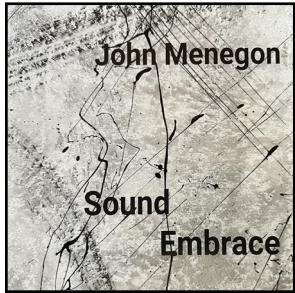


drum shuffles and situated keyboard comping are everywhere. Some pieces are freer still. Dramatic string scrapping on “Nature Morte”, for instance, underlines a blend of horn harmonies and piano intensity, while on “Timwork”, the slippery exposition is swiftly deconstructed with emphasis on harsh sputters and piccolo-elevated brass shakes, although swift reed flutters maintain the composition’s moderated pace. Still, the definition of how loose and open this session is compared to more formal Nabatov work is most apparent on “Old Fashioned”. Anything but what the title suggests, the extended piece gives every player solo space to express himself, revealing expanded techniques from brass note bending to reed flattement to ferocious string pumps, yet without the exposition deviating from focused linear motion and the basic melody.

Although some of the music is lovely by definition, there’s a lot more to this session. *Lovely Music* clearly underlines that the skills of the right creator can blend lyricism and invention to produce a program that can be as profound as the most carefully organized musical project without deviating too much from the jazz tradition.

For more info visit cleanfeed-records.com. Ralph Alessi is at The Jazz Gallery Jul. 11. See Calendar.



Sound Embrace
John Menegon (Valley Jazz)
by David Cristol

While New York visual artist and bass player John Menegon might not be a household name in the jazz world-at-large, he’s performed with many of the best, either regularly (e.g. saxophonists Dewey Redman and David “Fathead” Newman) or in one-off situations, mostly of the straight-ahead persuasion, but also including a stint with Anthony Braxton’s Tri-Centric Orchestra. A well-kept secret with spotless credentials, the bassist is currently working with Joe Lovano, with a recent gig in São Paulo, Brazil, and a planned September concert in Taiwan. And in the last year, Menegon has released two albums on his Valley Jazz imprint, including a vinyl reissue of the 1998 song-based *Misterioso* (featuring vocalist-wife Teri Roiger, guitarist Kenny Burrell and drummer Jack DeJohnette) as well as *Sound Embrace*, only the sixth album under his name since his 2003 leader debut (*Search Light*, which featured Redman, pianist Frank Kimbrough and Roiger).

Sound Embrace represents a collection of cunning original compositions by this tasteful and unshowy player. The *louche noir* feel and swing of opener “Hi Ho Silver”, a nod toward Horace Silver, works wonders pulling one into the music, while “The Light of Bley” refers to pianist Paul, whom Menegon met when he lived in Montreal in the late ’70s, and later played with. The Canadian connection continues, as the bassist’s quartet here features brothers Chet and Jim Doxas (tenor and drums respectively), plus their father George recorded the session at his Montréal studio. The highly dependable French virtuoso, pianist Jean-Michel Pilc rounds out the group, and each player demonstrates complete commitment and contributing inventions of their own on a variety of harmonic structures, melodic ideas, tempi and moods. The song titles often give a clue as to the underlying

concepts and effects sought, from “The New Old” to “Safe and Sound”. Solos are embedded in the compositions rather than superimposed, reinforcing the group consistency and overall flow, making for a constantly satisfying listen from beginning to end.

For more info visit valleyjazzrecords.com. Menegon is at Flute Bar Jul. 10, 16 and 30, and Lydia’s Cafe Jul. 19 (all with Teri Roiger). See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



Riofonic
Malfalda Minnozzi (MPI)
by Marilyn Lester

Italy-born vocalist-guitarist Malfalda Minnozzi took a trip to Brazil some many years ago and decided to stay. With a national soundtrack of the upbeat rhythms of samba and bossa nova, Brazil does emit a siren’s call. *Riofonic*, Minnozzi’s fourth outing for the US market is reliably, danceably samba happy in 14 tracks of popular bossa tunes and originals, mostly sung in excellent Portuguese and featuring a collection of notable Brazilian music luminaries, especially virtuosic guitarists (the backbone of bossa nova). Foremost of these all-stars is guitarist-vocalist-composer Roberto Menescal, now 87, who was at the forefront of the bossa movement in the late ’50s. His 1961 classic, “O Barquinho (Little Boat)” (with lyricist Ronaldo Bôscoli) is given a sweet duet here, with the master’s voice still youthful. Minnozzi, with a light soprano, has certifiably embedded herself in the bossa-samba ethos harkening back to golden age singers such as Gal Costa, Elis Regina, Astrud Gilberto, and more recently, step-daughter Bebel Gilberto.

