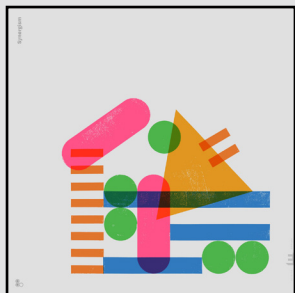


BOXED SET



Freedom Call
Dave Holland (Edition)
by Jeff Cebulski

In recognition of bassist Dave Holland's 80th birthday (Oct. 1), Edition Records has released the three-disc (vinyl and CD) boxed set, *Freedom Call*: "projects" of previously unreleased live music—18 tracks in all—compiled by Holland. Representing the three ensembles he has led over the past four decades, from his quintet and septet to the fusion-inspired Prism quartet, the overall audio quality, as well as the performances themselves, make this set essential for Holland's fans, especially those who never attended a Prism concert.

The British bassist first came to prominence when he joined Miles Davis' band in 1968, and he was a crucial element as Miles' music ventured into postmodern electric vistas. In the ensuing years, Holland was involved in a wide range of subgenres, from avant garde fare (appearances with Sam Rivers and Anthony Braxton, including 1972's *Conference of the Birds*, with Rivers, Braxton and Barry Altschul), solo endeavors (1977's *Emerald Tears*), chamber jazz (supporting the late trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, as on 1975's *Gnu High*, with Keith Jarrett and Jack DeJohnette), to guitar-centered post-fusion (including the Gateway trio with John Abercrombie and DeJohnette and his splendid unconventional *Extensions* from 1989, with Kevin Eubanks, Steve Coleman and Marvin "Smitty" Smith). But perhaps Holland's most important contribution has been gathering high-quality musicians for ensembles that ventured into interplay, improvisation

built upon repeated riffs, integrated pairings and exciting soloists, including himself, while being the fulcrum paired with superb drummers. This new boxed set release makes that arrangement skill abundantly clear.

Project one, *Sextet: Unity*, might be the best representation of that prowess. Originally, Holland was working on arrangements of his compositions for students at the New England Conservatory, but he ultimately decided to assemble a conventional sextet to perform them. His band—Alex Sipagin (trumpet, flugelhorn), Antonio Hart (alto), Robin Eubanks (trombone), the late great Mulgrew Miller (piano) and Eric Harland (drums)—began to perform in 2006, and in 2007 recorded *Pass It On*, released on Holland's Dare 2 label. The tracks here, expertly recorded and mixed, feature performances that postdate that album. (Those who desire more detailed info may be frustrated by the decision not to include specific dates and places of all the tracks in the set.) Of the seven selections, four are tunes from the album, and three are featured on other Holland recordings or not heard before. One 'new' offering is the opener "Step to It", which commences as a Holland-typical trope of interloping horn lines that eventually join to state the theme. With the leader squarely in the center, Sipagin (who sounds especially inspired in this collection) has the first solo before Holland's atop Miller's pleasant comping. The arrangements throughout are orchestral, the group sounding larger than itself. One example is "Fast Track", which features sharp horn solos and Harland's intense grooves. Another notable Holland solo occurs during "Modern Times", a stellar performance that emphasizes group interplay before a singular member emerges, in this case, Eubanks.

Project two, *Quintet: Synergism*, is a recording of Holland's late '90s-early aughts pianoless quintet that featured Chris Potter (saxophones), Robin Eubanks (trombone), Steve Nelson (vibraphone) and Billy Kilson or Nate Smith (drums). In the liners, Holland speaks of "a dream of having a long-lasting band...that could really move the music forward." The material here

was recorded in 2010, after the quintet's final album, *Critical Mass* (Dare 2, 2006). Of the six tracks, three come from that album, with three others previously recorded elsewhere. "Veil of Tears" lacks Holland's riveting solo intro first heard on *The Monterey Quartet: Live at the 2007 Monterey Jazz Festival*, but it does have the same sinuous 'at the Casbah' flow, with Potter's sensuous reading joined by Eubanks, while Nelson's vibraphone exudes Middle Eastern counterpoint more naturally than Gonzalo Rubalcaba's piano at Monterey. "Pathways", the Latin-tinged title cut from Holland's live octet album (Dare 2, 2009), Potter's "Souls Harbor", and Eubanks' "Full Circle", are also included.

