



Mundoagua (Celebrating Carla Bley) Arturo O'Farrill/The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra (ZOHO) by George Kanzler

Consisting of three multi-part extended pieces for jazz orchestra, Mundoagua (Celebrating Carla Bley) bookends two Arturo O'Farrill works around Carla Bley's Blue Palestine, her last completed work before she died in October 2023—commissioned by O'Farrill for his Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra. But the entire recording is a tribute to Bley, as the leader explains in his liner notes: Bley "discovered" a teenage O'Farrill playing piano in a band in upstate New York and recruited him for her Jazz Composers Orchestra. He notes, "Carla is the biggest influence on my work as a composer; she said the three most important ingredients a composer can have are curiosity, integrity and accuracy." O'Farrill also continues in the progressive, liberal tradition of protest music exemplified by Bley's work for Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra, saying "There are those who think musicians should just swing and play pretty music...I am not one of those. I have too much respect for human beings and for their intelligence".

The three-movement title piece tells the story of "how a species is slowly, irrevocably killing its host, so that corporate entities benefiting a handful of reprobate individuals can engorge themselves while millions die". The second movement, "Glacial", ingeniously depicts musically the "divisive repetition" of the 24-hour news cycle through contrasting individual instrument parts; and the third movement, "The Politics of Water", includes a cacophonous, mocking rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner". The Bley work, Blue Palestine, its four parts mostly cast in 7/8 meter, incorporates elements of both Middle Eastern/Arabic music and Afro-Latin jazz, each section incrementally built from solo voices that accrue rhythmic and orchestral momentum through the careful additions of growing ensemble density. Bley's daughter, Karen Mantler, contributes harmonica and organ to "Part 3", the harmonica and Patricia Brennan's vibraphone together creating unique tonal colors. Themes from the first three parts are reprised on "Part 4" as Adam O'Farrill's trumpet solo soars over the orchestra's full Afro-Latin rhythms.

Arturo O'Farrill's final work, Dia de los Muertos, swirls through evocations of the "Day of the Dead" holiday, with an Afro-Latin rhythm inflected opening section, "Flowery Death", unfurling a half dozen soloists. "La Bruja", the second section, is a Latin waltz featuring the open and muted trumpet of Rachel Therrien, and the work ends with "Mambo Cadaverous", described by the composer as "pure cartoon, skeleton imagery."

For more info visit zohomusic.com. O'Farrill's Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra is at Birdland Sundays and Zankel Hall Apr. 11. See Calendar.



Shine Hear, Vol. 2 Daniel Carter, Leo Genovese, William Parker, Francisco Mela (577 Records) by John Sharpe

The second volume from a July 2021 session, Shine Hear, presents three further off-the-wall excursions from the all-star quartet of veteran Daniel Carter (saxophones, trumpet, flute), Argentinean Leo Genovese (piano), William Parker (bass, shakuhachi) and Cuban Francisco Mela (drums, vocal). The connections within the group go way back, across the board: Carter and Parker cut their teeth at the tail end of the '70s loft scene, while Genovese appeared on Mela's debut album in 2006. Additionally, each member of the band has become something of a fixture on the 577 Records imprint over recent years, in all manner of combinations.

As a result, a relaxed and trusting atmosphere prevails throughout Shine Hear, Vol. 2, engendering a series of wonderful environments, particularly for Carter's arsenal of reeds and brass. Overall, there is a ruminative quality that largely stems from his reflective approach, notwithstanding the activity going on around him. It's a testament to his gravitas, when you consider that Genovese is an often restless presence, abetted by Mela's chattering percussion,

setting up a sometimes turbulent undercurrent that seems to proceed at a much faster rate than Carter's discursive narratives. Parker both anchors and mediates, ensuring a solid grounding, even when in robust counterpoint.

