

GREEN / BEJA FLOR / HEAR AND NOW / MY FUNNY VALENTINE / CARD TRICKS / IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD / SONNYMOON FOR TWO. 55:39.

Hall, g; Frisell, g; Scott Colley, b (Disc 2); Joey Baron, d (Disc 2). July - Dec. 2007, Brooklyn, NY (Disc 1, except "Bimini"), and Sept. 9, 2008, NYC, NY.



Lori Freedman by Frank Rubolino

the bell rattle and soft woody squeals on "Leak," the woody trills on "To Horn" (where Freedman sounds Jaume-like and contrasts fascinatingly with Thompson's upper register chirrups), and Thompson's intense, metallic "The Plummet" (where I could swear he quotes "Come Sunday" at one point). Unlike a lot of duos who get tunnel vision with their devices, these players know when to break up long chatty passages of extended technique with sudden, fulsome drones or brief snippets of melody. Don't overlook this fine disc.

On (3) we have an altogether different duo, a student meets teacher summit on the fan-funded ArtistShare label. A series of duos make up the first disc, starting with a luminous reading of Frisell's beautiful "Throughout," where Hall's wonderfully dry tone is heard as he constructs delicate lines across the chiming background Frisell nurtures. Both play unadorned on Hall's "All Across the City," with ellipses, pauses, and the like opening up spaces for reflection in this sleepy, charming tune. They're very simpatico across the pieces on this first disc. And I do like to hear Frisell play without effects, as he does while playing the head to "Bags' Groove" while Hall's semi-acoustic comps hard, almost like one of the hundreds of lessons they must have had years ago. They drift back into the ether on the improvised "Migration," setting up loops and laying down links (Hall's bluesy phrasing is pleasant, even if not always appropriate). They certainly excel with sunny, lyrical tunes like "Family" or Hall's beloved "Bimini"—but their reading of Dylan's "Masters of War" is perhaps the most intense thing here.

While the duo recordings were culled from five different sessions over the second half of 2007, lovingly laid down at Tony Scherr's place in Brooklyn, the broyant quartet session comes from a single November afternoon at Sear Sound. It's filled with chatty, amiable readings of standards and just a few originals. Bassist Scott Colley plays those long, limber lines that hold things down without hamstringing them. And drummer Joey Baron is just playful and restless enough to keep this session from becoming too relaxed.

The largely improvised "Barbaro" is far more interesting than the opening take on "I'll Remember April." It's got some electro-frippery from Frisell while Hall responds to Colley's double-time playing and Baron's skittery brushwork. But elsewhere, there are some great moments on the standards: Hall's lush introduction to "Chelsea Bridge" is just fantastic, the quartet exults in Cavabimbo's "Beja Flor" (with chiming acoustic and Baron using his hands), and even "In a Sentimental Mood" is distinct here, as the band plays around with tempo and harmony. While "Owed to Freddie

Green" has some teeth and grit to it, it's really only on Hall's "Hear and Now" (and to a lesser extent on the structured improvisation "Card Tricks," really a future for the mischievous Baron) that they get out, even getting into some detuning and backwards noises. Overall, this is a pleasant release, but perhaps not an especially provocative one.

Jason Birnba

Benny Powell (1) is the very definition of a journeyman. Though he's led his own groups, he's most noted and highly respected for his contributions to the work of others including Basie, Lionel Hampton, Randy Weston, Abdullah Ibrahim, and John Carter; just to hit the highlights. A crack ensemble player with a fat tone and a flair for fleet Bop-influenced solos, his services were widely sought after. Certainly on this newest session recorded on the cusp of his 77th birthday, he shows his age. That's good and bad. Certainly he's lost some agility on his horn. (To hear him at his prime catch his four choruses on the 1970 recording of "Fingers" with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra.) While his tone may be less sure, it's

more expressive and while he's not hammering out 16th notes at fiery tempos, he's shaping touching melodic statements. He speaks as an elder, maybe a bit frail, but powerful nonetheless.

As music director, TK Blue puts together a setlist heavy on the ballads, swing riff tunes, a township strut, and an opening tune that evokes Powell's birthplace, New Orleans. Drawing on the writing talents of the band members, there's plenty of variety and inspiration. Both Blue and pianist Sayuri Goto deliver solos that complement the melodic cast of Powell's work. A fine valedictory effort by a musician who's paid his dues several times over.

On (2) Carletti, Tardito, and Giovannini employ the unusual



Benny Powell by Jimmie Jones

1) BENNY POWELL NEXT EP ORIGIN 82517

FREE TO BE ME / THE TOWNSHIP DIARY / BEST PEOPLE / AKIHA / ANOTHER BLUE / NIGHT, NEVER END / I TRIED AND TRIED / A SINGLE TEAR OF REMEMBRANCE / YOU GOT IT / THE CARIBBEAN EXPRESS. 51:59.

Powell, tbn; TK Blue, ss, as, flt; Sayuri Goto, p; Essiet O. Essiet, b; Billy Hart, d. 2/9&10/07, West Orange, NJ.

2) MAX CARLETTI - MARCO TARDITO - GIORGIO GIOVANNINI THE ORIGINAL TRIOLOGY SILTA 804

SAGA OF HARRISON CRABFEATHERS / A CAT IN THE HAT / FREEDOM JAZZ DANCE / TE VOGLIO BENE ASSAIE / LIKE LULU / LETTERA DA SADO / GIOCATO / TAKE THE "A" TRAIN / CICOMIRO BLUES / AQUARELA DO BRASIL / FREE TRIOLOGY / FREEWAYS. 57:23.

