

CLUB ROOM

Located in the Iconic
SOHO GRAND HOTEL

Cocktails & Live Music
WED thru SAT

Doors Open at 6:00pm
Sets at 7:30pm & 9:00pm



**OCTOBER
PERFORMANCES BY**

TYREEK MCDOLE

WAYNE
TUCKER

LEAH
RICH

N'KENGE

Madeline
Dalton

ANITA
DONNDORFF

There is a \$25 cover charge on Wednesday & Thursday
and a \$35 cover charge on Friday & Saturday.



For Reservations, Menu &
Show Details, Visit:

CLUBROOMNYC.COM

310 West Broadway, SOHO—NYC



Transition[s]

Phil Haynes/Ben Monder (Corner Store Jazz)
by Ken Waxman

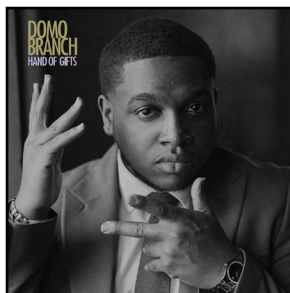
At first glance *Transition[s]* may seem like a strange duo session by veteran improvisers from dissimilar sectors of the jazz world. But this is actually a long-anticipated reunion between drummer-percussionist Phil Haynes and guitarist Ben Monder, who a quarter century ago frequently played together. One thorny touchstone was John Coltrane's "Transition" (hence the title), though that tune isn't included here. Monder, known for his work with The Bad Plus, Theo Bleckmann and even David Bowie, comfortably fits into all-extemporized contexts. Meanwhile Haynes, whose experience encompasses recordings with Paul Smoker, Herb Robertson and many others, is equally at home on these 13 selections, part of an ongoing series of albums from the drummer on the Corner Store Jazz label.

Dual excitement is conspicuous on the tune "Untitled Ones" where the guitarist manages to both exhibit his usual lyricism as well as jarring squeaky stops and shaking whines that intersect with the drummer's near-reed tone-like scratch across a cymbal. Similarly the title tune is a speedy excursion where Monder's perfectly-shaped fuzztones attain a pseudo-grunge flange at the same time Haynes outputs a near-perfect hard bop beat.

More outré impulses are given a workout by Haynes on tracks such as "Openings" and "Beyond". Slippery and menacing themes highlighting the percussionist's bell tree shakes, wood pops and lug-loosening stops move his partner's flat-line expositions to blurred fingering and throbbing amp echoes. Monder's expected melodic side is given a workout on "Too Easily", a contrafact of "I Fall in Love Too Easily". But even here the gentling exposition includes tougher strums that would be avoided in a conventional version.

It would seem that a 25-year hiatus hasn't lessened the skills or unity between these players. And they amply display both here. If any criticism exists it's that a few solo forays by Haynes are so brief that they finish before proper elaboration. Perhaps that could be rectified in a subsequent reunion.

For more info visit cornerstorejazz.com. Monder is at Smalls Oct. 9 (with Jerome Sabbagh) and Close Up Oct. 10 (with Tony Malaby). See Calendar.



Hand of Gifts

Domo Branch (Albina Music Trust)
by Terrell K. Holmes

Hand of Gifts, the new album by drummer Domo Branch, epitomizes straight-ahead jazz at its best. Branch, with Abdias Armenteros (saxophones), Tyler Henderson (piano) and Russell Hall (bass), shows off a mastery of various styles within the jazz idiom, playing

with both sophistication and soul.

"Harlem Nights" suitably sets the tone for the album, with its vigorous Latin beat that puts it in El Barrio as much as Sugar Hill. Armenteros' spirited soprano playing ignites the tune, followed by Henderson's sparkling, harmonically deft solo, while Branch's fierce polyrhythms stoke the fire. On "Our Man Bogle" (a slick blues in the style of John Coltrane's "Mr. Syms"), Armenteros whips off frenetic clusters of notes on soprano, playing with complexity as well as passion, spiraling, ascending, descending, going off mic, shrieking, then coming to rest. The band visits the archives of the Lee Morgan library for "Big Moves", a head-bobbing boogaloo. With Armenteros' pitch-perfect tenor in the lead, everyone eases back and lets the funky groove take the wheel. The saxophonist's reflective tenor work, with Hall's melancholy pizzicato and Branch's dramatic use of cymbals and mallets, highlights the rainy day ballad "A Letter to Peanut". Everyone swings as if their lives are at stake on the hard-bop archetype title track, from Henderson, who builds on clever avian triads during his fiery solo to Branch's thrashing, which threatens to burst speakers. The style and tone of Armenteros' barrel-chested tenor brings Dexter Gordon to mind. He doesn't insert quotes during solos but there's a winking playfulness in his repeated figures.

The leader shows off his formidable drumming skills on the brief but robust "Drum Solo", bringing to mind the line from rapper Jay-Z's "Public Service Announcement": "Allow me to re-introduce myself...." The piano-less "Blues for the World" has a different kind of classic feeling. Studio chatter is left in at the beginning, along with a false start and some quick warmup notes (think *Relaxin' with the Miles Davis Quintet*). The music that follows sounds improvised, and the banter and laughter continues during the tune. Perhaps that was Branch's intention all along, to underscore the album's reverential embrace of classic jazz tropes. In any case, the band is having fun making great music. The muscular waltz "A Memory" closes the album, propelled by Branch's thundering drums, Armenteros' colorful soprano performance, Hall's forceful pizzicato and Henderson's embroidery.

Hand of Gifts places Domo Branch and his exceptional quartet among the best ensembles on today's jazz scene.

For more info visit albinamusictrust.com. The album release concert is at Close Up Oct. 30. See Calendar.



Live-Action

Nate Smith (Waterbaby Music-naïve)
by Tom Greenland

On *Live-Action*, drummer-composer-producer Nate Smith continues his quest for a signature sound, drawing on pop, hip-hop, neo-soul, funk and jazz. It's an anthology album, each of the ten tracks having a different roster of musicians, each with a slightly different stylistic thrust. The overall sound is unified by Smith's keyboard-based backdrops, combining synths and electric piano to provide the basslines and somewhat unusual harmonic progressions of his pieces. Another unifying factor is his powerful rhythmic pocket, an approach stemming from J Dilla's non-quantized drum machine-produced studio beats as interpreted by live human drummers. Like