

and Motor City, with all hands in: bowed Bob, 88-key Kenny, chugging Tootie. Lateef's tricky "Mutually Exclusive" flits through post-Coltrane "Giant Steps" modal riffs with extra verve. Detroit drummer Roy Brooks' "Eboness" features heady, vibrato-rich bamboo flute over swooning dotted-eighth bass à la Horace Silver. "Inside Atlantis", another Barron original, swims by like a suite from Sea World. Tenor rips the changes like sharks after herring, then swims with whales in strong, swooning bass lines; piano whisks us to a folksy fishing village where dock kids troll for snappy wire-brush bait-fish. On "I Remember Webster" Lateef tenderly evokes the breathy aura of gentle giant Ben (Webster), "a kindred spirit," who passed in 1973. "Opus 1 & 2", Akira Inoue's meditative chant for piano, bowed bass and Zen-tense "Eastern" flute, floats smoothly into a grrr-easy, funk groove.

The bandleader woos his "Golden Goddess" by reciting "If I were the wind...", inhabiting Aeolian and Boreal temperaments, then wafting an impassioned flute ballad to vocal house acclaim. "Straighten Up and Fly Right" (the Nat "King" Cole 1943 crossover hit) gets a-rockin' and a-stompin' as Lateef keens, flashes and wails over relentless rhythm. "Yusef's Mood", a YAL favorite, brings up the house in a rowdy romp and sets it back down with a "Goin' Home" a cappella coda for the grateful, enthralled faithful. One disappointment: Lateef never shares his signature double-reed mastery on oboe or bassoon all weekend!

Deep kudos to Joe and Wayne Segal, lifelong stewards of the music and its creators, and deacons/proprietors of the Jazz Showcase (which will be celebrating its 80th year in 2027), and to producer/caretaker Zev Feldman.

For more info visit resonancerecords.org



New Digs
Michael Formanek (Intakt)
by Stuart Broomer

The title *New Digs* may reference bassist-composer Michael Formanek's relocation from America to Portugal a few years ago. It might also refer to the new compositions that Formanek has crafted for the remarkable septet assembled here. Trumpeter João Almeida is a Portuguese native; alto saxophonist John O'Gallagher is, like Formanek, an American resident in Portugal; tenor saxophonist-clarinetist Chet Dexas is a Canadian transplanted to New York; Formanek's partners in Thumbscrew, guitarist Mary Halvorson and drummer Tomas Fujiwara, are also NYC residents, while Alexander Hawkins, a key figure playing Hammond organ, is English. Together they create music of special resonance, varied voices and influences, merging with Formanek's strong, new compositions.

The opening, "New Old World", signals a frequent contrast between weaving unison themes and free improvisations. As a bassist, often in a foundational role, Formanek has a keen sense of background and foreground, something that's frequently in play here. The title "Prequel" references the first musicians assembled for the project. It's essentially a quartet

piece, emphasizing the band's rhythmic and electric foundations: Hawkins providing dense organ, Halvorson electronic squiggles and Fujiwara brilliant machine-gun drumming, with Formanek developing a subtly detailed, complex lead.

The leader's roles as composer, orchestrator and bassist are all strongly reflected in "Gone Home/Interlude for Susan Alcorn", beginning with a moving unaccompanied bass solo. When the ensemble enters, it's with suggestions of hypnotic minimalism and Gil Evans-like transparent voicings. Admirable lead work from Almeida shifts from composed to improvised melody before turning to Halvorson's harp-like arpeggios and Fujiwara's sparkling percussion, ultimately concluding with Dexas' impassioned tenor soloing over rich orchestral support.

The same subtle matchings of composed material and liberated improvisation contribute to all nine of Formanek's works, with every member of the group coming to the fore. "Braxes" has a strong initial theme, but its principal development is a collective improvisation by the three winds supported by Formanek's bass line. "Quinze" opens with an extended passage of spacey organ, dissonant clusters resolving to single tones and a stunning distortion solo from Halvorson. O'Gallagher contributes an intense, keening invocation before the theme of "It Was" emerges, in turn surrendering to a dense overlay of improvisation, the conclusion framing the work with an ever-brief unaccompanied envoi from O'Gallagher.

For more info visit intaktrec.ch. Formanek is at Close Up Oct. 28. He is also at The Jazz Gallery Oct. 29 and Firehouse 12 (New Haven, CT) Oct. 30, both with Myra Melford's Splash. See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.

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