On the opening "Sentimental Moments", Carter launches wafts of blues-tinged trumpet, before switching to tenor, where he continues in a similar vein, at the barest simmer, gradually ascending to a controlled falsetto squeal. "Vida Mia" offers more timbral variety, with a strikingly resonant introduction from Mela, complete with vocal imprecations, before a ballad feel with Carter's serene alto and Parker's breathy shakuhachi. It isn't until the final "Oh Yea T' Be Blessed" that a settled rhythm emerges. It's the format which inspires Genovese to his finest outing on the album, flowing phrases in each hand, one seeming to answer the other, while Carter has a lovely fluttering passage on flute, and later a lyrical Miles Davis-inflected trumpet. As always with Mela, his polyrhythmic beats come with a hearty side portion of vocalization, which fall partway between singing, chanting and shouting (consequently, appreciation of the whole package may depend on your appetite for his unique mode of expression).

For more info visit 577records.com. Carter is at Nublu Apr. 2 (with Luisa Muhr) and Ibeam Brooklyn Apr. 18 (with David Haney). Genovese is at Smalls Apr. 10 and Bar Lunático Apr. 16. Parker is at The Stone at New School Apr. 16-19. See Calendar.



Something Else! (featuring Vincent Herring) (Smoke Sessions) by Scott Yanow

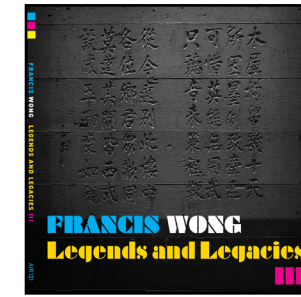
Alto saxophonist Vincent Herring organized the group Something Else! with the goal of playing some of the soul jazz classics that he heard while growing up. He enlisted quite an all-star group filled with musicians who had played together through the years in many settings and who shared a similar listening experience in their youth. The septet consists of Herring, Jeremy Pelt (trumpet), Wayne Escoffery (tenor), Paul Bollenback (guitar), David Kikoski (piano), Essiet Essiet (bass) and Otis Brown III (drums). Together on Soul Jazz they perform music that is on the soulful and bluesy side of hard bop, most of it dating from the '60s. The three horn players and pianist Kikoski get to solo on nearly every song, making the most of each note during their concise statements. Never merely jamming over the chord changes, they put plenty of feeling into their spots, and the rhythm section (including Bollenback who also has a few solos along the way) keeps the music grooving.

The program begins with an uptempo and driving version of Horace Silver's "Filthy McNasty", which serves as a perfect introduction to the group. It is followed by a medium-slow rendition of Stanley Turrentine's minor-toned "Too Blue", the infectious Eddie Harris "Mean Greens" (a bit reminiscent of Harris' "Freedom Jazz Dance") and the always catchy Pee Wee Ellis tune "The Chicken". The set's second half consists of: "Driftn'" (one of Herbie Hancock's best soul jazz originals); Donald Byrd's classic, if rarely played, restrained blues, "Slow Drag"; Roy Hargrove's funky "Strasbourg/St. Denis" and John Coltrane's

"Naima". The latter tune may seem a bit out of place but it is memorable for its faster than usual tempo, as well as for the upbeat, rockish Bollenback guitar solo, along with Essiet's danceable bass lines.

With its emphasis on strong melodies, catchy rhythms and joyful moods, Soul Jazz is a particularly accessible album with its affectionate look back at a vintage style.

For more info visit smokesessionsrecords.com. This project is at Smoke Apr. 30 - May 4. See Calendar.



Legends and Legacies III Francis Wong (Asian Improv) by Kurt Gottschalk

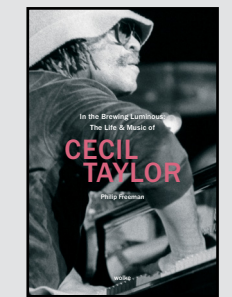
The 1990s Asian influx into the Afro-centric Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) seemed unlikely at the time, but bassist Tatsuo Aoki and saxophonist Francis Wong (who both turn 68 this year, the latter this month) proved to be assets as instrumentalists as well as through their Asian Improv Records label. Thirty years on, the connections continue. Last month, Chicago's Experimental Sound Studio announced a new archive and year of events documenting the collaborations between Aoki and AACM member Fred Anderson; and Wong has released the third volume in his Legends and Legacies series. Continuing the composer's dedication to touchstones of Asian American history, the album features a tentet with a triple-reed front line including Mwata Bowden and Ed Wilkerson, two powerful players keeping the AACM home fire burning.

