

Record Reviews



BLICHER HEMMER GADD OMARA

Omara; Elijah Rock; They Had No Rose; The Colour Red; Three Grains Of Salt; My Babe; If I Were A Cow; On The Porch; Korean Bbq (55.04)

Michael Blicher (s); Dan Hemmer (org); Steve Gadd (d). London, Denmark, Germany, February 2017.

C-Nut 09
★★★★

Through warm, squelchy organ and the gentle scratch of brushes, Michael Blicher opens the title track of this stunning live disc with a spacious, bossa-style melody on soprano sax. It's a dreamy start to the second album from a band bound

JJ CONTENT

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together through their love of strong groove, the music of New Orleans and all those classic organ groups led by the likes of Ramsey Lewis, Jack McDuff and Jimmy Smith. Gadd is undoubtedly a big draw here and doesn't disappoint. Understated under Blicher and Hemmer's beautifully entwined lines he brings great feel to the music, underpinning everything with loose, simple patterns that liven into earthy solos, or when the melodies or mood twist and this mainly bluesy set flips into something sassy, funky or Latin-inspired.

With the exception of gospel standard *Elijah Rock* and a feather-light and funky take on Willie Dixon's *My Babe*, all tracks here are credited to Blicher. His playing throughout is seductive and his tone, taste and use of space clearly stresses his love of singers and song, delivering lines so lyrical they ignite equally melodic or rhythmic ideas in his bandmates. While *The Colour Red* has Hemmer's high-register gospel riffs screeching and splurging and the funky *They Had No Rose* is built on a military-style snare groove that only Gadd can pull off, it's the tunes and musical exchange between the three that make this record one you'll keep coming back to. Go pick it up, you won't put it down.

Mark Youll

TILL BRÖNNER/DIETER ILG NIGHTFALL

A Thousand Kisses Deep; The Fifth Of Beethoven; Nightfall; Nobody Else But Me; Air; Scream And Shout; Wetterstein; Eleanor Rigby; Peng! Peng!; Body And Soul; Ach Bleib Mit Deiner Gnade (50.08)

Brönnner (t, flh); Ilg (b). Krün, Germany, October 2017.

Okeh 889854921125
★★★★

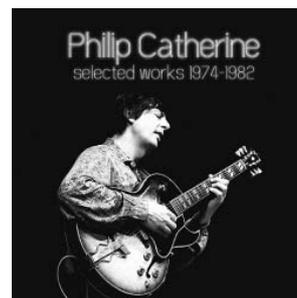
Two exceptionally talented instrumentalists, Brönnner and Ilg are rightly respected for their work in various contexts. They have played as a duo for some time but this appears to be their first duo album. Hearing them in this format it is clear with every note that they deserve their following and the praise they have received. Given the nature of the instrumentation, Brönnner has most solo space and his fluidity and invention is excellent throughout. The sound he draws from the trumpet is full and rounded and is even richer when he plays flugelhorn. Ilg is primarily responsible for underpinning these performances with always interesting playing and when he does solo it is similarly flowing and inventive.

The better known of the titles heard here, *Nobody Else But Me* (Kern, Hammerstein), *Eleanor Rigby* (Lennon, McCartney), *Body And Soul* (Green), and *Air* (J.S. Bach), are all used as foundations for building absorbing improvisations and although straying some distance from the familiar melodies, they are never too far out. There are also three originals by Brönnner and Ilg and *The Fifth* is Ornette Coleman's. Whatever the source, all of this fine duo's music is always accessible. A wholly admirable album that will appeal not only to the many admirers of these two musicians but also to any who might be unfamiliar with their work but like their jazz forceful, dynamic yet always tasteful and melodic. Warmly recommended.

