

sonorities of amplified contra-bassoon. Centerpiece “Ripples” pairs slurry string glissandi with buzzy horn overtones (now like a sarrusophone) and reaches a sustained climax to rattle windows and jar your fillings. Walter’s mouse-hole scampers upend memories of AEC co-founder Famoudou Don Moye’s amped rampages: chamber work has replaced tribal spectacle. “Ruff, Ruff, Ruff, and Squeaky” (comic title of the year?) unleashes a barrage of rumpiled graffiti that fades off-stage with quivery “jews-harp” and an ambiguous Ewen-Smith guitar-bass meld. Solo high saxophone on “Shiver” meanders into a swoon as the band checks out on a drum-bass flurry. Pure chime and temple bells calmly anchor the prevailing hush of mini-suite “Sustain and Ring”...with infinite decayyy... Midnight in their clock shop invites meditation amid eventual susurrations and tintinnabulations (thanks, liners writer, reedman Joshua Marshall). Inching toward an anti-climax, bandmates softly ply gongs, lyre, bowed cymbal, echoey timbales, rubber ducky and ref whistle. “The Final Bell” rolls with stormy interplay over a creaky hull. At the single toll of this space-ship’s bell, the cycle rewinds anew.

For more info visit widehive.com. Mitchell is at Roulette Mar. 6 (presented by Interpretations). See Calendar.



Dark Journey (The Music of Andrew Rathbun)
Western Jazz Collective (Origin)
by George Kanzler

If jazz is “the sound of surprise,” then the septet (sometimes octet with guest percussion on some tracks) Western Jazz Collective definitely delivers. *Dark Journey (The Music of Andrew Rathbun)* features multi-reed player Rathbun’s kaleidoscopic compositions, works far from the conventional 32-bar or 12-bar tunes that dominate the jazz canon. His pieces unspool like skeins of multi-colored and textured threads that weave complex forms. Many of the nine tracks here employ shifting time signatures, often including odd meters as well as changing tempi, from swift down to rubato, sometimes all on the same tune.

“Making No Sense”, the opening and longest track is representative of most of those attributes. The rhythm section, with Matt Landon (guitar), opens in a rollicking 3/4-6/8 time, then gives way to a Scott Cowan (trumpet) solo at a crawling tempo, gradually joined and backed by comments from Landon and Matthew Fries (electric piano), as the tempo dissolves into semi-rubato ensemble choruses, horns and guitar joined by the sonorities of Greg Jasperse’s wordless (mostly vowel-based) vocals. Then a 6/8 jangly rhythm introduces solo trades by the composer’s soprano saxophone and Landon’s guitar; the track then concludes in a slow reverie of electric piano, guitar and voice.

Rathbun’s arrangements conjure a surprising variety of timbral and tonal colors from just a septet/octet. “Longer Wait” evokes a *Twilight Zone* vibe with soft keyboard chords and his slithery WX7 electronic saxophone, paired with Cowan’s classically pure-toned open trumpet. “Different Directions” unfurls true to its title, as shifting times (6, 4, 5) are more than matched by disparate lines from voice, horns and guitar and piano. A highlight is the second-longest track, “February First”, with John Hébert’s pizzicato bass solo opening over a trotting tempo, and other

musicians dropping contrasting lines until pianist Fries asserts a theme ushering in guitar and tenor saxophone solos (Rathbun in Sonny Rollins mode), all culminating in an electronically altered, Eddie Harris-like saxophone mouthpiece on trumpet solo coda.

The sum total results in a constantly surprising and stimulating program exploring the outer range of jazz’ compositional strategies.

For more info visit originarts.com. Andrew Rathbun is at Ibeam Brooklyn Mar. 15 (presented by Connection Works). See Calendar.



Francesca
David Murray Quartet (Intakt)
by Ken Waxman

Apparently there comes a time when avant garde tenor saxophonists turn into Coleman Hawkins. They don’t become slavish imitators, but although exploratory impulses remain, swing, melody and a deeper sound become paramount. That transformation first affected Archie Shepp, who transitioned to blues and ballads by the late 20th century. Now the same metamorphosis has affected David Murray. Unlike Shepp, who arguably changed to mask a failing lip, Murray’s skill is still on full display and *Francesca* is a high-quality mainstream release. One reason for that is the New York-based saxophonist-bass clarinetist (who returned to NYC in 2016) surrounds himself with younger, accomplished musicians, as heard in the last few years on tour and on the quartet’s new album: Marta Sanchez (piano), Luke Stewart (bass) and Russell Carter (drums).

