

TIGER MOON

A FAMILY AFFAIR
BY FRANZ MATZNER

Founded in 2014, Tiger Moon Records is quite literally a family affair. Based in Berlin, Germany, it is essentially a platform for the works of the freelance musicians—and married couple—saxophonists Almut Schlichting and Alexander Beierbach. It might be easy to shunt their efforts aside as an indulgent project, a way to keep their own fun and communication flowing. But doing so would sacrifice an invitation to hear the unexpected and experience a musical blast. Armed with Schlichting's baritone and Beierbach's tenor and soprano, the duo engages with each other and, separately or together, in collaborations with a diverse set of musicians to present a surprising range of jazz idioms, from brass band to contemporary modern and experimental. Idiom shapeshifters aptly describe the two. The phenomenon often applies to each release, and certainly across the entire catalog.

Despite its small scale and limited resources, Tiger Moon has received attention from domestic and international journalists and radio. The pair explains this success due to developing solid public relations and because, as Schlichting says, "We have been personally and continuously taking care of the label

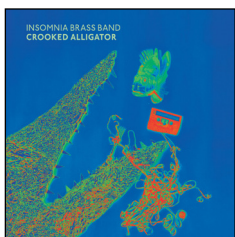
for ten years." Like many small-label founders, the two also were motivated by obtaining more direction over the many steps of the production processes. A priority was "creating continuity and recognizability so that Tiger Moon would be a unifying platform for our various bands." Perhaps counter-intuitively for those with kids, the couple explain that their depth of commitment in many ways comes from their private life. "Tackling this as a team is, of course, reassuring and helpful. Although our daily life is quite full... frantically juggling music and family, we occasionally have quiet moments together. It is in these moments that new ideas for the work can emerge all at once."

A distinguishing feature of many of the label's releases is Schlichting's baritone. Asked about the choice, she responds that she now uses it exclusively in order to "focus on the possibilities of the low tone world." The albums featuring her work glow with a rich, pliable depth. Unsurprisingly, this is most observable on her duos, for example with bassist Sven Hinse on *Subsystem*. "Zirkuswalzer" (from *Schneekönig*) wields an odd assortment of sounds. Swing is interrupted by fair-like twirls; a sudden switch and circus rhythms intrude, followed by abstract blasts that bring to mind vehicles colliding and girders bending. For his part, Beierbach's hallmark is his flexibility, astuteness and inspirational curiosity, combined with skills capable of manipulating many contexts. One example is "A Night and 43 Seconds" from the band BROM (which

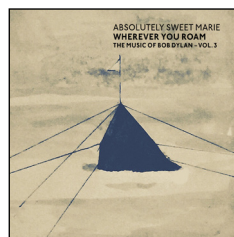
has two Tiger Moon albums to date). Setting aside the title's possible jocular reference to John Cage's "4'33", the extended track is definitely not silent. Tempos shift rapidly; dynamics plunge, flatten and erupt; solos blur boppish and then just as easily emit impressionistic waves. From the same release, "Glimmer" presents a different aspect of the label's character, gliding mysterious and melancholic. Similarly, "Chestnut" (from *Cardboard Sea*) quivers moonshine blue.

Beierbach also reaches beyond the normal canon, with wit and flair. A prime example is his work dedicated to Bob Dylan. He describes his interest in Dylan as a return to early youth when he listened to the singer-songwriter regularly. However, as a jazz student, Dylan fell off his radar. Then, Beierbach rediscovered him and became, as he says, "...all the more hooked. I had to integrate my admiration into my own artistic work." The result is the band Absolutely Sweet Marie, which has made multiple albums. On these, he runs the gamut between poignant and playful, simple and clever. One example is a luxuriant rendition of "Boots of Spanish Leather", which drips with tension, as if the quartet was restraining potent emotions behind its tightened horns and quiet beat. A second is the funky "Stuck in Mobile with The Memphis Blues Again", which cuts to the original's quirky heart. Dylan is not the only such touchstone. One finds New Orleans flavors, blues

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Crooked Alligator
Insomnia Brass Band



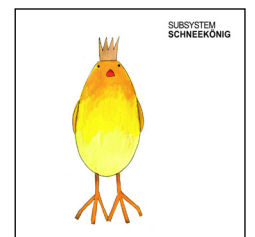
Wherever You Roam: Music of Bob Dylan Vol. 3
Absolutely Sweet Marie



Cardboard Sea
BROM



Saints & Fools
Shoot The Moon



Schneekönig
Subsystem

VOXNEWS

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

BY TESSA SOUTER

Congratulations to all the nominees for the GRAMMYS "Best Jazz Vocal Album": **Kurt Elling**, for his *Wildflowers Volume 1* (Edition), a spontaneous duo album with pianist Sullivan Fortner; the wonderful **Catherine Russell** (another piano/vocal duo) with Sean Mason (*My Ideal*, Dot Time); Brazilian legend **Milton Nascimento** and **esperanza spalding's** *Milton + esperanza* (Concord); and a beautiful outing, *Journey in Black* (s/r) from DC-based first-time nominee, **Christie Dashiell**. The unskippable **Samara Joy** won for *A Joyful Holiday* (Verve), featuring Fortner.

