



HUESO (Food)
For These Streets (Out Of Your Head)
Adam O'Farrill
by Jeff Cebulski

With his eloquent, piquant tone and organic improvisation, trumpeter Adam O'Farrill is a musician one cannot ignore. As a leader and composer, he has carved his own path in the world of chamber jazz, creating modal and often abstract canvasses for his cosmopolitan themes informed by deep cultural investigation. O'Farrill's two latest releases testify to his artistic resolve.

Released late last year with his quartet Stranger Days, *HUESO* was motivated in part by a residency O'Farrill and the ensemble took at an organic farm in Maine to reinvigorate themselves. The refreshed participants gel as the leader and Xavier Del Castillo (tenor) establish a vigorous tag-team relationship, while Walter Stinson (bass) and the leader's brother Zack O'Farrill (drums) provide a percussive spine. They begin with a two-part interpretation of Nigel Godrich and Thom Yorke's "Truth Ray", where the trumpeter plays a solo coda before the quartet renders an elliptical tone poem that prances atop the song's chordal pattern. "Dodging Roses" has a bebop vibe, with a repeating sax riff that supports Stinson's energetic solo before the two horn players engage in duo antics, leading to an extended trumpet expression that exemplifies O'Farrill's

angular style. The title cut rides a faintly Latin rhythmic flow while the leader and Del Castillo mirror, separate, and return over Stinson's dark, dramatic phrases and the drummer's percolation.

O'Farrill's newest album, *For These Streets*, is a chamber short story collection, arranged and produced to signify an octet's individual performers as characters that communicate in tandem and in counterpoint as they build to resolution. Influenced by Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*, the composer dove deeply into the literary, theatrical and musical culture of the '30s and then applied his observations to music, exploring images and motifs that reflect conflicted feelings about Brooklyn, his home. Key to the album's efficacy are two central figures, Mary Halvorson (guitar) and Patricia Brennan (vibes), and the dynamic rhythm section of Tyrone Allen II (bass) and Tomas Fujiwara (drums). Besides O'Farrill, the horn section—including David Leon (alto, flute), Kevin Sun (tenor, clarinet) and Kalun Leung (trombone, euphonium)—is interspaced in the chromatic environment provided by Halvorson and Brennan. The guitarist's languid chords lead the opening song "Swimmers", in quick juxtaposition with talkative horn sequences bolstered by Stinson's insistent bass and Fujiwara's peripatetic drumming, while Brennan comps with bright flourishes. "Nocturno, 1932" paints a more delicate, moody picture that is revved up in "Migration", with Leung's trombone heading the horn quartet, creating an image of a city in transition. The vibraphonist's solo, neatly paired with the rhythm section, fits and spurts while Halvorson drops in deft conversational notes. "And So On" amps up the drama, with the trumpeter's squawking horn pitted against Brennan's placid phrases before a prolonged abstract section that suggests a social dissonance.

HUESO and *For These Streets* are energized by Adam

O'Farrill's constant inquisitiveness, serious concern for life quality and knack for expressive chamber arrangements that provide thoughtful postmodern contexts for the serious listener.

For more info visit foodmusic.co.uk, outofyourheadrecords.com. O'Farrill is at Close Up May 4. See Calendar.



What Happens Next
Ray Suhy/Lewis Porter Quartet (Sunnyside)
by Mike Shanley

On paper, this seems like a pairing that might never work: the guitarist for the death metal band Six Feet Under and a pianist-scholar who has written a biography of John Coltrane. But respectively, Ray Suhy and Lewis Porter crossed paths while playing with saxophonist Allen Lowe, who wouldn't hire a musician based on what the papers might say. Along with helping bring Lowe's signature work, *Blues Project*, to life, Suhy and Porter now have three albums together, which brings up their mutual compatibility.

Regardless of what he unleashes in his other band, Suhy favors a clean, crisp sound in this quartet, which is completed by Joris Teepe (bass) and Rudy Royston (drums). When the opportunity comes up for some

shredding, in the fleet "Saturn", for example, he thinks nothing of bending notes and yowling a bit. But he sounds just as comfortable playing in unison with the pianist in "A Hopeful Song", the latter a Porter tune with a funky theme that evokes the best qualities of pop jazz. Porter often comes off like the edgy yang to Suhy's lithe ying. "Volition" is fueled by turbulence in the rhythm section, with the bassist and drummer nearly dueling with Porter for the spotlight, which inspires some creative fire from the pianist. After the clean opening in "Four Worlds", he makes some dissonant staccato jaunts up the keyboard while Royston rolls behind him. The duo also digs into music history. "Brake's Sake" (one of Thelonious Monk's deep cuts) is a fun romp, especially when Teepe picks up on the buoyant feeling of the composer. "All the Things and Then Some" borrows the often-heard changes from Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein's "All the Things You Are" and proves these old standards still have life in them. "Ralos" presents a contrafact of the jazz standard "Solar", a piece usually attributed to Miles Davis (the composer, however, is guitarist Chuck Wayne), with Suhy unleashing a haunting, echoey guitar sound that eventually climaxes with some fast picking.

What Happens Next proves to be an appropriate title. Even in a rather straightforward setting, Suhy and Porter come up with ideas that can't be accurately predicted.

For more info visit sunnysiderecords.com. Suhy and Porter are at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem May 8 (with Allen Lowe). See Calendar.



