



The Order
Silt Remembrance Ensemble (Cuneiform)
Assassinations (for free-jazz quintet)
Luke Stewart (Catalytic Artist)
 by Sophia Valera Heinecke

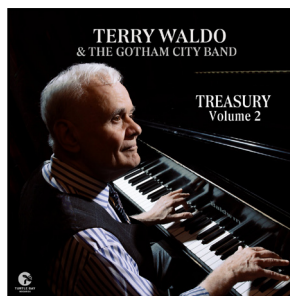
Bassist Luke Stewart—whose C.V. ranges from Irreversible Entanglements (with the late trumpeter Jaimie Branch) and Heroes Are Gang Leaders (with tenor saxophonist James Brandon Lewis), to drummer William Hooker and currently saxophonist David Murray's quartet—is also an estimable leader in his own right, as these two releases reveal.

Nominally led by Stewart, *The Order*, by the Silt Remembrance Ensemble, brings together players from his Remembrance Quintet and Silt Trio, creating continuity with figments and fragments of collective imagination. How the album came to pass was happenstance of place and time, an opportunity seized. The sound interrogates free jazz against liberty, seeming to, as stated by poet No Land on the opening track, “see through matter into the core, molten experience.” We hear it on “River Road” as layering, building, fading with stand-out percussion from Chad Taylor, and from a haunting lead in on “Survive”, invigorated by Jamal Moore on reeds, sustained by the ebb and flow of the bassist. It isn't a live album, but an intentional sequencing of music was arranged in post-production by Stewart to create a new narrative. There is a steadfast

building of energy throughout, something so deep you can't touch the bottom. Many moments let us swim in something visceral. “Commandments” moves the body first to move the heart, inviting listeners to dance, quake, to be involved. On “Lions Den”, the interplay between volume and tone creates an internal to external conversation that evokes looking inside oneself for the past, asking “what do you have to offer?” and “what do you bring to collective action?” as well as “can what you bring adapt to meet the needs of the present flow?”

Individual power is multiplied by collectives. *The Order* is expertly in conversation with *Assassinations (for free jazz quintet)*, a live recording centering the words of essential figures in the global struggle for Black liberation, including contributed poetry by Stewart's contemporary and Irreversible Entanglements bandmate, Camae Ayewa (better known as Moor Mother). *Assassinations* was released to raise funds for the Jericho Movement, an organization amplifying the stories and struggles of political prisoners and POWs inside the US. “What kind of elder would you like to be?” Stewart asks, setting up the delivery of sonic homages for Patrice Lumumba, Malcolm X and Steve Biko. The Malcolm tribute includes electronics from Aquiles Navarro, exemplifying the future that these figures spoke of is now, not speculative. “The aspirations of colonized people everywhere are the same,” Stewart's voice reminds us, quoting Lumumba in the first piece. Throughout the album, instrumental breaks descend into rightful disarray and reorganize around vital texts in each unique movement. “We shall ensure for everyone a station in life befitting human dignity, worthy of his labor...” Janice Lowe's narration echoes Stewart's “worthy,” speaking Biko's words. In the lament of Keir Neuringer's saxophone playing and in the group tapestry of sound woven altogether, Stewart actualizes what Biko understood to be “envisioned self,” focusing towards self-determination, presenting a genuine stylistic fusion from the players invited to perform. The grief that accompanies the brutal theft of these assassinated leaders is palpable. Still, the album is not just an effort in remembering. *Assassinations* is a determined activation to take to heart, full of feeling to recognize the privilege of being alive without forgetting death.

For more info visit cuneiformrecords.com and catalyticsound.com. Stewart is at Owl Music Parlor Sep. 21 (with History Dog) and The Jazz Gallery Sep. 25 (with Yuhuan Su). See Calendar.



Treasury, Volume 2
Terry Waldo & The Gotham City Band (Turtle Bay)
 by Marilyn Lester

Terry Waldo, pianist-composer and historian of early American music, has enough credits to his name to fill many treasury volumes; but this series plans only three. *Treasury, Volume 2* offers 11 tracks of prime ragtime, with The Gotham City Band, which Waldo has been fronting since 1984. Thirteen of his band's regulars appear here, many of whom also sing (as does Waldo), plus two additional guest vocalists.

