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Lady In Satin
Kandace Springs (SRP)
by Scott Yanow

During Feb. 19-21, 1958, Billie Holiday recorded *Lady In Satin*. The set of 11 ballads found her joined by a large string orchestra conducted and arranged by Ray Ellis rather than the usual all-star jazz combo. The conception was Lady Day's and, after it was released, she said that it was her personal favorite recording. It would be the next-to-last studio album that she made. While some listeners think of *Lady In Satin* as being a great recording with Holiday at her most expressive and vulnerable, others (including myself) find it difficult to get beyond the deterioration of her voice. Age 42 at the time, her singing could have passed for someone who was 72. While her rendition of "You've Changed" (which had entered her repertoire) is the highpoint, some of the other ballads (none of which she had previously recorded) are just not uplifted by her coarse voice and the unimaginative writing for strings, despite her emotional and often-touching singing.

Kandace Springs performs the 11 songs from the original *Lady In Satin* album with the 60-piece Orquestra Clássica de Espinho in Portugal. By contrast, 34 at the time of the Dec. 2023 recording, her voice is both youthful and mature. Springs has a soulful delivery that is quite attractive, and the large orchestra (unfortunately uncredited) has better, more effective, arrangements to work with than the group from the Holiday original. The singer, whose career thus far (this is her sixth album) has straddled the boundary between jazz and R&B, proves to be a sensitive ballad singer as shown on numbers such as "You Don't Know What Love Is", "But Beautiful", "It's Easy To Remember" and "Glad To Be Unhappy". And to her credit she does not attempt to sound like Holiday.

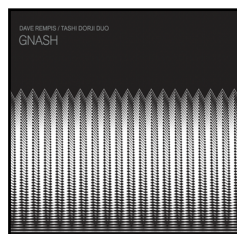
Since every song is taken at a slow pace, with Kandace Springs soaring over the lush orchestra, this *Lady In Satin* is recommended as much to middle-of-the-road pop listeners as it is to those who love superior vocal ballad sets.

For more info visit srpmusicgroup.com



Propulsion
Dave Rempis, Jason Adasiewicz, Joshua Abrams, Tyler Damon (Aerophonic)
Gnash
Dave Rempis/Tashi Dorji Duo (Aerophonic)
by Stuart Broomer

Since emerging in 1997 with the Ken Vandermark Five, Dave Rempis has steadily developed into one of the most expressive saxophonists in free jazz, whether contributing mightily to bands such as Ingebrigt Håker Flaten's Chicago Sextet, the collective supergroup From Wolves to Whales (with Nate Wooley, Pascal Niggenkemper and Chris Corsano), or leading his

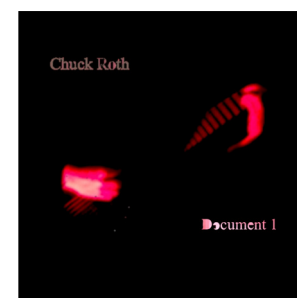


own bands. The two sessions here also emphasize his skills as a spontaneous composer, gathering musicians who together create substantial conceptual structures within their group improvisations. Though one might think of Rempis as a tenor saxophonist, he can sound at home with most of the saxophone family.

Propulsion's quartet line-up of Rempis (tenor, alto, baritone), Jason Adasiewicz (vibraphone), Joshua Abrams (bass) and Tyler Damon (drums) might impress before they are even heard, but there's a shock of the new from the opening "Divergence". Adasiewicz' shimmering, hovering tones add a special sense of suspension, contributing to an almost orchestral layering in which the saxophonist's forceful tenor playing stretches against the compound drone provided by the vibraphonist, Abrams' resonant bass and Damon's dense undercurrent of drums. As the longest piece of the three tracks, "Divergence" (over 26 minutes) has passages of sustained tenor oratory that can recall the late work of John Coltrane, a resemblance heightened by the sustained restraint of the band. "Egression" begins with four minutes of unaccompanied alto saxophone, building tension with passages of lyrical, liquid effusion and contrasting explosions, cascading runs punctuated by rasps, honks and plosives. The concluding "Ephemera" has Rempis adopting an almost solemn voice on baritone saxophone, beginning in an improvised trio with Abrams' intertwining arco bass and Adasiewicz' rapid abstractions. Another sustained collective work, it goes through various permutations, reducing to the vibraphonist, bassist and drummer before concluding as a delicate percussion duo of just vibraphone and drums.

While *Propulsion's* structures are subtle, those of *Gnash*, by the duo of Rempis and Bhutanese-born guitarist Tashi Dorji, are elemental, seeming both spontaneous and fore-ordained. The 20-minute "Orphic Hymn" begins with an electric guitar solo, modal and rhythmically driven, Dorji creating a forcefield of hanging, clanging, resonating fundamentals, like ear-bleed temple gongs announcing ceremonies of transformation. Entering after several minutes, Rempis develops the theme further, his volcanic tenor summoning the furies. "Ask for the Impossible" takes another extended path: Dorji emits a storm of electronic shards, smears and warbles as the saxophonist compiles withering, high speed-runs throughout the alto's registers. The two ultimately find concurrence with rapid, repeating, intertwined scalar lines, eventually breaking down into a choir of flutters and suddenly variable reflective bits. The two musicians are so closely attuned that the result sounds more like one performer than a duo, the piece ultimately turning lyrical with Rempis soaring over repeated chordal passages. *Gnash* is music of galvanizing intensity.

For more info visit aerophonicrecords.com



Document 1
Chuck Roth (Relative Pitch)
by Elijah Shiffer

Guitarist Chuck Roth is a member of that seemingly ever-expanding faction of New York improvisers committed to pushing the boundaries of their instruments. On *Document 1*, his debut solo recording,