Could there be such an album as *Riofonic* without the magic team of Tom Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes? Four gems represent, with a notable rendition of “Garota De Ipanema (The Girl from Ipanema)”, the 1964 hit that introduced America to a bossa nova craze via Stan Getz and Astrud Gilberto. Emulating that release, Marcelo Martins takes the featured Getz role, while Minnozzi contributes basic vocals. Also outstanding are “Corcovado”, with a new arrangement by Menescal; “Só Danço Samba (I Only Dance Samba)”, conceived by Menescal with a funky groove and handclaps; and album closer “Água De Beber (Water to Drink)” arranged by guitarist (and album producer) Paul Ricci, showcasing Minnozzi’s skills at percussive vocal interpretation and soft scat. Also important to foundational bossa was guitarist-composer Luiz Bonfá, who with Eumir Deodato wrote the title song “The Gentle Rain (Chuva Delicada)” for the 1965 film. Minnozzi sings the ballad in delightfully accented English, lushly accompanied by cello virtuoso Jaques Morelenbaum. Two originals from Minnozzi and Ricci are “Café South American Style” and the autobiographical “Postcard from Rio”, sung in English and featuring horns; both add a dollop of contemporary swing to the bossa foundation. There’s also a nod to Minnozzi’s homeland via Domenico Modugno’s “Tu Si ‘Na Cosa Grande (You Are Something Grand)”, delivered in Neapolitan dialect.

For anyone who loves samba-bossa nova, or who just wants to get happy, *Riofonic* is for you.

For more info visit mafaldaminnozzi.com. Minnozzi is at Jazz Forum Jul. 6, Bronx Music Hall Jul. 10 and Nublu Jul. 11. See 100 Miles Out and Calendar.

GLOBE UNITY



I Am Doing My Best
Curtis Nowosad (La Reserve)
Forever Stories of: Moving Parties
Peggy Lee & Cole Schmidt (Earshift Music)
The Slow Road
Triology (Cellar Music)
by Daniel A. Brown

Canada Day (Jul. 1) marks the milestone of that nation’s confederation and sovereignty. In that spirit, this month we explore three releases from Canadian jazz artists. From the halcyon days of bebop and modern-modal jazz to developments in fusion and improv-electronic music, our northern musical family remains a worthy ally, and jazz ally with recent albums—by Curtis Nowosad, Peggy Lee with Cole Schmidt, and Triology—maintaining that momentum.

The latest from Winnipeg-born (and longtime NYC resident) drummer-composer-bandleader Curtis Nowosad is an eight-song collection inspired by healing, parenthood and self-compassion. Heady stuff, and Nowosad and band—Joey Landreth (guitar, vocals), Andrew Renfroe (guitar), Luke Sellick (bass) and Joanna Majoko (vocals)—rise for the occasion. “We Do We”, “Mythologies (The Stories We Tell)” and “Echo Delta” all highlight the interplay between Renfroe and Nowosad; the former two evoking gritty-leaning John Scofield and Pat Metheny; while “Echo...” is a moody, postmodernist extension of John Coltrane’s “Equinox” and Sonny Sharrock’s “Many Mansions”. The lilting swing of “Carry You Home” features a duet between Landreth and Majoko, an assuring vibe punctuated by the former’s ethereal guitar.

Forever Stories of: Moving Parties is a years-long culmination between Canadian-based musicians Peggy Lee (cello) and Cole Schmidt (guitar) and a roster of 13 musicians, including Erika Angell (voice, electronics), Wayne Horvitz (piano, organ, Wurlitzer, electronics), Sunny Kim (voice, electronics) and Frank Rosaly (electronics). Over the course of the album’s 14 tracks, the assembled players deeply explore the combination of composed and purely improvised music. The pointillism of “Blame” is opened wide by the arrival of trumpeter JP Carter. “It Will Come Back” offers sweeping strings, electronic gurgles and Horvitz’ keyboard swirls underpinning Kim’s whispered recitation, while the molten “Gloop” raises the heat with metallic-gospel swagger. In total, this album is a welcome free-music addition from an ensemble of impressive players.

Formed in 2008, and taking their inspiration from the protean jazz trios of Nat King Cole and fellow Canadian Oscar Peterson, the drummerless group Triology—Miles Black (piano), Bill Coon (guitar), Jodi Proznick (bass)—is joined by Scott Hamilton (tenor) on a nine-song set, *The Slow Road*. The opening waltz of “Luna” sets the scene: a well-lit rhythmic stroll featuring a melodic dialogue between the saxophonist and guitarist, followed by tasty piano and bass solos. The music of the jazz elders is well represented. Charlie Parker’s “Moose the Mooche” receives a staccato-driven treatment; Randy Weston is highlighted with a truly swinging version of his “Hi-Fly”. The group also digs deep into Jimmy Van Heusen’s “I Thought About You”. The session’s straight-ahead vibe doesn’t unearth any new ground but is still a worthy upgrade of the *terra firma* of traditional jazz fare.

For more info visit lareserverecords.com, earshift.com and cellarlive.com. Nowosad’s album release concert is at Smalls Jul. 31. See Calendar.