Bruce Crowther

PHILIP CATHERINE SELECTED WORKS 1974-1982

CD1: [*September Man*] (1) *Nairam; Nineteen Seventy Fourths; T.P.C.; September Man; When It Is In The Beginning; The Middle; The End; Monday 13 (40.51)*



CD2: [*Guitars*] (2) *We'll Find A Way; Five Thousand Policemen; Sneezing Bull; René Thomas; Moss And Weeds; Homecomings; Charlotte; Noburl; Isabelle (39.37)*
CD3: [*Babel*] (3) *Babel; Janet; Riverbop; Spirale; Philip à Paris; Magic Ring; Dinner-Jacket (35.58)*
CD4: [*End Of August*] (4) *Petit Nicolas; Grand Nicolas; Janet; September Start; (5) Goodbye; (4) Birth Of August; End Of August; (5) Presque (38.10)*

CD5: [*Solo Bremen 1979 & 1982*] (6) *Tunnel Of Love; Babel; Nem Um Talvez; Every Day; Petit Nicolas; D-Tune; (7) Rue Du Sel; My Funny Valentine; Rianne; Crystal Bells; To Larry; (8) Etude Pour Peter S (53.19)*

(1) Palle Mikkelborg (t); Charlie Mariano (as, f); Jasper Van't Hof (p, org); Catherine (elg); John Lee (elb); Gerry Brown (d). Brussels, 9-11 August 1974.

(2) As above but Catherine (elg, g, bjo) and omif Mikkelborg. Brussels, August-September 1975.

(3) Catherine (elg, g, syn, vocoder); Jean-Claude Petit (kyb, syn, arr); Jannick Top (elb); André Ceccarelli (d, pc); string quartet. Paris, 1980.

(4) Mariano (ss, f); Catherine (elg, g); Nicolas Fiszman (elb, g); Trilok Gurtu (pc). Brussels, 19 & 30 January 1982.

(5) add Toots Thielemans (hca).

(6) Catherine (g, elg, elb). Bremen, 24 & 26 September 1979.

(7) same. Bremen, 24 & 25 June 1982.

(8) Catherine (elg, elb); Sebastiaan de Krom (d). June 1998.

Warner/Milan 0 190295 857097
★★★★

I realise that I've always thought of Philip Catherine as young, but this set is released to mark his 75th birthday. A little investigation shows he was already recording with Americans such as Lou Bennett and Oliver Jackson at the beginning of the 60s, and later on Chet Baker, Dexter Gordon and Mingus also entered his discography. A phenomenal musician, he has always wanted to keep his stylistic options open. In the year of the first album here, which shows a marked awareness of what Miles Davis was up to at the time, he was also recording with Stephane Grappelli. That liaison has encouraged some to see him as developing the Django tradition but most of the music here suggests nothing of the sort.

The powerful bass and drums of Lee and Brown place the first album clearly in the jazz-rock field and they return for the second one which is even dedicated to Miles Davis. However this is more varied with bass and drums absent at times and a single brief pastiche includes Catherine's banjo. Mostly his guitar was exploring the multiple sounds which amplification and electronics made possible. Overdubbing also offered a potential he was very keen to explore; hence on *Sneezing Bull* acoustic and amplified guitars can be heard at the same time. Charlie Mariano is a potent presence here as Mikkelborg had been on September Man, where he was the arranger as well as providing some terse trumpet. The next album, *Babel*, has Jean-Claude Petit arranging for Catherine and a string quartet, with drums and bass less assertive. It's an experimental setup with some conversational remarks from Catherine's daughters thrown in for fun. *End Of August* brings back Mariano in excellent form, his soprano often responding to Catherine with telling effect, and Toots Thielemans makes a mournful contribution to the almost funereal *Goodbye*. By then Catherine had moved further into his own explorations and had no need to dedicate his music to American heroes. An exotically named percussionist was creating a rather different atmosphere from that of the Lee-Brown axis. And the style of an acoustic guitar solo on *Grand Nicolas* does raise the Reinhardt connection.

CRITICS' CHOICE

The 10 CDs JJ critics most wanted to hear from this month's review pile

Brian Blade & The Fellowship	Body And Shadow	Blue Note, no number
Philip Catherine	Selected Works 1974-1982	Warner Music 0 190295 857097
Chick Corea & Steve Gadd	Chinese Butterfly	Stretch/Concord Jazz, no number
Bill Evans	New Jazz Conceptions	Poll Winners 27364
Maynard Ferguson	Memories Of Maynard/Best Of Columbia	SNR 005
Ella Fitzgerald	Sings The Cole Porter Song Book	Poll Winners 27363
Thelonious Monk	Monk's Dream	State Of Art 81215
Ivo Neame	Moksha	Edition 1108
Louis Prima	The Wildest Show At Tahoe	Jackpot 48781
Zbigniew Seifert	Solo Violin	Zbigniew Seifert Foundation CDFZS-3

