

anthemic, starting with leisurely piano and saxophone before Scales joins in halfway. Almost immediately, she begins adapting the sturdy melody, bringing it back to its R&B roots that's inspired so much reggae. The album ends with two strong originals by Scales, including the affecting "Find a Way" and "Saving Grace", the former on which her voice is a deep-soul marvel, pairing exquisitely with Curtis' bass commentary and Flanagan's slow, mellow playing.

For more info visit truthrevolutionrecords.com. The album release concert is at 54Below Sep. 11. See Calendar.



Ghazi & Boom.Diwan X Arturo O'Farrill Live in the Khaleej!
Ghazi Al-Mulaifi and Arturo O'Farrill (s/r)
by Franz Matzner

Ghazi & Boom.Diwan X Arturo O'Farrill Live in the Khaleej! is a marriage between ethnomusicology and sonic exploration, which piques curiosity and pleases the ear. Whereas context is at times a welcome additive to any artistic endeavor, it is an essential ingredient to fully appreciate this album. One pillar of the album is pearl diving music, the Kuwaiti traditional folk music that accompanied that activity, a tradition practiced for centuries until it was banned after the discovery of oil. Guitarist, bandleader and researcher Ghazi Al-Mulaifi's grandfather was one of the last pearl diving masters, and this provided the musician motivation to bring the distinct polyrhythms of this traditional sea music, along with its cultural syncretism and call-response structures, to life. The album's second pillar is GRAMMY-winning pianist, bandleader and innovator Arturo O'Farrill's exploration of the bonds between Afro-Cuban and Arab music. This exploration reverberates with its own rich, rhythmic and distinctive complexity that blends throughout the release. The final product is not a literal representation of either tradition. It is a true fusion of elements that bridge time, culture and musical contexts to form a distinct modern jazz union shaped by two master musicians and their adept colleagues.

"Muneera" plunges immediately into overlapping rhythms and intense exchanges between Al-Mulaifi's electric guitar and O'Farrill's piano, while the accompanying musicians provide alluring density, particularly the bass clarinet's distinct richness. Then the airy "Ana Mashoof" departs in the other direction. Slow-paced and brimming with nostalgia, Al-Mulaifi accompanies his vocals on the tune with blues-tinged guitar notes. Here we also witness Mateo's deft bass playing and Jasper Shogo Dutz' clarinet mastery as the musicians shape a musical narrative. The remainder of the tunes project a similarly broad range of textures, exposing listeners to complex and unusual rhythms, such as the Khaleeji rhumba. Another notable feature of the album is its variety of percussive instruments, each drawn from Afro-Cuban, Latin and Arabic heritages.

In sum, *Ghazi & Boom.Diwan X Arturo O'Farrill Live in the Khaleej!* is a life-affirming, mesmerizing example of pan-culturism that revels in music's intertwined histories and pliable capacity for ceaseless evolution.

For more info visit boomdiwan.com. Arturo O'Farrill is at *Birdland Sundays* (with Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra) and *The Cutting Room* Sep. 5 (with MFM Unity Ensemble). See Calendar.



Hyperglyph
Chicago Underground Duo (International Anthem)
Milan
Rob Mazurek (Clean Feed)
Color Systems
Rob Mazurek Quartet (RogueArt)
by Patrick Romanowski

Composer, trumpeter, synthesist, painter and poet Rob Mazurek is one of the most distinct and indefatigable artists working in contemporary music. His prolific and far-reaching creative output as both a soloist and collaborator in myriad groups spans the course of the past 30 years from Chicago to Brazil to his current home base in Marfa, TX. Mazurek has had a hand in numerous ensembles, including his long-running collaboration with Chad Taylor in the Chicago Underground Duo, as well as the more outwardly expansive Exploding Star Orchestra. These groups are just a few of the vehicles in which he continues to operate, distilling his multidisciplinary "abstractivist" approach. While maintaining deep ties to the underground network of inveterate players in Chicago's avant garde, Mazurek consistently incorporates a new generation of younger musicians into the mix. Taken together, these three recent releases are exemplary of this multifaceted and collaborative quality in his work.

Marking the Chicago Underground Duo's first release in 11 years, *Hyperglyph* is an absolute killer. Mazurek handles trumpet, piccolo trumpet, RMI electric piano, synths, voice, flute and bells, along with a few spoken word passages, to an igniting, vivid effect. The compositions have an ultra-radiant sound, as transcendent moments of hard, bright rhythm strike out the path, and zone in and out of a panoply of electro-acoustic soundscapes. The opening single, "Click Song" rallies the vibe—a cavorting, ecstatic horn chant embedded in a swarm of polyrhythms, heralding a kind of electrified Les Baxter port of call for the future. Taylor's work on drums, mbira and kalimba is phenomenal. The title track is outstanding, with its ferocious rhythmic core pulsing throughout the foreground of the album. On every track a series of hypnotic and infectious grooves blend seamlessly into the lively holographic dimensions of the production and make for totally absorbing listening. "Contents of Your Heavenly Body" is tagged with a few spoken word passages by Mazurek through the sieve of a compressed mic. His voice has a kind of Captain Beefheart-flavored vamp of atomic punctuation delivered with a cool undercurrent reminiscent of a telegraphic William S. Burroughs dispatch from Tangiers. "Towards oblivion, unrelenting, screaming, furious," it works amazingly well. Coupled with the supportive engineering genius of the International Anthem label's Dave Vitano, the album is profoundly fresh from start to finish.

