance in her interpretations, but most of the session flows harmoniously with graceful airs. She provides an avenue for quiet resolution through her spacious strolls. Hume's tender keyboard touch allows one note to melt into the next, while fluid phrases rise and fall with a delicate air. By combining a light touch with drifting sensations, her music grows and disappears like smoke. Noodling at the piano for an hour, she creates a quiet swirl of melancholy that rests gently on the soul.

Jim Santella

1) PAOLO LATTANZI, NIGHT DANCERS, SILTA 603.

Cicerchi's Wanderlust / Just a Story / 14/2 / In a Dark Room / When it Doesn't Matter / Other Lands / Night Dancers / Four Years Gone / Fairy Tales to a Child / May, 57:22.

Lattanzi, d; Nikolay Moiseenko, as, ss; Arlieni Budynek, g; Pau Terol, p, org; Marco Panascia, el b, b. November 13, 2005; Brookline, MA.

2) ROB MAZUREK, WE'RE ALL FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE, THRILL JOCKEY 181.

Sting Ray and the Beginning of Time (Part 1) / (Part 2) / (Part 3) (Psycho, Tropic Electric Eel Dream) / (Part 4) / Black Sun / Cosmic Tomes For Sleep Walking Lovers (Part 1) / (Part 2) / (Part 3) / (Part 4) (Fifteen Ways Towards a Finite Universe) / (Part 5). 50:49.

Mazurek, cnt, elec.; Nicole Mitchell, flt, vcl; Jeb Bishop, tbn; Corey Wilkes, flgh; Josh Berman, cnt; Matt Bauder, b cl, ts; Jeff Parker, g; Jim Baker, p, syn, pianette; Jason Adasiewicz, vib; John McEntire, marimba, perc; Matt Lux, el b, g; Jason Ajemian, b; Mike Reed, d; perc, saw; John Herndon, d. June 2006, Chicago, IL.

3) VEIN, VEIN, META 305.

Surd / New O-Rootie / Shapes / Homenaje / Down the River / Shadow of a Memory / Kime / In Between. 43:30.

Michael Arbenz, p; Florian Arbenz, drums; Thomas Lähns, b. January 2006, Zurich, Switzerland.

Up for consideration here are three ensembles that are making the admirable attempt to stretch beyond the traditional boundaries of mainstream post-Bop.

Starting with the relatively most conventional: (1) has drummer/composer Lattanzi leading his tight group through the obstacle course of his original pieces with somewhat mixed results. Like many other drummer-led albums that have come before, this one is long on smoking grooves and tricky odd meter vamps and a bit shorter on compositional interest and a sense of melodic conviction. The playing is certainly of good quality and no one treads overtly onto the landmines set by Lattanzi's often challenging heads. On the other hand, no soloist, with the possible exception of Lattanzi himself, transcends the material either. Moiseenko comes close and his high-energy alto and soprano achieves liftoff on a few pieces such as "In a Dark Room." Unfortunately, he has an occasional tendency to resort to patterns and cliché, somewhat marring the positive impression

of his otherwise excellent playing. More understated is the piano playing of Terol who seems to be playing it a little safe. I sense that he was happy to navigate the odd meter shoals without serious mishap. My sympathy does go out to him though because the piano he was saddled with was criminally out of tune. An instrument in that condition can instantly sap a player's will to create and it's no fun for the listener either. Budynek's playing is an interesting mix of influences and he gets off some decent solos but again, I was a bit annoyed by his painfully out of tune guitar, particularly on "Other Lands." There is simply no excuse for this sort of lapse in a studio setting. Lattanzi naturally has little difficulty getting through his own material and he plays with both imagination and confidence. The problem with the CD, as alluded to earlier, is the uneven writing. All too often, the tunes appear to be marking time until everyone can get to the grooves, and, in too many places, there is a sense of contrivance. Melodically, the slower stuff had a tendency to meander. But despite my misgivings about the tunes, I do give full credit for Lattanzi's attempt to avoid the commonplace. Several of his polyrhythmic ideas are certainly quite engaging. He plays through the complexities with ease and cooks at all the right times. One final note: I'm not sure that any artist ultimately benefits from including breathless, over the top, liner notes such as those penned here by veteran drummer, Kenwood Dennard, who is obviously a big fan. The danger is that expectations are raised artificially high and, as is the case on this CD, the reality may not be quite as transcendent as the notes suggest.

