



The Rhythm
Eddie Allen's Push (Origin)
by Terrell K. Holmes

Eddie Allen's top-flight band Push—Allen (trumpet), Jon Beshay (tenor), Misha Tsiganov (keyboards), Tyler Bullock II (piano), Kenny Davis (bass), EJ Strickland (drums) and guest Steve Turre (trombone)—really brings it on *The Rhythm*, an energetic album that displays the leader's formidable skills as producer, arranger and composer.

The Afro-Cuban inflected title track exemplifies how Allen adeptly manipulates rhythm, making it flexible in a way that's engaging but not pretentious. Tsiganov's haunting Fender Rhodes on "Between the Darkness and the Dawn" provides an initially crepuscular feeling until Beshay's urgent tenor lines, in conjunction with Allen's deft trumpeting, propel the tempo quickly into sunlight. The irresistibly funky "Maurice" pays tribute to the funk band Earth, Wind & Fire founder Maurice White. Allen's surprising and delightful arrangement of "Mood Indigo" takes Duke Ellington from Harlem to the Caribbean. "Our Day Will Come" (Hilliard & Garson) tips its cap to the 1963 bossa nova-influenced chart-topper by Ruby and the Romantics. What's clear is that Allen thrives in the jazz-funk milieu. "Daybreak", "Worth Saying", "The

Journey", "7 Days" and "Eve's Deception" are all foot-tapping grooves that touch straight-ahead, big band and fusion; and to it, this excellent septet brings the sound, color and vigor of a larger ensemble.

Allen's musicianship, and the fun he's having, extends from the band to his listeners, and it's these elements that make this such an entertaining project. Though no selections were played live early last month at Jazz Genius (the still-newish Lower East Side venue), he did present a pared-down group (a quartet instead of the album septet), with pianist Tsiganov the only holdover from the recording. With Gregory Jones (bass) and Jerome Jennings (drums), his set opened with an upbeat version of Richard Rodgers' "Have You Met Miss Jones", on which Allen played a lovely, muted trumpet, inserting quotes from "Pop Goes the Weasel", "Chicago" and "The Sailor's Hornpipe". The leader switched to flugelhorn for a lovely rendition of Lee Morgan's "Ceora". Moving over to open trumpet, with Jennings on brushes, "Body and Soul" (Johnny Green) began at a ballad tempo, then gradually built to a formidable intensity. The rhythm section worked out alone on an original from the leader, "I Told You So" (according to Jennings, it was also a favorite saying of the late saxophonist Dexter Gordon). The quartet performed an evocative version of Juan Tizol's "Caravan", the drummer setting the pace by using tom-toms for a talking drum effect, while Allen made elephantine sounds on trumpet as he flirted with the melody. This hard-swinging bit of Ellingtonia brought everything full circle, closing a set that beckoned listeners to go home and explore Allen's expansive, recorded ensemble on *The Rhythm*, which similarly, and perhaps not-so coincidentally, also includes a taste of Duke.

For more info visit originarts.com. Allen is at Clement's Place (Newark, NJ) Apr. 6 (with Lance Bryant) and Apr. 17

(with Damon Duewhite), Sistas' Place Apr. 18 (as leader) and Little Red School House Apr. 29 (with Damon Duewhite). See *Calendar* and 100 Miles Out.



New Paintings of Jazz
Trøen-Arnesen Quartet (Losen)
Tri vendur blés ho i den høgaste sky
Mathilde Grooss Viddal (Losen)
by Franz Matzner

The two albums, *New Paintings of Jazz* from the Trøen-Arnesen Quartet and *Tri vendur blés ho i den høgaste sky* from multi-instrumentalist and bandleader Mathilde Grooss Viddal, are markedly disparate musical affairs. The former is a traditional, improvisatory jazz album that will satisfy the need for a quiet oasis, while the latter is a crossroads of Norwegian folk and other global musical systems that co-evolved over centuries through exchange and adaptation.

The Trøen-Arnesen Quartet's sound is placid and graceful on its *New Paintings of Jazz*. The members operate as a talented, integrated whole, able to fluidly deliver the well-structured compositions. The band's phrasing is clear, whether playing in unison or trading improvisations. Each is also adept at painting miniature musical portraits that stand out for their predominantly light touch. This trait is evident on tunes such as the mildly swinging and silky-smooth "Modalan", and the soothing "Crossing", featuring co-leaders Elisabeth

Lid Trøen, whose flute flows and weaves, and Dag Arnesen, whose gentle piano accompaniment is prodded along by bassist Ole Marius Sandberg. The playful "Turbulence" interrupts its own cruising tone with a final dissonant uproar.