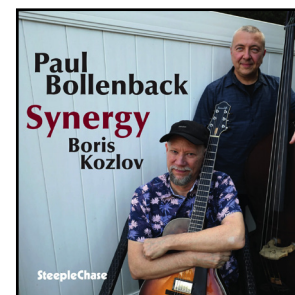
This second volume's bounty, taken from sessions recorded in 2018 and 2022, opens with the power of “Guess Who's in Town” (J. C. Johnson) with vocalist extraordinaire, Veronica Swift, who began her career as a precocious young jazzier and then expanded into a

fusion of rock and modern genres. Her adaptability is front and center on this raggy swinger, as she perfectly replicates the style of 1920s singers. A specialist in classic big band song, vocalist Molly Ryan delivers the happy-making “Get Out and Get Under the Moon” (William Jerome, Larru Shav, Charles Tobias). Her clear, light, girlish tone is uniquely suited to this style of music, creating a transportive effect to the collective of “girl singers” famous back in the day.

For a sampling of Waldo's vocal ability, there's “Smiles” (J. Will Callahan, Lee S. Roberts), opening with his easy pianism and crooning scat, leading into a sharp trumpet solo by Mike Davis before returning to a sweet harmony duet with Arnt Arntzen (vocals, guitar, banjo) taking the top voice in a mildly grainy, yet charming delivery. Others in the unit who sing are fellow banjoist Jerron Paxton, Jim Fryer (trombone) and Brian Nalepka (bass). They can be heard respectively, on the barrelhouse “Wabash Blues” (Fred Meinken, Dave Ringle) and the wildly uptempo “Since My Best Gal Turned Me Down” (Ray Ludwig, Howdy Quicksell); full-bore, hot closer “Viper Mad” (Sidney Bechet, Rousseau Simmons) and the classically raggy “Sweet Sue” (Victor Young, Will J. Harris). Waldo, Paxton and Nalepka make a fine trio on the terrific banjo feature, “The Smiler” (Percu Wenrich).

The leader's piano playing is effectively and wisely presented throughout, but he's also generous in features for his crackerjack sidemen, who also include Colin Hancock (trumpet), Ricky Alexander (clarinet, alto), Evan Arntzen (clarinet), Dan Levinson (tenor), Jay Rattman (bass saxophone), Nick Russo (banjo), Jay Lepley (drums) and Mike Lipskin (piano).

For more info visit turtlebayrecords.com. Waldo is at Arthur's Tavern Thursdays. See Calendar.



Synergy
Paul Bollenback/Boris Kozlov (SteepleChase)
 by Tom Greenland

Synergy, guitarist Paul Bollenback's tenth release as leader/co-leader (this his first on SteepleChase), arrives over a decade after his last album, *Portraits in Space and Time* (Mayimba Music, 2014). Known for his 20-year stint in the late organist Joey DeFrancesco's trio, this pared down duo setting with Russian-American bassist Boris Kozlov brings the guitarist's comprehensive skill set into sharp focus: ten tunes are his, while two are covers.

The sound of a clean-toned guitar and acoustic bass stretched over the length of an album risks monotony: both instruments are limited in their ability to produce dramatic dynamic contrasts. But Bollenback and Kozlov keep things exciting with constantly changing tones and textures. The mood is mostly relaxed, even when the proceedings get complicated, as on “Confrontation”, where the abstract, key-shifting melody is doubled, or on “G Blues in Bb”, an odd 14-bar form with a strange extended turnaround and short, traded solos played in double-time. Bollenback's unfiltered electric guitar tone reveals every nuance of his touch, while his sundry techniques—rapid legato phrases, double-stop passages, swept arpeggios, chord melodies, filled octaves, popped harmonics, bluesy riffs, cross rhythms—add variety.

On tunes such as “Lope”, “After-Thaw-T”, Ellington's “In a Sentimental Mood” and Johnny

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