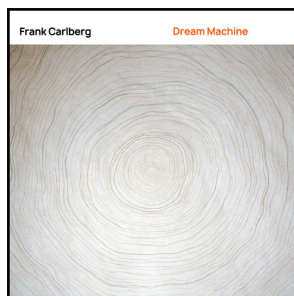


the instrument's extensive range. It's a mysterious listen and their concise and cryptic accompanying text only does so much to clear the waters: "We maneuver through woody sounds created by individual movements and decisions. Our cello playing is free from classical patterns, a real achievement! It is not natural to develop one's own approach to this high culture instrument." Those words do, however, hint at just how thick and heady the album is, and at the same time how atmospheric it is, even down to the soft room noise. It's not necessarily an easy listen, but it is an evocative one: creaky rocking chair, distant horn, sparrows and sputters and throughout it all, some truly fine playing.

The Hemphill Stringtet represents a very different approach to string music. They are a traditional configuration—with Curtis Stewart and Sam Bardfeld (violins), Stephanie Griffin (viola) and Reid (cello)—dedicated to the music of Julius Hemphill, perhaps best known as a founder of the World Saxophone Quartet. A few years before his death in 1995, and after a reportedly contentious ousting from the quartet, he upped the game to a saxophone sextet for the album *Fat Man and the Hard Blues* (Black Saint, 1991). He was clearly interested in arranging for like voices, so a string quartet was a natural. He set three Charles Mingus compositions for strings ("Nostalgia in Times Square", "Alice in Wonderland" and "Better Get Hit in Your Soul"), presented here and representing close to half of the playing time of The Hemphill Stringtet's *Plays the Music of Julius Hemphill*. The balance of the program is made up of new arrangements of four of Hemphill's multiple saxophone compositions: "Revue" (probably the most familiar Hemphill tune in the set) and a pairing of "My First Winter" and "Touchic"—all initially recorded by the quartet—and "Choo Choo", recorded by the Julius Hemphill Sextet on the posthumous *At Dr. King's Table* (New World Countercurrents, 1997), under the guidance of Marty Ehrlich. This is not, however, staid string music. Hemphill didn't need a rhythm section to make his saxes swing, and likewise, the Stringtet is very much a jazz band, regardless of instrumentation. They play heads, variations and solos that soar. Reid carries bass lines quite adeptly when needed, and even on the somber "My First Winter", Hemphill's joyous spirit shines through.

For more info visit relativepitchrecords.com and outofyourheadrecords.com. Tomeka Reid is at BRIC Ballroom May 3-4 (part of Long Play Festival), Roulette's 2025 Gala honoring Anthony Braxton May 8, and Park Avenue Armory May 20 (with Sofia Jernberg). See Calendar.



Dream Machine
Frank Carlberg (Red Piano)
by George Kanzler

Pianist Frank Carlberg's last album was the big band *Elegy for Thelonious*. Here on *Dream Machine* he leads a quintet with the capacious sonic diversity and range of that big band. This wide sonic range stems from Carlberg's use of two keyboardists: the leader's piano and Rhodes, and Leo Genovese's Hammond B3 and Farfisa organs plus synthesizers. Rounding out the quintet are Hery Paz (tenor), John Hébert (bass) and Dan Weiss (drums). The leader, whose composing philosophy asserts that music should be about more than just music, says that this work includes inspirations from the fairground, circus and cinema. The title of the album references an early sci-fi invention. According to

Carlberg it was "a rotating cylindrical object that could put someone in a dreamlike state by sitting in front of the machine with one's eyes closed." Four short "Dream" pieces occurring sporadically throughout the other nine tracks are meant to represent those "dreamscapes."

The first, "Dream I", is meant to conjure the barker in a carnival, the hurdy-gurdy-like bounce of the Farfisa-led piece ushering the listener into the album's world. If Carlberg's two last big band albums were inspired by, as well as a tribute to, Thelonious Monk, the music here more reflects the influence of Charles Mingus. Such Mingus tropes as acceleration and deceleration of tempi, sudden contrasts in volume, overlapping or concurrent soloing, rhythmic dropouts, a cappella interludes and shifting melodies, as well as novel combinations, occur on many of the longer tracks.

Genovese's Farfisa work brings that carny feel to "Reconstruction", before the tempo takes off and the ensemble becomes fast and furious to usher in a Paz tenor solo bordering on the chaotic, which ends with a rhythmic dropout for the leader's piano solo. It is eventually joined by pizzicato bass leading to a massed ensemble laying the table for a drum solo before the carny-like theme returns. The Mingus influence is also palpable on "Search and Rescue", as keyboard long tones swirl around to usher in another Paz solo over an accelerating tempo that eventually gives way to an a cappella tenor saxophone interlude. An elegiac mood, heightened by arco bass, ends the album wistfully.

For more info visit frankcarlbergmusic.com. Carlberg is at Bar Bayeux May 1. See Calendar.

**KEITH JARRETT
THE OLD COUNTRY
GARY PEACOCK
PAUL MOTIAN**

More from the Deer Head Inn ECM

The Old Country
Keith Jarrett, Gary Peacock, Paul Motian (ECM)
by Scott Yanow

The previously unreleased *The Old Country* was performed at the same September 16, 1992 engagement as the lauded 1994 ECM release, *At The Deer Head Inn*. It was the only time that pianist Keith Jarrett teamed up with both bassist Gary Peacock (from Jarrett's Standards Trio of 1983-2009) and drummer Paul Motian. The pianist had recorded with Motian as early as his 1967 album *Life Between The Exit Signs* and on a regular basis with his classic American Quartet (1971-76) but not at all in the years since. In contrast, Peacock and Motian recorded together frequently through the years including with pianists Paul Bley, Bill Evans (*Trio '64*), Marilyn Crispell, Martial Solal and Masabumi Kikuchi (in the group Tethered Moon).

While Motian here displays a slightly lighter and freer touch than Jack DeJohnette, in reality the music on *The Old Country* is quite similar to what was generally heard by Jarrett's Standards Trio. Peacock gets some solos and Motian takes a few breaks, but the pianist is very much the lead voice throughout, even starting some of the songs with long unaccompanied passages. The group performs eight mostly well-known standards, beginning with an uptempo rendition of "Everything I Love" and a sensitive interpretation of "I Fall in Love Too Easily". "Straight No Chaser" and "All of You" find the trio stretching out at a swinging pace with Jarrett avoiding the predictable and creating a nonstop flurry of ideas. The other selections include an affectionate rendition of "Someday My Prince Will Come", an extensive nearly 13-minute treatment of the title track (composed by Nat Adderley), which includes a long

closing vamp, as well as "Golden Earrings" and "How Long Has This Been Going On".

Keith Jarrett and his Standards Trio recorded at least 20 albums during 1983-2003, plus a final release (*Somewhere*) in 2009. Listeners who enjoy the music of that classic group will certainly find *The Old Country* to be well worth their time, particularly since none of the three musicians can be heard live anymore. Both the bassist and drummer have since passed on (Peacock in 2020 and Motian in 2011) and Jarrett (who turns 80 this month) no longer performs, after suffering multiple strokes in 2018.

For more info visit ecmrecords.com

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