Project three, *Prism: Freedom*, features the fiery guitar of Kevin Eubanks, with whom Holland played in a Sam Rivers band and maintained a connection ever since. Completed by Harland and the versatile pianist Craig Taborn, Prism is an extension of Holland's fusion days, with Harland providing rock-ish support as Eubanks builds progressively intense solos with intuitive fills from Taborn. One can imagine the bassist's grinning satisfaction in the midst of the roar. One notable track of the handful here is the guitarist's "Communication Bias" (which is not on the group's sole album from 2012), an 18-minute excursion that is delivered like a suite. The guitarist's lead-in, with Harland's insistent support, sounds like his funky work on *Extensions*, until the pianist gradually takes over with a dignified chamber interlude that resolves into Eubanks' bent-note, sustained effects. A stately Holland solo follows, which evolves into a blues as the guitarist takes over, slowly revving up the intensity with drummer Harland.

With only five of this set's tracks coming in under 10 minutes, *Freedom Call* gives Holland fans a sumptuous treat that honors the bassist's legacy and offers new looks at recognizable themes, while making the seasoned listener nostalgic for these three adventurous ensembles.

For more info visit editionrecords.com/artists/dave-holland



Nerve Case
Vito Dieterle (SteepleChase)
by Terrell K. Holmes

Tenor saxophonist Vito Dieterle, who has been a constant presence on the NYC jazz club scene for many years, affirms his eminence with his new album *Nerve Case*. With Kris Kaiser (guitar), Griffin Fink (bass) and Aaron Seeber (drums), the quartet works out on tunes that fully display their talent, cohesiveness and creativity.

Based on its tempo, and the album's title (an anagram of the dystopian sci-fi show *Severance*), "Split" suggests both speed and division. Seeber's crisp cymbal work, Kaiser's fiery guitar riffs and Dieterle's concise, articulate tenor phrasing propel this energetic tune. Henry Mancini's lush theme song for the short-lived '60s TV show, *Mr. Lucky*, evokes dinner jackets and martinis at the Plaza, but the leader's dreamy bossa nova arrangement shifts the vibe a couple

of miles south to a Village watering hole where the hepcats tip rum and Cokes. The excellent turns by saxophonist, guitarist and bassist on Cole Porter's "Get Out of Town" declare that if they're going, they'll strut out on their own terms. Another outstanding Fink bass solo is at the heart of the lovely "Gaslight" (Duke Pearson). There's a humorous disconnect on "I Won't Dance" (Jerome Kern) where Dieterle and Kaiser sound like two mismatched dance partners seeking common ground; the saxophonist's truncated chords and sudden key changes skitter around the melody, while the guitarist stays true to the song without a misstep.

The elegiac waltz "Theme for Ernie" (Fred Lacey) is stellar, from Kaiser's reflective intro to the vibrations of Dieterle's final note (and at this point it also becomes clear that Fink was trying to steal the album spotlight with another showcase for his great bass playing). The song was written in memory of Ernie Henry, an alto saxophonist who played with, among others, Thelonious Monk; appropriately, the quartet also play Monk's "We See" so smartly that it sounds like it was written for them. A beautiful rendering of "My Old Flame" (Walter Johnston) leads to the title cut, an in-the-pocket jaunt that effectively brings the album full circle and establishes *Nerve Case* as one of this year's standout releases.

For more info visit steeplechase.dk. Dieterle is at *Midnight Blue* Oct. 9. See *Calendar*.



Eat Your Greens
Kelly Green Trio (Green Soul Studio)
by Sophia Valera Heinecke

Pianist-vocalist Kelly Green's new album, *Eat Your Greens*, is a subtle sequencing of a timeless journey from the dizzying heights of new love to the quiet satisfaction of self-acceptance, a kind of love and commitment Green has unique insight into. Drawing inspiration from her sage mentors such as Mulgrew Miller, Harold Mabern and Randy Weston, Green internalizes Miller's advice: "You have to sleep it, eat it, drink it, and most of all, you have to play and put your life story in every note." This ethos of commitment is evident throughout the album, which blends standards with wry originals that reflect both rigor and playfulness.

The journey begins with Green's arrangement of "Nobody Else But Me", a track that celebrates quirky confidence, and bursts with gratitude for individuality. Her vocal phrasing is unconcerned,