

The closing track, “Band Width 8”, extends the process to include a third musician, Vladimir Tarasov, the legendary Russian (Lithuania-based) drummer of the Ganelin Trio and a member of the Jones Jones trio with Dresser and ROVA saxophonist Larry Ochs. He’s making his contribution here from Lithuania, still further from Australia. The collective detailing and shared interaction make up the ultimate testimony here to the possibilities of long-distance collective improvisation, all the way to the delicacy of the final moments, combining Rose’s high-pitched repeating fragment, Dresser’s light pizzicato and Tarasov’s subtle snare.

For more info visit relativepitchrecords.bandcamp.com. Dresser is at The Stone at The New School thru Nov. 1 and Fridman Gallery Nov. 21. See Calendar.



West of Broadway
Rachael & Vilray (Concord)
by Marilyn Lester

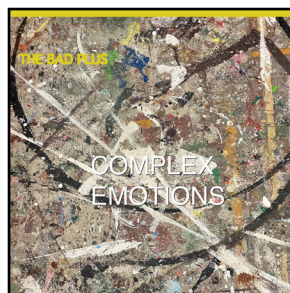
Think of the famed harmonious vocal duo of Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gormé, or Sonny & Cher, and you have the recent combo of Rachael Price and guitarist-vocalist-songwriter Vilray Bolles, whose third album, *West of Broadway*, is an homage inspired by Bolles’ recent fascination with classic musicals.

Brooklyn-based and performing together for a decade, the ten tracks (nine originals) are a fusion of West Coast jazz, vintage and Broadway musical styles with witty subject matter. Somewhat vocally idiosyncratic rather than mellifluous, smart arrangements and the backing band push the album into the range of thorough, smile-inducing enjoyability. Vibraphonist Warren Wolf makes significant contributions over the whole, especially on “My Key to Gramercy Park”, an easy swinging, vintage-style band ballad, one of the songs to showcase Bolles’ guitar playing. The wit here is about a coveted key-only allowed to the elite residents around tony Gramercy Park to admit themselves to the fenced, gated and locked patch of green.

Over all, in the way of ’30s/40s bands, vocals are often second to band features. The ensemble here is uniformly tight, with (in addition to Wolf and Bolles) Adam Dotson (trombone), Steve Wilson (alto, soprano), Jay Rattman (clarinet), Neal Miner (bass) and John Riley (drums). “Loves Comes Around”, with Price, offers another generous band spot, with Wolf again prominent as well as Wilson on soprano. But it’s the opener, “Forever Never Lasts”, that’s the full immersion into the duo’s musical compatibility and keen wit; it’s about their relationship—and the “F” word. In the realm of the exceedingly quirky, Price asks in track two, “Is It Jim?”, wherein she’s gone to bed with a human lover and wakes up with a tortoise beside her, hence the question. The listener can decide if Jim is a prankster, signaling a breakup or has been the victim of the whims of a mischievous classical Greek god, probably Hermes. Unexpected fun arrives with the double-entendre-titled “Off Broadway”, opened by a suave Bolles, and joined by two other voices in lovely harmony; but despite a deceptively jaunty, clarinet-heavy instrumental, the lyric is dark, if amusing, about fabled Broadway. That third voice: special guest, comedian/late-night TV host Stephen Colbert. Closer is a cover, a perfect

“Manhattan Serenade” (Harold Adamson, Louis Alter), capping an album well worth it for its wit, creativity and superb musicianship.

For more info visit concord.com. The album release concert is NJPAC (Newark, NJ) Nov. 16 and The Town Hall Nov. 18. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



Complex Emotions
The Bad Plus (Mack Avenue)
by Tom Greenland

Complex Emotions, the second release by the third incarnation of The Bad Plus, represents a consolidation of individual approaches. Founding members Reid Anderson (bass) and Dave King (drums) have been onboard since 1989, recording the group’s trio debut in 2001 with pianist Ethan Iverson, replacing Iverson with fellow pianist Orrin Evans in 2017, then replacing Evans with tenor saxophonist Chris Speed and guitarist Ben Monder in 2021. The quartet’s 2022 debut, *The Bad Plus*, introduced the new members and sound, subsequently honing this sound with eighteen months of intensive touring.

With *Complex Emotions*, the quartet’s sophomore release, the individuals have become a collective. Anderson and King’s link-up is still the heart of the band, working its magic, Reid a buoyant anchor for King’s gale-force blasts, together generating rhythmic waves that surge and swell. Speed and Monder have learned how to surf over these waves without losing balance, complicating the scene with mellow violence and subdued ecstasy. Many of the song themes on this all-original set are played in unison by saxophone and guitar, Speed’s smooth legato shaded with hoarse coughs and gritty buzzes seamlessly integrated with Monder’s diverse palette of guitar timbres, including glossy overdrive, chorused arpeggios, swelling echoes, half-bends and filtered attacks.

Often sounding like one thickened instrument, Speed and Monder’s empathetic unison readings of the various song melodies is one of the album’s chief delights. King’s “Casa Ben” is one of the prettiest of these themes, played in 6 at double-time tempo in descending sequences with yin-yang syncopations, leavened by a pastoral bridge, then an edgy vamp, the song’s harmonies easily shifting through cousin-key centers. Anderson pens four of the album’s eight tunes, all compelling: “Grid/Ocean”, which morphs from a spooky tango to punky bombast; “French Horns”, a marching metallic anthem in 3 showcasing Speed’s intelligent ecstasy and Monder’s Alan Holdsworth-ian sheets-of-notes; “Carrier”, a folksy ditty rumbled by King’s stumbling, J Dilla-esque syncopations; and the New Wave-y “Deep Water Sharks”, a forum for Speed’s in/out, smooth/rough tenor style, especially effective on the outro blowing section. Speed’s “Cupcakes One” also sounds a bit New Wave, like something Devo might have written, and features some of Monder’s shreddiest moves, while the guitarist’s “Li Po” morphs from threnodic tone poetry into a high-spirited hive of activity, rhythm section padding synth parts, everyone soloing, everything balanced.

For more info visit mackavenue.com. The Bad Plus is at The Jazz Loft (Stony Brook, NY) Nov. 7 and Solar Myth (Philadelphia, PA) Nov. 10. See 100 Miles Out.



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