

in any direction, depending on what instrumental tracks were dropped in. It could be updated British folk, Weimar post punk, or avant garde art song (cf. drummer Roger Turner's duo with Phil Minton, a singer Riemann has worked with in the past). Almost any direction, because there isn't much room for anything to be added. There's the occasional piano and some electronic augmentation, but the accompaniment is the drumming: not overdone, never overbearing, but present, filling the audio space. Riemann is an imaginative drummer, varying parts but keeping the pulse like a good rock bassist; there's generally an urgency, a dirge and drive.

Chloe Kim's *Ratsnake* is a different animal. Kim clearly thinks big and gives serious consideration to orchestrating on the kit. While the relative rawness of Riemann's record provides the needed immediacy, *Ratsnake* has a rich and wide audio picture, accentuating treatment of the drum set in different sections. Other treatments are few. The opening title track seems to be overlaid with bowed cymbals and gongs, although it could be just the sounds of demons and imps let loose in the studio (if it is played live, I would like to see her do it). The rest of the seven tracks are more straightforward. Momentary complexities suggest more layering, but Kim's technique shouldn't be underestimated. At the 2023 MONA FOMA festival in Tasmania, she played ten hours a day for ten days, alone. She's clearly got chops. While her music is hardly traditional, Kim's drums do often evoke the music of her native Korea, with deep bass resonances and taut treble beats that sound somehow hollow. She grew up surrounded by the tradition but never practiced it until she moved to Sydney to study jazz drumming. She also never studied composition formally, but in recent years has been composing for chamber ensembles, including a piece for a string bass sextet. As a soloist, she plays like an orchestrator; it's only so big a step.

For more info visit fortevilfruit.bandcamp.com and kourecords.com



Square One
The Empress (Cellar Music)
by Jim Motavalli

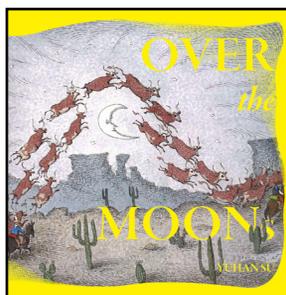
The fact that all four horn players here on *Square One* are women—Pureum Jin (soprano, alto), Erena Terakubo (alto), Chelsea Baratz (tenor), Lauren Sevia (baritone)—is incidental to enjoying this crackling hard bop album by these first call players. That said, South Korea-born, NYC-based Jin did form this co-op band (and produced the record) with the intent to give female players a chance to show off.

It's a sparkling showcase that blasts out of the gate with German saxophonist Michael Lutzeier's "Instant Composure". The horns sound like a big band embracing the warm theme, then break out for some fast and concise alto, tenor and baritone solos, egged on with some lovely call-and-response. This is not a head-solos-reprise-out album, but rather cleverly arranged (mostly by Lutzeier) to fully utilize the front-line saxophone quartet, aided by Steve Ash (piano), Joey Ranieri (bass) and Pete Van Nostrand (drums). George Gershwin's "But Not for Me" could have been taken from a multi-horn, mid '50s Blue Note release, with straight-ahead solos at midtempo giving way to

Ash in fine Bobby Timmons fashion. But then a very tight unison horn section (spiced by Ash) enlivens the melody to the outro. Juan Tizol's "Caravan" features some fine desert stickwork from drummer Van Nostrand, as well as a dazzling horn arrangement, including a memorable saxophone battle. Sevia's baritone, right out of the Pepper Adams tradition, is particularly blistering. Matt Dennis' "Everything Happens to Me" (arranged by Jin) is a beautiful balladic change of pace. The group takes on the master with "Mr. Syms" (from John Coltrane's *Coltrane Plays the Blues*), which is taken at a loping pace. Jin's soprano playing especially makes it resonate, a true tip of the hat to Coltrane, who also played the straight horn on the original. The group's "Milestones" isn't the Miles tune, but rather the earlier, unrelated, John Lewis composition. Sevia noticeably digs into this one, before her horn teammates have a go at it, as well as bassist Ranieri.

The solos throughout the album are masterful, and an additional note must be made regarding the stellar arrangements, which really add extra depth within each selection. Next up...*Square Two!*

For more info visit theempressmusic.bandcamp.com. Erena Terakubo is at *Dizzy's Club* Mar. 25-29 (with *DIVA Jazz Orchestra*). She is also at *Beanrunner Cafe* (Peekskill, NY) Mar. 7. See *Calendar* and *100 Miles Out*.



OVER the MOONS
Yuhan Su (Endectomorph Music)
by Ken Waxman

After 16 years in the US and despite ICE and the Trump administration's immigrant-focused fear-mongering, Taiwanese vibraphonist Yuhan Su's musical ideas are as much part of the local jazz gestalt as they are international. On *OVER the MOONS*, her fifth album, Su leads a crew of top New York players through eight tunes no more foreign than the films of her US-based countryman Ang Lee. That doesn't mean she has rejected her heritage though. Some of the titles reflect the duality of her two-fold language and culture identities. Still, the only overt Chinese reference is on "Genius and Dumb", in which she rhythmically recites Mandarin syllables in sync with James Paul Nadien's drum pops and Yingda Chen's guitar strokes. The narrative then evolves to feature pianist Matt Mitchell, as well as alto saxophonist Alex LoRe's expressive note-bending, further overlaid with Shinya Lin's electronic splatters.

Like most dedicated, creative musicians, rather than being nativist, Su's compositions succinctly include textures related to her extensive playing experience, which encompasses work with such diverse stylists as Greg Osby, Amir ElSaffar and the Webber/Morris Big Band. Tenor saxophonist Anna Webber herself is also featured here and joins LoRe to contribute high-pitched reed riffs on the title tune, which contrapuntally confront the leader's perfectly-focused resonating vibraphone shapes and stops, plus some solidly-cadenced guitar licks. Both saxophonists contribute ethereal flute to the ballad "Too Much Time Matching Clouds", which widens distinctively as Su's subtle metal bar reverberations and Chen's carefully-rounded guitar notes echo reflectively above Marty Kenney's bass stops and Mitchell's expansive piano accents. Other tracks are tougher and more accelerated

and include, at points, almost as many contrapuntal reed honks, drum rumbles, keyboard clipping, projected guitar flanges, bass pumps and ringing vibraphone clanks that skirt ebullient Jazz Messengers territory. At the same time, the clarity of clean, contemporary interpretations is never abandoned.

Clearly in a non-confrontational and swing-affiliated manner, *OVER the MOONS* metaphorically demonstrates the comprehensive achievements of immigrants to the US that was usually celebrated in the pre-MAGA era.

For more info visit endectomorph.com. Su is at *Nublu Classic* Mar. 27. See *Calendar*.

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