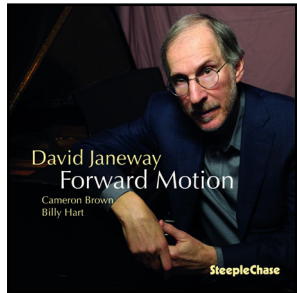


Lament", during the tenor/drum trading at the end of "Kern" and on "Flights" and "Catch 22". The trio as a team shines brightest on "Loomie Nation", where individual contributions become seamlessly integrated, where time slows, opens and expands. In keeping with the etymology of its title, this album seeks for something rarer than mere illumination (i.e., "showing, lighting")—it seeks lumination: a moment or more of inspiration and enlightenment.

For more info visit anzicrecords.com. The album release concert is at Smalls Mar. 7-8. See Calendar.



Forward Motion
David Janeway (SteepleChase)
by Ken Dryden

Like veteran pianist (Dr.) Denny Zeitlin, David Janeway found time during his career as a psychiatrist to record and play gigs, though on a more limited basis than Zeitlin. Since Janeway retired from his psychiatric practice in 2019, he's been a lot more musically active, though like most he was promptly hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. But even the lockdown didn't keep the pianist from forming a first-rate trio with Cameron Brown (bass) and Billy Hart (drums), as heard here on his new album.

Forward Motion, the group's second recording together, continues to demonstrate that Janeway could always have had a full-time career in jazz, had he chosen to do so. This session offers a strong mix of jazz tunes, including both well-known and hidden gems, along with potent originals by the leader. The pianist's joyful setting of Cedar Walton's "Martha's Prize" reminds us of the power and lyricism of the late pianist, a piece he premiered in the mid '90s that is just starting to gain traction among musicians. Thelonious Monk's "Two Timer" is rather obscure, since its composer never recorded it, and if he had, it surely would have been very different from Janeway's breezy interpretation here.

Brown's inventive bass playing is prominently featured in the first half, with the leader's post-bop chops to follow. Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's lush ballad "The Star-Crossed Lovers" is given a rhapsodic setting by Janeway, with the nimble percussion of Hart, as well as Brown's spacious bass line, fueling the pianist's shimmering improvisation. Cole Porter's "Night and Day" has been a go-to standard for decades and the up-tempo piano romp through it with a bossa nova undercurrent would get any audience on its feet and dancing. Janeway's "Fully Vaxxed" conveys the turmoil that people felt as to whether or not they were safe from COVID-19 during the pandemic; the strong interplay between the three musicians is intense and pardon the pun, infectious. His lyrical "Bright Waltz" has a mysterious, exotic air, blending a lush theme with a sense of foreboding. Another original by the leader, "Woodward Avenue", conveys the imagery of a busy city street on a weekday. And to close this rewarding session, Janeway's setting of Monk's "Bemsha Swing" displays the marvelous interplay of the trio as they break new ground exploring this jazz standard.

For more info visit steeplechase.dk. Janeway is at Smalls as leader Mar. 28-29 and as sideman Mar. 21-22 (with Eliot Zigmund). He is also at Jazz Forum Mar. 28-29. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



In Memory of Lester Bowie
Frode Gjerstad, William Parker, Hamid Drake
(Circulazione Totale)



Broken Compass
Broken Compass (Frode Gjerstad, Isach Skeidsvoll,
Ole Mofjell) (Circulazione Totale)
by Elliott Simon

These pair of releases from Norwegian saxophonist, Frode Gjerstad (who turns 77 this month), show off his adventurous horn in two very different trios. *In Memory of Lester Bowie* is a live gig from 2000 with William Parker (bass) and Hamid Drake (drums), while *Broken Compass* presents a new trio with Isach Skeidsvoll (piano) and Ole Mofjell (drums). When taken together they embody the evolution of a premiere spokesman for free jazz in Norway but also two major aspects of his long and prolific career.

In the '80s, Gjerstad was part of Detail, a trio with South African bassist Johnny Dyani and British drummer John Stevens that immersed the saxophonist in avant garde jazz improvisation. Their 1983 debut album (*Backwards and Forwards*, Impetus) illuminated Gjerstad's dynamic interplay with an exceptional rhythm section. While one can draw comparisons between Detail and his Drake/Parker band, striking differences do exist. On *In Memory of Lester Bowie*, the three are equals who together extensively toured in the late '90s. This live session, recorded in Chicago upon learning of Bowie's passing, captures the trio at their peak. The musicians exhibit a seamless rapport, devoid of egos, allowing each to inhabit musical space comfortably. Even without a trumpeter present, the honoree's spirit still permeates the four compositions titled "For Lester 1-4", that elegantly use silence, quick attacks and dynamics to achieve depth and subtlety. Whether it's Drake or Parker initiating rhythms that organically evolve into cohesive wholes, Gjerstad explores them with his entire range on saxophone. His array of sounds—squeaks, squonks, cries and wails—always retain a semblance of melody. During the nominal leader's breaks, both Drake and Parker reveal their exotic melodicism and spirituality.

Broken Compass delves into an encounter with a captured monkfish whose sister, mother and gender all come into question. Introducing a "homegrown" Norwegian trio, it initially evokes Gjerstad's collaboration with bassist Øyvind Storesund and drummer Paal Nilssen-Love. However, the resemblance ends there, as Gjerstad and pianist Skeidsvoll share a remarkable synergy. The duo previously collaborated on *Twenty Fingers* (Relative Pitch, 2021) that showcased their combination of lyricism and improvisational prowess. Drummer Mofjell also skillfully engages with Skeidsvoll, as on "Is the fish a he or a she?", crafting intricate and melodious rhythms for the saxophonist to improvise over or harmonize with. Does the monkfish embody Thelonious Monk's essence through the session's employment of dissonance, unconventional harmonies and elements of suspense and surprise? "Why is it looking at me?" is tenderly questioning; "Who is his mother" features a switch to clarinet for a demure piece filled with trials and tribulations. Throughout, the band strikes a unique balance of independence and structure, utilizing the tools of free jazz while incorporating catchy hooks and riffs. As free as this music is, it maintains a sense of cohesion, offering a welcoming and safe listening environment.

For more info visit frodegjerstad.bandcamp.com

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