March is Women's History Month: this year's theme, "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating and Inspiring Generations." Thus, the current wealth of album releases and concerts celebrating women composers and performers is particularly apropos. A fabulous composer, back-to-back GRAMMY-winner **Nicole Zuraitis** is currently working on her next project, *Siren Songs*, an album of songs by women composers. Last year's *Flying High: Big Band Canaries Who Soared* (Jazz at the Ballroom) featured pianist-vocalist **Champion Fulton**, and paid tribute to big band-era female vocalists. At the Madison Community Arts Center, NJ (Mar. 2), Fulton will present selections from that album and talk about Peggy Lee, Ella

Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday, all of whom began their careers as big band singers. Catch her also at Birdland (Mar. 7-9) with the *Flying High* project, featuring rising star guest vocalists **Ekep Nkwelle**, who stunned everyone with her performance of Ellington's "Come Sunday" as part of the Russell Malone tribute at Jazz Congress in January, and **Olivia Chindamo**.

Speaking of big band singers (and making history), there's a brand-new album from **Ella Fitzgerald**, the first woman to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award (1967) at the GRAMMYS. *The Moment of Truth: Ella at the Coliseum* (Verve) was recorded live at The Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Arena in June 1967. According to Will Friedwald's liners, it includes several songs that she never recorded elsewhere and rarely sang live, including a killer version of "Alfie". Performing in the middle of a three-year tour with Ellington's big band (some of whom appear on the album), she is absolutely at the top of her game.

Utterly thrilling improvisational vocalist **Kokayi** appears on two superb new albums: Jamie Baum's *What Times Are These* (Sunnyside) and Ambrose Akinmusire's *Honey from a Winter Stone* (Nonesuch). Jazz vocalist **Jeanie Bryson** (daughter of Dizzy Gillespie)—whose husband, jazz guitarist Coleman Mellett, died in 2009 on Continental Flight 3407 on his way to perform in a concert with Chuck Mangione—has co-produced (with Mellett's brother) an exquisitely moving posthumous album, *Sing You a Brand New Song: The Words and Music of Coleman Mellett*. A multi-award-winning short documentary with the same title (featuring Mangione, Will Lee, Steve Gadd and Larry Goldings) will be shown at The ShowRoom Cinema in Asbury Park, NJ (Mar. 1), followed by a Q&A with Bryson. If you missed the incredible **Joyce Moreno** at Dizzy's Club last month you can hear her on pianist Renee

Rosnes' new album *Crossing Paths* (Smoke Sessions), which also features Brazilian legend **Edu Lobo**, singing his own composition "Pra Dizer Adeus" (with the addition of a wordless vocal interlude sung by Rosnes), and New York-based Brazilian transplant, **Maucha Adnet**, who toured with Antonio Carlos Jobim for the last decade of his life.

See You There...Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition winner **April May Webb** fills the **Abbey Lincoln** chair for Terri Lyne Carrington's reimagining of the Abbey Lincoln-Max Roach epic *We Insist! Freedom Now Suite* at Smoke (Mar. 5-9). Multiple GRAMMY nominee, **Nnenna Freelon**, celebrates her new all-originals album *Beneath the Skin* (Origin) at Dizzy's Club (Mar. 21-23). Vocalist **Louise Rogers** celebrates female NYC composers and lyricists at Pangea (Mar. 19). **Renée Manning** with Earl McIntyre's Tribute Band presents musical portraits of influential African Americans, from Marcus Garvey to Sojourner Truth to tuba virtuoso Howard Johnson, at Shapeshifter Lab (Mar. 9). **Cécile McLorin Savant** plays Carnegie Hall (Mar. 27) with The Knights, performing Darcy James Argue's orchestral arrangements of standards. **Rondi Charleston's** song cycle collaboration with Fred Hersch, *Suspended in Time* (Resilience), will be performed by Hersch and the Crosby String Quartet with **Gabrielle Stravelli** and **Kate McGarry** at Joe's Pub (Mar. 30). Saint Peter's Church presents **Judy Niemack** (Mar. 9), **Lisa Sokolov** (Mar. 16) and **Laurie Dapice** (Mar. 23). Soulful jazz vocalist-pianist-composer, **Mala Waldron**, performs at Ossining's Westchester Collaborative Theater (Mar. 1) and Langston Hughes Public Library in Queens (Mar. 15). Vocal supergroup, **säje**, featuring the sirenesque voices of **Sara Gazarek**, **Amanda Taylor**, **Johnaye Kendrick** and **Erin Bentlage**, appears at the PJS Jazz Society's "Second Sunday Concert Series" in Mount Vernon, NY (Mar.9).