



STEFANO PASTOR With GEORGE HASLAM/CLAUDIO LUGO/GIORGIO DINI - Freedom (Slam 520/Silita 1001; UK) Featuring Stefano Pastor on violin, George Haslam on bari sax & taragato, Claudio Lugo on soprano sax and Giorgio Dini on double bass. Virtuoso violinist Stefano Pastor has worked Harry Beckett & Borah Bergman, as well as having an ongoing collaboration with Slam's reeds wiz George Haslam. I can't say that I was familiar with the other two members of this fine quartet. Mr. Pastor played here at DMG last year & will hopefully be here again this summer, so don't miss an opportunity to hear him live.

'Freedom' features an interesting instrumental line-up with two reeds (bari & soprano saxes) and two strings (violin & double bass), both from opposite ends of the sound spectrum. This is not just another "free improv" session, since there are some sketches or charts involved from what I can hear. Bassist Giorgio Dini does a great job of holding down the rhythm section role by pumping lines, occasionally at a furious pace. There is a constant layer of lines that intersect and interact, shift and move together like currents in the ocean. Although there are free elements or sections, someone (George?) seems to have written small figures that brings thing together. This is just an assumption, although there is some amazingly tight interplay here. The magic here is when one of the players begins a line the others harmonize with it instantly creating superb shifting shades and focused ideas. What I find most interesting is when they end up in some sublime, melodic and what sounds like partially charted sections. There is calm center to much of this which makes this set often thoughtful and haunting. - Bruce Lee Gallanter, Downtown Music Gallery