Milan is an excellent solo date from a live 2023 radio broadcast recorded at Radio Popolare (in Milan, Italy) for the Italian radio program, *Jazz Anthology*. The album consists of eight original compositions on which Mazurek dexterously toggles between trumpet, piccolo trumpet, prepared piano, sampler, bells, shakers, flute, vocals and an arsenal of other percussion instruments. A powerful and haunting live solo performance, he exerts a singular improvisational prowess upon the materials at hand, firing on all textural cylinders. Tracks such as "Magic Yellow Bucket", "Bar Basso" and "Moss Covered Hips" flow between a few prevailing dramatic modes and descend into lower registers with a series of suspenseful piano and trumpet explorations. A basin of spontaneous and shambolic passages pepper the decisive moments with rustic fits of jangling spiritual elements.

The Rob Mazurek Quartet's *Color Systems* features Mazurek (trumpet, piccolo trumpet, bells, electronics) with Angelica Sanchez (piano), Tomeka Reid (cello) and Chad Taylor (drums). The album is a series of expansive compositions and improvisational ensemble suites based on Mazurek's own watercolors, which he dedicated to

other visual artists, and which in turn were issued to the quartet to serve as a springboard for the creation of the music. "For Page Color System for Louise Nevelson" opens with a steely, desolate vibe. Sanchez enters with a stark dash of chords, while the leader beckons the group in with a series of muted, textured trumpet trills. Lucid forms begin to emerge as the ensemble journeys from darkness to light. Reid's playing is remarkable throughout, establishing a grounding and intense undercurrent. Taylor trades intuitively between mallets, brushes and sticks, building the aesthetic momentum and rising to the surface to lock in with Mazurek at decisive rhythmic pivots. "Nineteen Colors on a Three-Sided Box for Nuno Ramos" is a harrowing exploration of tone shifts, navigated with a spry spiritual essence. The group steers into some sharp, stunning, animated moments. Overall, the album concept is fascinating and the music wonderfully articulated within the intimate framework of each piece; melded together with a warm and rich production, the acoustic interplay between the musicians is delicately attuned and absolutely superb.

For more info visit intlanthem.com, cleanfeed-records.com and roguart.com. The Chicago Underground album release concert is at Public Records Sep. 13 and Solar Myth (Philadelphia, PA) Sep. 14. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



A Little Taste: A Tribute to Dave Frishberg
Rebecca Kilgore (Cherry Pie Music)
by Scott Yanow

West Coast-based Rebecca Kilgore (who turns 76 this month) has been a top swing singer ever since she made her 1981 recording debut. Her appealing voice (slightly reminiscent of Doris Day), perfect placement of notes for maximum swinging, impeccable articulation and full knowledge of the lyrics that she interprets, have always made her a major attraction at classic jazz festivals. Unfortunately, serious health problems now have forced her into permanent retirement. Yet, her collaborations with trombonist Dan Barrett and guitarist-singer Eddie Erickson (as the group BED) are well remembered. *A Little Taste*, a tribute to her long-time friend and occasional duet partner, pianist-composer Dave Frishberg (who passed away in 2021), is officially her final release in a long string of rewarding recordings.

For this special project, Kilgore is accompanied by Randy Porter (piano), Tom Wakeling (bass) and Todd Strait (drums), with Barrett (trombone) guesting on three selections. Tim Jensen (flute, piccolo) and John Moak (trombone) help out on two songs apiece, along with a string quartet added on five selections, plus Kilgore's husband, Dick Titterington (trumpet), who contributed the arrangements and appears on six tunes. The singer, still then in prime form, is heard throughout. She performs three songs on which Frishberg wrote both the music and the lyrics, six pieces on which he supplied the words to instrumentals by Johnny Hodges, Johnny Mandel, Alan Broadbent and Barrett, and two numbers ("Telephone Song" and "Ah, So Pure", better known as "Martha") that he enjoyed performing. Frishberg's lyrics, which were often witty and insightful, tended to be nostalgic for '50s New York, and the swing style heard throughout this set perfectly fits the atmosphere that his words created. Among the highlights are "A Little Taste", "Little Did I Dream", "Heart's Desire", "Brenda Starr" and "Ah, So Pure".

Rebecca Kilgore never made an unworthy recording and her final statement, *A Little Taste*, is up to her usual level of swinging artistry.

For more info visit cherrypiemusic.com