Carletti, g; Marco Tardito, cl, b, cl, as; Giovannini, tbn.
No date. Turin, Italy.



Bobby Few by Frank Rubolino

**MICHEL LAMBERT
- RAKALAM
BOB MOSES
MEDITATION ON
GRACE**
FMR 256-0108

though not unprecedented configuration of trombone, reed, and guitar. The most famous such trios have been super groups—Giuffrè, Brookmeyer & Hall and Zorn, George Lewis & Frisell. These names don't have such luster, but that doesn't mean this trio doesn't sparkle on a recital of originals, Italian tunes, and standards. This format with neither bass nor drums gives the ensemble a fluid, light swing. Tardito's bass clarinet adds further weight in spots in the bass region, but there's never a sense of something missing. Instead this is a well-joined triangulated sound with the burden of rhythm, harmony, and melody shifting imperceptively from player to player. Each piece is intriguing in its own right. Take the covers of "Freedom Jazz Dance" and "Take the 'A' Train." Eddie Harris' greatest hit gets deconstructed with Tardito's bass clarinet taking the lead as the trio starts with shards of the theme and reassembles it over the course of the performance. "A Train" is taken at an unusually leisurely stroll with the trio waxing nostalgic. They open with another cover, Steve Kuhn's wistful waltz "Saga of Harrison Crabfeathers." Carletti's own compositions hold up as well. His "Like Lulu" is a nod to Zorn's *News from Lulu* (12/88, p.32) a connection that won't be lost on anyone familiar with that trio. More distinctive are his quirky swingers "A Cat in the Hat" and "Ciciomiro Blues" and the lyrical closer "Freeways" that evokes American folk music. They show off the considerable skills of this ensemble, which is a fitting successor to previous trombone-reed-guitar trios.

David Dupont

BARRAGE / MEDITATION ON GRACE / DELICATE BALANCE / RADIANT TRANSMISSION. 71/35.

Lambert, Moses, d. 7/15/04, Quincy, MA.

Two established modernist drummers, full of respect for one another and each deeply interested in the powers of "sacred sound healing," get together to make some music, and guess what? That's right, lots of drums and cymbals in swirls of entwined poly-rhythms. There are four long pieces exploring the continuum from the opening "Barrage" to the gentler textures of "Delicate Balance." Great fun for them, as you can hear from the occasional whoops of delight, but not particularly absorbing as a listening experience unless long passages of drums, drums, and nothing but drums really hold your interest.

Stuart Kremnsky

SHOUT OUT ON THE MOUNTAIN / THE DANISH BLUES / AND LEFT ME CRYING / BROKE IN THE MORNING / GEORGIA WARI / ONE HUNDRED WAYS / STORMY WEATHER / MIDNIGHT AT THE ORNIS / ELEANOR RIGBY / HALF AN ERA / FOR OUR FOLKS / SLEIGHT RIDE / MY FAVORITE THINGS. 53/53.

Hailey, p; Zukoski, b, cga; Michael Hailey, d. December, 2002, Iowa.

1. BUZZY / 2. WAKE UP / 3. NICA'S WINTER WALTZ / 4. PLINI UP HOUSE / 5. STICKY WICKET / 6. IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD / 7. AW GEEZ / 8. THE HAPPY BLUES. 67/50.

Frost, fs, ss; Steve Frost, tpt, flgh; Bill Boris, g; Tom Vaitas, p, org (2, 3, 7); Demos Petropoulos, org (1, 4, 5, 6, 8); Dave Bernat, d (1-7); Tim Mulwenna, vib, perc (2, 3, 7); Mark Berfs, b (2, 3, 7); Bugs Cochran, d (8). No date or location given.

Here are two recordings of dramatically different form and substance. On (1), pianist Frank Hailey leads a trio positioned on the popular edge of the jazz continuum, making heavy use of backbeats, rock rhythmic grooves, and bluesy Ramsey Lewis-type figures in right hand. Hailey and bassist Eric Zukoski, principal arrangers for the set, utilize this Jazz/Rock mode for most selections, even old standards such as "Stormy Weather" and "Georgia," but also have recast old classical themes (such as "Blue Danube," and "Half an Era") in Swing style, a technique used by big bands such as Artie Shaw and others in the big band era. The normally Latin vehicle "Wave," done here as a Swing tune, finds Hailey delivering his most substantive piano solo, while Zukoski steps forward for a brief but well-done solo on the nice waltz, "Broke in the Morning." Hailey and the trio close out this professionally recorded album with two bonus cuts from their upcoming Christmas album.

By contrast, Mike Frost's live recorded project (2) falls in the straight-ahead mainstream/Bop Jazz category with this informally recorded effort. With some differences in rhythm section personnel suggesting this recording came from two or more sessions, the overall feel is a relaxed, high-spirited, sometimes rambling jam session with mixed performance levels. Demos Petropoulos is a strong contributor on B3 organ, backing other soloists well and evoking the great Jimmy Smith on "Sticky Wicket." Guitarist Bill Boris is a strong soloist throughout, standing out on "The Happy Blues," while pianist Tom Vaitas excels on the haunting "Nica's Winter Waltz," which Vaitas co-composed with Frost.

Don Lerman



Vito Ricci by Frank Rubolino

**1) FRANK HAILEY &
ERIC ZUKOSKI
AN OLD SWEET SONG**
SEA BREEZE 3089

**2) MIKE FROST
PROJECT LIVE**
BLUJAZZ 3365