Tri vendur blés ho i den høgaste sky is a bird of another color. Grounded in Norwegian medieval ballads and their underlying stories, the album is redolent with traditional modal folk singing, which often is highly emotive a *cappella*. Present also are strains of the Sami people's ancient vocal heritage. For those unfamiliar with these styles, an analog might be the more familiar Celtic forms. In the hands of vocalist Unni Boksasp, the effect is central to the album's powerfully stirring impact. However, it is the combination of her singing with Viddal's compositions, instrumentation and modern interpretations that make this album an overwhelmingly poignant experience. "Maria Magdalena (Held in Disgrace)", "Valivan (The Pioneer)", and "Trollstem (Harp Strings)" evoke memories of roots and rock, textures of wool, and the feel of soil and earth. The low murmurs of "Subconscious" echo like notes in an empty church. The lament "Stolt Margjit" and "Marie (Cure)" (akin to an aria) unfold like intricate weaving, the attenuated vocals knit together with fiddle bow, bass and whispering winds. The album is not simply a meditation on Norwegian traditions, however. It travels across borders and periods, integrating Arabesques, Middle Eastern music, the symphonic, chorales and more modern improvisational structures. "Kvinnemorderen (Scheherazade)", for instance, dances with appropriately sleek, winding lines and the fanfare of "Gullborgs (Fearless Girl)" races and twirls in a jazz fiesta.

Losen Records here has produced two very different albums: *New Paintings of Jazz* is suited to a

peaceful evening, as *Tri vendur blés ho i den høgaste sky* presents an exquisite cultural merger demonstrating music's ability to define places, penetrate spiritual cores and transcend time and space.

For more info visit losenrecords.no



Antónima
Sofia Rei (GroundUP Music)
by Wif Stenger

On *Antónima*, Argentinian singer-songwriter Sofia Rei performs in a fabulous acoustic jazz duo with Peruvian bassist Jorge Roeder. Though they've been touring, playing songs from their powerful 2023 album *Coplas Escondidas*, this new project is a completely different kettle of fish, as Rei shifts gears from acoustic minimalism to electronic-driven complexity. The only common threads are her songwriting and mighty voice—though this time it's processed, multitracked and blended with guest vocalists: nine women from all over Latin America, including genre-crossers such as Xenia Rubinos and Gaby Moreno. Despite the number of guests, this party still sounds unified, thanks partly to co-production, arrangements and programming by JC Maillard, and mixing and mastering by recently

deceased legend Bob Power.

With this album, Rei picks up where she left off with 2021's *Umbral*: sophisticated electronic alt-pop without obvious nods to jazz (besides Josh Deutsch's sensitive trumpet work on "Peter Pánico"). On the title track, Colombian duo Las Añez echoes the great Barcelona nuevo flamenco/hip-hop band Ojos de Brujo. There are many compelling, complex elements involved, but also, in contrast, simple hand drumming throughout, like a heartbeat. Mireya Ramos duets on "Si Una Cae" with Cuban percussionist Pedrito Martinez, who adds a gentle hint of cumbia. The poignant refrain is a call to resistance, translating roughly as "If one falls, others rise/From their ashes, your fire." The vocals get intense and almost scary on the single "Zig Zag", featuring singer extraordinaire Daymé Arocena, with Yoruba incantations and West African highlife guitar alongside a squiggly synth and near-techno beats.

Rei's wide palette extends the breadth of her previous half-dozen albums in Spanish, French and English. She's a versatile vocalist, appealing and expressive in many styles and settings. From a background in punk and classical, she's explored and fused genres from fado to funk, house, klezmer and Ethio-jazz as well as South American folk styles. Her collaborators over two decades in New York includes a wide array, too, from Maria Schneider and John Zorn to Myra Melford, Bobby McFerrin and Marc Ribot.

Antónima is a heady, ultra-produced mix of cutting-edge and traditional Latin sounds, but to hear Rei's unadorned voice in all its power, glory and improvisational skills, check her out on *Coplas Escondidas*, as well as live, onstage.

For more info visit groundupmusic.net. The album release concert is at National Sawdust Apr. 2. See *Calendar*.

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