Jazz Fest
Peter Evans/Petter Eldh (More Is More)
by Stuart Broomer

Trumpeter Peter Evans and Swedish bassist Petter Eldh have played together for years, sharing a similarly mercurial creativity, pressing the limits of technique, technology and genre. Eldh is a virtuoso of sonic technology, notably adding a bizarre electronic dimension to the saxophone-heavy group Koma Saxo. The Bandcamp copywriter warns that *Jazz Fest* is "their most vulgar creation to date." The notes also inform that it was "produced...2023-2024 in Berlin," which might seem like a long time to produce six tracks totaling just 21 minutes of music, but this EP is no conventional recording.

The shifting group of musicians, from three to eight per track, includes Alice Teyssier (flutes, voice), Joel Ross (vibraphone) and Michael Shekwoaga Ode (drums), while saxophonists Immanuel Wilkins and Dave Liebman each appear twice. Others make single appearances. Individual musicians also play multiple instruments on a single piece. The title *Jazz Fest* is a playful descriptor as well as a key. While the music has the variety of a festival, its distinguishing feature is the level of processing involved. At times the music suggests the work of George Russell heard in the sonic equivalent of a funhouse mirror.

"Dirty Cop" presents the smallest "ensemble"—just Evans (flugelhorn, piccolo trumpet), Eldh (electric bass and production) and Wilkins (alto)—but it's a virtual *film noir* soundtrack. After a brief intro of street noise and a woman talking, the track has Evans soloing on piccolo trumpet over his own over-dubbed brass choir that reaches well into the trombone register. There's also some percussive sizzle under Wilkins' keening, lyrical solo before that "brass ensemble" joins

in. "Wave" includes eight people with Evans' doubling flugelhorn and piccolo trumpet plus Teyssier's flute, alto flute and voice, foregrounding the role of drummer Ode, here likely processed for sudden decelerations. The concluding "HIME" has a repeating pattern that sounds like doubled piccolo trumpet parts, just microscopically out of sync.

For sheer post-modernity, this album might be filed with Mostly Other People Do the Killing's *Blue*, that note-for-note remake of *Kind of Blue* with Evans in the role of Miles Davis.

For more info visit moreismorerecords.com. Evans is at Roulette May 2 (part of Long Play Festival), and at Close Up May 17. See Calendar.



At Club Danshaku NY
Ron McClure Trio (SteepleChase)
by Andrew Schinder

In 1993, veteran bassist Ron McClure teamed up with pianist Don Friedman (who would have turned 90 this month) and guitarist Vic Juris for a gig at Club Danshaku, formerly located on Manhattan's Upper East Side. All three players had been mainstays of the New York jazz scene (McClure still is, the other two have since passed away), if slightly unheralded across the greater musical ecosystem. Unbeknownst to the trio, McClure's wife, Michiyo Tanaka, secretly recorded the gig (she apparently made a habit of doing so at the numerous shows she attended). Following a fairly convoluted sequence of events, the tape was found over 30 years later in McClure's SOHO apartment during a much-needed paint job. The bassist, surprised at what was uncovered, soon took the tape to a sound engineer to try to make a commercial release out of it.

Reviewing the merits of *At Club Danshaku NY* as an album seems a bit inappropriate, as it was obviously never intended to be one: a tape recorder hidden in a handbag is a far cry from a modern recording studio. Thus, despite the best efforts of the sound engineer, the quality of the recording is fairly substandard (for example, background noise from attendees at the club is often heard). Nevertheless, it proves to be a vital artifact of the NYC jazz scene of the early '90s (Friedman was a roommate of legendary Bill Evans bassist Scott LaFaro, for instance). All three performers were and have moreso become important figures in the mix of 20th century jazz icons, but they had never played together as a trio before this gig, and yet they didn't need any time to develop chemistry with each other, as is evident in this striking live concert performance.

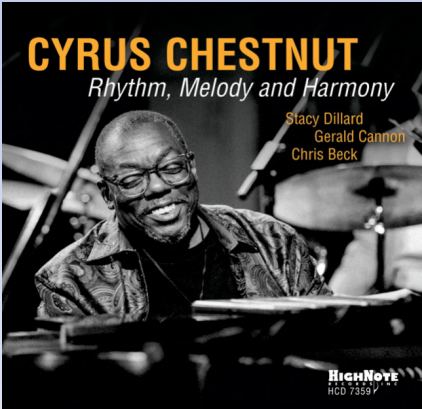
During the show, the trio mixed standards and originals. The Dave Brubeck classic "In Your Own Sweet Way" opens the set, with the musicians giving the ballad an uptempo interpretation. They give similar treatment to Rodgers and Hart's "My Romance" (famously covered by the Bill Evans Trio on *Waltz for Debby*), with Juris' guitar interpretation adding a new dimension to what is most typically a piece for piano trio. McClure's bass shines on the original "Golden Earrings", finding his way in between the piano and guitar masters.

Though two thirds of this trio have since passed, they have left behind a treasure. The jazz community is forever grateful that a SoHo apartment finally received its paint job.

For more info visit steeplechase.dk

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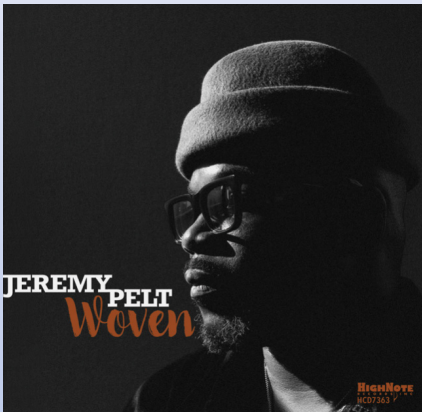
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