The first four CDs are miniaturised versions of the original LP issues with sleeves and labels copied immaculately. The fifth CD offers previously unreleased music with the word "Solo" possibly misleading. In two different years a studio in Bremen allowed Catherine to indulge himself in overdubbing, following a tradition begun by Bechet many years earlier. The conversations between acoustic and amplified guitar (or two of the latter with differing tones) are masterfully developed in a variety of tempos and meters. *My Funny Valentine* is a beautiful performance in a traditional manner. As a conclusion to the set this CD confirms the wide range of Catherine's involvement in music and the variety of his means of expression.

Graham Colombé



MARK CHERRIE QUARTET
JOINING THE DOTS

Morse Code; Maiden Voyage; Little Wing; Footprints; October's Child; Just Like Lovers Do; Scarborough Fair; When We Were Free; Sippin' At Bells; Smells Like Teen Spirit; Starless And Bible Black; Walking On The Moon; Last Summer; Just Like Lovers Do (65.27)

Cherrie (steel pan); John Donaldson (p); Mick Hutton (b); Eric Ford (d); Dominic Grant (g); Nigel Price (elg); Dave O'Higgins (ts); Sumudu (v). Guildford, 10 April 2016.

Trio 599

★★★★

Cherrie recalls that his father, newly arrived from Trinidad, played the steel pan professionally in the 1950s. He himself has been playing it for over 40 years and says he still has to field questions like "Does it play real musical notes?" It does, of course, and very good ones on this CD. Used as a solo instrument the sound is very exotic and calls to mind places like Trinidad, even to people like me who have never been there.

Cherrie sails blithely through jazz pieces like *Maiden Voyage* and *Footprints* with some smooth, metallic improvised solos and even manages to get a jazz sound on less likely material such as *Scarborough Fair* and Sting's *Walking On The Moon*. He can swing it too. The programme ranges from jazz classics like *Sippin' At Bells* in full hard bop mode to some punk songs he grew up with but due to his jazz chops and those of his musicians heard here, it all comes out jazz inflected. Piano, bass, drums and the pan blend seamlessly on all selections. Sumudu sings in husky tones on two tracks and O'Higgins and Price have their solo moments. This release is fresh and a little different but well within the tradition and it is recommended.

Derek Ansell

JOHN COLTRANE

MY FAVORITE THINGS

CD1: (1) *My Favorite Things; Ev'rytime We Say Goodbye; Summertime; But Not For Me; (2) One And Four (aka Mr Day); Exotica; Like Sonny; Exotica (alt take) (61.17)*

CD2: (1) *My Favorite Things; Ev'rytime We Say Goodbye; Summertime; But Not For Me; (3)*



Impressions; Naima; My Favorite Things (69.19)

(1) Coltrane (ss, ts); McCoy Tyner (p); Steve Davis (b); Elvin Jones (d). New York City, 21-26 October 1960.

(2) Coltrane (ts); McCoy Tyner (p); Steve Davis (b); Billy Higgins (d). Los Angeles, 8 September 1960.

(3) Coltrane (ss, ts); McCoy Tyner (p); Art Davis, Reggie Workman (b); Elvin Jones (d). Newport Jazz Festival, Newport, Rhode Island, 1 July 1961.

Green Corner 100895

★★★★

Why anyone would want the same music in both mono and stereo versions is puzzling, but this seems to be a new dimension in collecting. In this case it seems particularly weird, since the mono Atlantic release of *My Favorite Things* was especially good, and the stereo recording is no improvement.

The disc was one of several turning points in Coltrane's career and marked his deployment of the soprano saxophone. It created quite a shock to audiences in England when he offered half-hour workouts on Richard Rodgers's melody from *The Sound Of Music* at UK concerts the following year. Trane turned the tune inside out in, at times, tortuous fashion. He reharmonised both *Summertime* and *But Not For Me* and offered a poignant reading of *Ev'rytime We Say Goodbye*, giving all these standards fresh legs and unsuspected qualities.