Legends and Legacies III opens in a series of wonderfully loose fanfares counted off by tuba player William Roper. This intro lasts just over a minute before a brief pause and the hammered strings of Yangqin Zhao's yangqin set up the slow dance of the second section. "Shanghai Stories" continues the episodic structure, a setting for an untold story of Wong's parents meeting and falling in love during the Chinese Civil War (1927-49). Aoki's bass introduces "Within These Walls", influenced by Lenora Lee, whose improvised dance in the studio guided the musicians. Her own inspiration was the detention of her parents at the Angel Island Immigration Station in San Francisco Bay under the Chinese Exclusion Act. "Miyoshi Sketches" is another episodic piece, leaning more heavily into Asian instruments. In addition to the yangqin, the ensemble includes another Chinese string instrument, the shamisen (played by Aoki) and a small percussion section of taiko and tsuzumi (along with Western trap drums). It's the most integrated ensemble piece of the album, with the reeds playing variations on a slow melody over plucked string repetitions.

The album concludes with a short take on an upbeat traditional tune, arranged for Asian strings and full percussion contingent. Drawing lines to the AACM might seem a bit of overreach, but the march rhythm, yelled vocals and strained clarinet solo in "Within These Walls" recall the Art Ensemble of Chicago's military settings (cf. "Get in Line") and the long drum intro to "Miyoshi Sketches" evokes the extended percussion solos of the AACM's Famoudou Don Moye. It's not derivative, it's not unlicensed lifting, it's just something in the Chicago air.

For more info visit asianimprov.org

IN PRINT



In the Brewing Luminous: The Life & Music of Cecil Taylor Philip Freeman (Wolke) by Ken Waxman

One of improvised music's most creative figures, pianist-composer Cecil Taylor (1928-2018) was involved in controversy from his first mid '50s recording until his death (this month marks his seven-year deathaversary). Someone whose style was unique, with echoes of notated music plus expected syncopation and blues, Taylor's music became more unmetered and abstract as his career progressed, with performances mixed with poetry and dance. He still has as many admirers as there may be detractors, though. Philip Freeman is one of the former, setting himself the herculean task of producing Taylor's first-ever biography. The effort couldn't have been easy, however, despite masses of information available: more than most musicians, Taylor had many interests beyond music. He also frequently partied all night in clubs whose main attraction was champagne, cocaine and an audience for his tales. A mercurial leader, scores were obtuse and frequently jettisoned for free improv at the last minute. A master of obfuscation, his interviews, while voluble, were usually elliptical with detours into private references. Freeman spent two days hanging out with Taylor and bolstered his interview with published material.

The book becomes more valuable in its second half as Taylor, now famous, plays internationally, works with many old and multiple new associates, has unrewarding academic stints and finally is the recipient of awards and monetary grants. "He had completed the journey from insurgent to institution," Freeman writes. Earlier chapters drag somewhat, since most of the information on Taylor's rise from razzing to respect had already been frequently published. Whether the book is for the knowledgeable jazz fan, or the innocent novice, can be questioned. Freeman needlessly supplies a detailed biography of every musician mentioned, but he also provides a valuable service by meticulously reviewing all of Taylor's extant recordings. This effort gives the reader an idea of how his music evolved and how the players dealt with it. Freeman's in-person interviews with Taylor encompassed twelve hours. He also had conversations or email exchanges with other associates, and attributes some quoted material to particular publications. Despite a seven-page bibliography, most anecdotes, though, aren't sourced, nor are there indications as to whether the material is contemporary or after the fact.