Murray also continues to play bass clarinet, and on “Richard’s Tune” he takes out that horn and balances chalumeau burps and clarion squeaks. Interestingly enough, the Don Pullen composition, which also features Sanchez’ leaping piano chording and Stewart’s slithering double bass thumps, mixes wallowing reed scoops and vibrations plus what seems to be a contrafact of “Jitterbug Waltz”. On tenor, the passion and power Murray has always displayed is still upfront, alongside slurs, splashes and smears—sometimes expressed unaccompanied—as on the title track. More often than not he plays in tandem with Sanchez’ keyboard bounces and swirls, measured drum smacks that take on bop and Latin articulations and occasionally the bassist’s string slides. Among the allusions, Murray’s expositions encompass interludes where he stutters, swallows and stings tones into expanded doits that meet piano stops and trade fours with the drummer as on “Am Gone Get Some”. Torque linear altissimo motions into clenched snorts speed up as they squeal into a nearly endless exposition on “Come And Go”. Murray also ups the excitement with constant overblowing and triple tonguing introduce Carter’s ruffs and cracks on “Cycles and Seasons”. Throughout the album foot-tapping rhythms mostly recap the heads.

Francesca can be heard as one of the most outside mainstream albums or, conversely, the most inside avant garde session. And it can and should be appreciated by those who favor one or both of these genres.

For more info visit intaktrec.ch. Murray is at Blue Note Mar. 3, 17 and 31. See Calendar.

DROP THE NEEDLE



Hip Ensemble
Roy Haynes (Mainstream-Wewantsounds)
by Pierre Giroux

Roy Haynes, who passed away last November at the age of 99 and whose centennial is this month (Mar. 13), was regarded as one of jazz’ most compelling drummers, possessing an unerring instinct for innovation and ranking among the most recorded drummers in the genre. His *Hip Ensemble* now has been (finally) reissued and available on vinyl for the first time since its initial release in 1971.

Featuring the original gatefold artwork with first-generation photos, remastered audio and a two-page insert (including new liner notes from Kevin Le Gendre), the music is a striking synthesis of jazz-funk, spiritual jazz and raw percussive power. The album moves effortlessly between deep grooves and fiery improvisations, capturing the restless energy of the era. Surrounding Haynes is a band that amplified his vision: George Adams (tenor), Marvin Peterson (trumpet), Teruo Nakamura (bass), Mervin Bronson (electric bass), Elwood Johnson and Lawrence Killian (percussion) and Carl Schroeder (piano, Fender Rhodes).

Side one opens with the Stanley Cowell theme “Equipoise”, guided by Haynes’ unshakable command of time and texture. Adams takes control of the theme with his sharp edges and smoke, while Schroeder’s keyboard musings are both rhythmic and exploratory. “Tangiers” (an original by the drummer) is a poly-rhythmic deep-end dive, with Adams’ desperate wails in full flight, as Haynes’ drumming fills a whole mad, beautiful rhythmic world. “Nothing Ever Changes My Love for You” (Marvin Fisher, Jack Segal) was first made popular by Nat “King” Cole and was eventually covered by numerous popular and jazz artists. The band takes the number at a bristling pace, driven by the leader with support from percussionists Johnson and Killian interjecting vitality into the number. Schroeder’s keyboard work punctuates the ensemble with sharp voicing, and Adams and Peterson each offer splendid solos.

Side two continues with sweating, grooving, soaring tracks such as “Satan’s Mysterious Feeling” (by Adams), which comes in like a fever dream. Haynes’ funky drumming creates a hypnotic pulse, with the tenor saxophonist wailing like a siren from some lost, haunted place. “You Name It/Lift Every Voice and Sing”, the first section of a two-part, nine-minute number, struts and saunters with electric bass thick as summer city heat. The second section, composed in 1900 and often referred to as “The Black National Anthem”, begins with an explosive drum solo. The closer, “Roy’s Tune”, was not included in the original album; it is a testament to Haynes’ enduring brilliance, and it is like a sermon you didn’t even know existed.

For more info visit wewantsounds.com. A Roy Haynes Memorial is at Saint Peter’s Church Mar. 13. See Calendar.