Rob Mazurek's fourteen piece ensemble is hard at work on (2). Though the group is essentially a highly modified big band it's unlikely that "Jumpin' at the Woodside" is in the book and that's a good thing. Although they embrace both Free playing and the liberal use of electronics, the music has firm roots in the Jazz tradition. The most obvious point of departure, given both the cosmic titles and the far reaching musical content, would appear to be Sun Ra though strangely he is not listed among the influences acknowledged in the notes. The opening suite, "Sting Ray" gives some idea of the breadth of approaches in the music with relentless vamps alternating with frantic ensemble work elbow to elbow with chaotic Free-Jazz sections, and eerie electronic spacescapes ("Electric Eel Dream"). The suite concludes with a relatively more conventional 6/8 head suite that illuminates the Jazz roots of Mazurek's music. While many of the individual pieces are interesting enough, their collection into a suite for this piece seemed a little arbitrary to me, but that's a small point. The next piece, "Black Sun," is a brief post-Chopin solo piano improvisation that happily relieves the effect of the prevailing density of sound. Although I think many of Mazurek's ideas are good ones, some sections tended to go on a bit too long without sufficient textural variety or development. With all the coloristic resources available to him, it's a shame that he didn't vary the back-

— Italiano —

[...] Questa volta parliamo di tre gruppi che stanno effettuando un ammirabile tentativo di estendersi al di là dei confini del tradizionale jazz mainstream post-Bop.

Cominciando con il più relativamente convenzionale troviamo il batterista/compositore Lattanzi a capo del suo affiatato gruppo nel viaggio attraverso il percorso ad ostacoli rappresentato dai suoi pezzi originali, viaggio che procede con esiti variabili. Come molti altri album capitanati da batteristi che hanno preceduto il presente, questo è ricco in termini di grooves accattivanti e complessi vamp su tempi dispari ma è un po' meno convincente dal punto di vista compositivo. La performance è di certo di buon livello e nessuno dei musicisti inciampa sulle mine sparse nelle pieghe delle impegnative creazioni di Lattanzi. D'altro canto nessun solista riesce a trascendere il materiale, con la possibile eccezione di Lattanzi stesso. Moiseenko ci riesce quasi ed i suoi sassofoni alto e soprano ad alta energia decollano su alcuni pezzi come "In a Dark Room". Sfortunatamente però egli mostra anche una certa tendenza a rifugiarsi in schemi e cliché, rovinando in qualche modo l'impressione positiva che comunque lascia grazie al sua prestazione eccellente. Più modesto è il piano di Terol che sembra suonare un po' sul sicuro. Ho l'impressione che egli fosse felice di navigare le acque pericolose dei tempi dispari senza rischiare incidenti ma ha comunque la mia simpatia perchè il piano con cui si è dovuto cimentare era criminalmente scordato. Uno strumento in quelle condizioni può immediatamente smorzare la voglia di creare e non è divertente neanche per l'ascoltatore. Budynek mostra un interessante mix di influenze e suona anche qualche assolo decente ma, di nuovo, durante l'ascolto ero infastidito dalla sua chitarra scordata,

in particolare modo su "Other Lands". Semplicemente non ci sono scuse per questo tipo di inaccortezze in studio. Lattanzi naturalmente non è messo in difficoltà dal proprio materiale e suona sia con immaginazione che convincimento. Il problema del CD, come detto in precedenza, è la scrittura poco omogenea. Troppo spesso i pezzi sembrano temporeggiare fino a quando tutti i musicisti non sono entrati nel groove, e, in troppi momenti si ha un senso di preparazione. Melodicamente la roba più lenta ha una tendenza a vagabondare. Ma nonostante le mie critiche sui brani, devo dare pieno credito a Lattanzi per il suo tentativo di stare fuori dal luogo comune. Molte delle sue idee poliritmiche sono piuttosto accattivanti. Suona attraverso le complessità con naturalezza e si fa inteso in tutti i momenti giusti. Una nota finale: non sono certo che nessun artista alla fine abbia un vero beneficio nell'includere delle note di copertina mozzafiato come quelle scritte qui dal veterano batterista Kenwood Dennard, che evidentemente è un grande fan. Il pericolo è quello di sollevare le aspettative artificialmente in alto mentre, come nel caso di questo CD, la realtà potrebbe non essere altrettanto trascendentale. [...]