

Around You Is A Forest
Thomas Morgan (Loveland Music)
Io Pur Respiro
Elias Stemeseder/Thomas Morgan (Squama)
by Mike Shanley

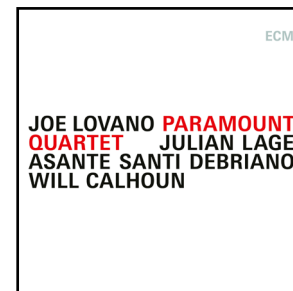
In addition to being a highly sought-after bassist, it turns out that Thomas Morgan also knows a good deal about the evolution of computer software. The son of a computer science professor, the younger Morgan was playing with MacPaint as a toddler, long before he took up an instrument. In the liner notes to his *Around You Is A Forest*, he explains in great detail how his fascination with information technology grew, even as his musical studies took precedence. It eventually resulted in *WOODS*, a virtual string instrument Morgan created through SuperCollider, a real-time audio server. Sounding alternately like a cimbalom, zither, marimba and West African lute-harp, it produces cascading, melodic patterns that move steadily, thanks to generative code written by the bassist.

For his debut album as leader, Morgan invited a group of friends to perform together with music he wrote with *WOODS*. The title track (the one piece to prominently include his bass) features lines that flow and bend thoughtfully while his “partner” calmly unleashes an arrhythmic pentatonic scale. Dan Weiss’ tablas and Gerald Cleaver’s trap kit make interesting partners with *WOODS* on their respective tracks,

due to the rhythmic ideas both players throw into the fray. But despite strong performances by other guests (Frisell, Taborn, Henry Threadgill, Ambrose Akinmusire), the non-human contributions start to sound indistinguishable from track to track. While not as minimal as a Philip Glass melody, they feel like relentless arpeggios with slightly melodic variations, all operating in the same, subdued dynamic range. The one selection that feels unique to this, ironically, comes at the end when Gary Snyder recites his poem “Here”.

Io Pur Respiro captures Morgan and pianist Elias Stemeseder live in Florence, Italy. With a set that ranges from variations on a 17th-century madrigal to originals, the album reveals the deep connection between both players, which only gets more enthralling, thanks to the warm acoustics of the setting: the Sala Vanni, a concert hall, formerly a 17th-century refectory. “Madrigal, Variation, Courante”, based on the piece that gives the album its name, begins with Morgan’s pensive work in the lead, eventually shifting to a syncopated part with animated chords and a skipping bass line. A similar feeling underlies “On the Euclidian Plane”, where the pianist and bassist both feed off an implied groove that inspires some staccato piano jabs. Here, and on “I Have the Room Above Her” (Kern, Hammerstein), Stemeseder briefly switches to harpsichord, which resonates beautifully in the performance space. Morgan has garnered a reputation for the sensitivity he brings to a wide range of musical settings. Pieces such as “Subjects Carved from Words Uttered” exemplify his reputation by putting his strong vibrato and melodic range in the forefront.

For more info visit lovelandcph.bandcamp.com and squamarecordings.bandcamp.com. Morgan is at Village Vanguard Aug. 11-16 (with Bill Frisell) and Close Up Aug. 19, 21 (with Micah Thomas). See Calendar.



JOE LOVANO **PARAMOUNT**
QUARTET **JULIAN LAGE**
ASANTE SANTI DEBRIANO
WILL CALHOUN

Paramount Quartet
Joe Lovano (ECM)
by George Kanzler

Joe Lovano began his career a half century ago playing in B3 organ soul jazz bands, and his style, mostly on tenor, has morphed from that hard-driving groove, through featured big band soloing, to more avant styles with groups featuring guitarists and, in some cases, two drummers. His latest stylistic shift coincides with his move, just over a half-dozen years ago, to the mellow, space-oriented ECM label.

Paramount Quartet is another band pairing Lovano’s tenor saxophone (also G-mezzo soprano and tárogató) with guitar and a rhythm section: Julian Lage (guitar), Asante Santi Debriano (bass) and Will Calhoun (drums). The album’s seven tracks divide neatly into two arcs, each begun with one of only two titles not written by Lovano: ballads “First Song” (Charlie Haden) and “Lady Day” (Wayne Shorter). In each case, they are followed by selections that increase, or change up, both tempo and mood. The ravishingly lyrical “First Song” is treated with sublime tenderness by the leader. First Lage, then Lovano, limn the melody and elaborate on it with exquisite warmheartedness, lightly accompanied by discreet brushes and anchoring bass. “Amsterdam”

JAZZ ON THE PLAZA THURSDAYS 12:30PM

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July 30
Camille Thurman

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September 10
The New School

September 17
William Paterson University

September 24
Manhattan School of Music



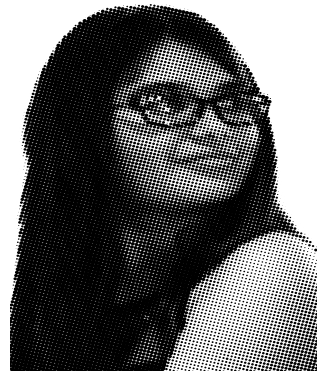
August 6
Yoav Eshed



August 13
June Cavan



August 20
Wayne Tucker



August 27
Leonieke Scheuble

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