

equivalent of drum top tap dancing, plus Costa's reed motifs, including upwards smears, seemingly endless linear vibrations and harsh tongue stops. Still, the concluding "Words of Freedom" stands out even more because of Parker's instrumental adaptability. Backed by the snaps, crackles and pops from the drummer, the saxophonist and Parker, playing bamboo flute or shakuhachi, create a closely-breathed wind duet where light slide-whistle-like peeps slither around ever tauter and heavier saxophone strains and cries. The contrapuntal result evolves perfectly in itself, until blending with Ernsting's measured clip clops.

Stentorian thumps mark the bassist's solid contributions throughout. Mostly concluding with horizontal reciprocity, the other pieces, especially the over 22½-minute title track, leave enough space for note-bending pitch expressions, undulating squeals, squawks and stutters. Even as the exposition gets speedier, torqued by angled spiccato bass lines and thick press rolls, string strums and cymbal dings join with toneless reed breaths to smear the extemporizations back to a thematic conclusion. Parker's myriad commitments probably preclude extensive work in this trio. But on the evidence here, it's a configuration that deserves an encore.

For more info visit nobusinessrecords.com. Parker is at Roulette Jun. 2-5 and 7 (part of Vision Festival) and National Sawdust Jun. 18 (with Isaiah Barr). See Calendar.



This Time
Marty Ehrlich Trio Exaltation (Sunnyside)
by Thomas Conrad

Although Andrew Hill died in 2007, his spirit looms over this recording. The three players on *This Time* – Marty Ehrlich (alto, tenor), John Hébert (bass) and Nasheet Waits (drums) – were, for a while, half of one of Hill's epic sextets.

This Time comes out of an aesthetic environment that is the natural habitat of both Hill and Ehrlich. It is a domain on the near reaches of the avant garde, where asymmetrical beauty often takes you by surprise. Ehrlich once called Hill "a master of simple complexity." So is Ehrlich. On his new album, along with two Hill compositions, there are seven by Ehrlich. He is accomplished on many reed instruments, but here he stays with alto saxophone on eight of the nine tracks. In the wide open spaces of a saxophone trio, it is possible to fully experience (on this well-recorded album) the penetrating power of his alto sound, with its rich inner depths and its clean cutting edges. It is also possible to closely follow the meticulous process by which Ehrlich develops an improvisation. His sense of musical logic is not entirely radical, but it is his own.

Hébert and Waits step up to strongly fulfill their increased responsibilities in the saxophone trio format. The bassist's note choices are so precisely placed they seem destined. His interactions with Ehrlich are beyond calls-and-responses. Hébert's lines are further explanations of Ehrlich's thoughts. As for Waits, he is now so ubiquitous on the jazz scene that he is on the verge of becoming America's house drummer. His presence on this album is always provocative, sometimes overtly ("Variations on a Vamp"), sometimes subtly ("This Space, This Time"). Ehrlich's best tune is "Twelve for Black Arthur", a song in joyous praise of his forebear, Arthur Blythe. The album's high points are the two Hill pieces; Hébert and Waits

introduce "Dusk" as a brooding dark ceremony, then Ehrlich shatters the atmosphere with his cries. "Images of Time" is a dead-slow, rapt, haunting ballad, with a simple melody that evolves organically into complexity.

Marty Ehrlich has never quite become famous, even though, for approximately half a century, he has been making uncompromised, fiercely creative records like *This Time*.

For more info visit sunnysiderecords.com. The album release concert is at Soapbox Gallery Jun. 4. Ehrlich is also at Roulette Jun. 20 (with Air Legacy Trio). See Calendar.



3
Waclaw Zimpel/Saagara (Glitterbeat)
by Tom Greenland

In these times of encroaching artificial intelligence and deep fakery, humans are developing a complex love/hate relationship with machines. Are robots making our lives easier? Harder? Both? In the case of Saagara's (Sanskrit for "Ocean") third album, 3, released last October, the answers are "yes", "no" and "maybe." What began in 2012 as an all-acoustic, Shakti-inspired East-meets-West collaboration between Polish free jazz clarinetist Waclaw Zimpel and four South Indian Carnatic musicians – Mysore N. Karthik (violin), Giridhar Udupa (ghatam), Aggu Baba (khanjira), K Raja (thavil) – has steadily modernized and mechanized, Zimpel's role shifting more and more from player to producer.

The newest "member" of the band is a nifty invention by modular synthesist James Holden named "Humanizer," an entity capable of recreating those idiosyncrasies of micro-timing that invariably occur between error-prone humans performing music together in real time. The album, consisting of six nightclub-friendly dance/trance tracks, doesn't elicit the sterile, quantized perfection of a drum machine. Though the three drummers play live – Udupa on a clay pot, Baba on a small, jingle-less tambourine, Raja on a large barrel drum placed sideways in his lap – much of the music isn't live, but rather is formulated from bits and pieces of sampled drums, violin, bass clarinet, guitar, keyboard, voices and other sounds, all mixed by Zimpel into repeating and/or morphing sequences. The "live" quality of the album chiefly derives from Zimpel, Karthik and Udupa's improvised parts, particularly during Karthik's responsorial exchanges with Udupa, but even these live sounds are often filtered, not as up-front as they could be. On the other hand, thanks to Humanizer, Zimpel's densely layered loops are not as robotic as they could be, the machine reacting and adjusting to the drummers' minute timing shifts to maintain a strong "pocket" between the humans and itself. Almost all the tracks contain minor melodies over four-beat meters and droning pedal tones; only the first, "God of Bangalore", with its devilishly tricky cycle and counter-rhythms, showcases the South Indians' proficiency in Carnatic tala rhythms.

Thanks to Humanizer and Zimpel's various machinations, the musicians don't have to work as hard at groove-making as they otherwise might. Even better, their rhythmic "mistakes" can now be viewed as an asset, bringing a certain life, or humanness, to the music that no machine can match (yet).

For more info visit glitterbeat.com. Zimpel is at David Rubinstein Atrium Jun. 13-14 (part of Jazztopad Festival). See Calendar.

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