The author should be applauded for the work he put into the book and the wealth of information he amassed. But insight beyond fact recitation is sorely missing. Until another major study of Taylor is written though, this will be the book to read about someone whose music is as important to jazz as Duke Ellington's.

For more info visit wolke-verlag.de



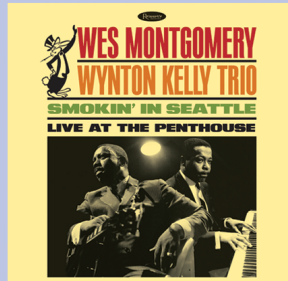
CHARLES MINGUS IN ARGENTINA: THE BUENOS AIRES CONCERTS A never-before-released pair of recordings of legendary bassist Charles Mingus captured live in Buenos Aires in June 1977 featuring Ricky Ford, Jack Walrath, Bob Neloms and Dannie Richmond. Transferred from the original tapes recorded by Carlos Melero, the limited-edition 180-g 3-LP set is mastered for vinyl by Matthew Lutthans at The Mastering Lab and pressed at 33 1/3 RPM at Le Vinylist. Includes liner notes by author / jazz historian Brian Priestley. [3-LP AVAILABLE APRIL 12 & 2-CD/DIGITAL AVAILABLE APRIL 18]



KENNY DORHAM BLUE BOSSA IN THE BRONX: LIVE FROM THE BLUE MOROCCO Never-before-released recording of trumpet icon Kenny Dorham live at the Blue Morocco jazz club in The Bronx, NY in 1967 feat. Sonny Red, Cedar Walton, Paul Chambers and Denis Charles. Transferred from the original tapes recorded by Bernard Drayton, the limited-edition 180-gram 2-LP set includes liner notes by jazz scholar Bob Blumenthal; plus interviews with Eddie Henderson, Jeremy Pelt, Steven Bernstein, Reggie Workman, Dan Morgenstern and others. [2-LP AVAILABLE APRIL 12 & CD/DIGITAL AVAILABLE APRIL 18]



FREDDIE HUBBARD ON FIRE: LIVE FROM THE BLUE MOROCCO Never-before-released recording of trumpet icon Freddie Hubbard captured live at the Blue Morocco jazz club in The Bronx, NY on April 10, 1967 feat. Bennie Maupin, Kenny Barron, Herbie Lewis and Freddie Waits. Transferred from the original tapes recorded by Bernard Drayton. Limited-edition 180g 3-LP set mastered for vinyl by Bernie Grundman with liner notes by noted producer John Koenig; interviews with Eddie Henderson, Jeremy Pelt, Steven Bernstein and others. [3-LP AVAILABLE APRIL 12 & 2-CD/DIGITAL AVAILABLE APRIL 18]



WES MONTGOMERY/WYNTON KELLY TRIO SMOKIN' IN SEATTLE: LIVE AT THE PENTHOUSE Smokin' in Seattle, with jazz guitar icon Wes Montgomery and the Wynton Kelly Trio, is getting a second pressing with new front and back album cover artwork. Captured live at the Penthouse in Seattle, WA on April 14 and 21, 1966 and features bassist Ron McClure and the legendary drummer Jimmy Cobb. The deluxe 180-gram LP is freshly remastered from the original tapes by Matthew Lutthans at The Mastering Lab, and comes with an elaborate insert. LP AVAILABLE APRIL 12 & CD/DIGITAL ON APRIL 18



THE CHARLIE ROUSE BAND CINNAMON FLOWER: THE EXPANDED EDITION A Brazilian-inspired reissue of the legendary saxophonist Charlie Rouse's 1977 album, originally released on Douglas Records. Nearly 50 years later, Resonance is proud to present this deluxe edition of Cinnamon Flower, which contains nearly 30 minutes of previously-unissued versions of songs from the original release captured by Resonance founder and engineer, George Klabin, at Sound Ideas studio in New York City. Limited-edition 180g 2LP with liner notes by author James Gavin. AVAILABLE MAY 30TH ON LP, CD & DIGITAL DOWNLOAD