

Record Reviews

JJ STAR RATINGS

- ★ Family members only
- ★★ Good playing with moments of inspiration, derivative concept
- ★★★ Professionally executed, perhaps with originality in playing or concept
- ★★★★ Exceptional in concept and execution, a once in a decade recording
- ★★★★★ Epoch-making recording demonstrating hitherto unheard concept

A bracketed star indicates a half-star



ANTONIO ADOLFO / ORQUESTRA ATLANTICA ENCUNTROS

(2) *Partido Samba-Funk; Pentatonica; (1) Atlantica; Luizao; Milestones; Saudade; Africa Baía Brasil; Delicada Jazz Waltz; Sa Marina (52.57)*

(1) Jessé Sadoc (t, flh, arr); Gesiet Nascimento (t); Aldivas Ayres,

Wanderson Cunha, Serginho Trombone (tb); Levi Chaves (ss, bar); Danilo Sinna (as, f); Marcelo Martins (ts, f, arr); Marcos Nimrichter (acc); Adolfo (p); Leo Amuedo (elg); Nelson Faria or Claudio Jorge (g); Jorge Helder (b); Rafael Barata (d); Dadá Costa (pc). Rio De Janeiro, 2017. (2) add Ze Renato (v).

AAM 0712

★★★

I've stated it before and I'll state it again. It's not fair to the purchaser of a CD that interesting relevant information is made available to the reviewer (on an A4 sheet from Jazz Promo Services) but is missing from the CD packaging. My information includes commentary on individual tracks and some soloist identification, but buyers have only personnels, track listing and a brief note from leader Adolfo. At least the latter reveals that this CD is for him a dream come true – his first with “a large ensemble”.

I think the hero of this entertaining album is Jessé Sadoc. And that may seem odd as he plays trumpet or flugel solos on only three tracks, combining plenty of technique with a slightly stiff sense of rhythm. He's the hero however because he arranged eight of the 10 tracks and the arrangements are eventful and imaginative, producing plenty of variety from four brass, three reeds, rhythm section and occasional wordless vocals or solos from guitar or accordion. Adolfo's piano, always percussive and melodic, is featured a great deal,

perhaps at his own behest, and my only criticism of the arrangements is that I'd like to have heard more of the kind of thing that surprises on the final track when baritone and trombone (Ayres) exchange fours. The uninhibited alto of Sinna and the more sedate tenor of Martens have a couple of solos each and the accordionist, although uneasy with the fast tempo of *Milestones*, makes an appropriate contribution to the penultimate waltz. As one expects from Adolfo the rhythms are infectious and danceable and the enlarged band certainly adds a new dimension to his music.

Graham Colomé



ALCHEMY SOUND PROJECT

ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE

Adventures In Time & Space; Ankh: Song Of The Whistle Wing; Odysseus Leaves Circe; Transition Waltz; Jeff's Joy (42.22)

Samantha Boshnack (t, flh); Erica

Lindsay (ts); Salim Washington (ts, f, bcl); Michael Spearman (tb); Sumi Tonooka (p); David Arend (b); Johnathan Blake (d, pc) Conshohocken, PA, 23-24 June 2016.

ARC 2857

★★★

A quote on the inner sleeve describes Alchemy Sound as “a mesmerizing combination of chamber jazz, symphonic music, modern jazz and big band”, and certainly all those elements are present in this music. After a lively and heavy workout on *Adventures In Time*, the combo subsides to a rhapsodic reading of *Ankh*. The ensembles are tight and very well structured before Washington steps out to take a lyrical flute solo as the rhythm section enfolds him. Erica Lindsay's tenor is fiery but lyrical throughout an inventive solo in which she uses the full range of her instrument. There are many layers to this music so a cursory listen won't really do; play it over a few times to get the full impact. David Arend's arco bass solo on *Ankh* is melodic and his intonation is very good.

Brass and reeds combine in fine form to begin *Song Of The Whistle Wing*; this is an ensemble piece in the opening minutes, juxtaposed with a bass solo in the background. Counterpoint from trumpet and tenor sax are added to the mix as the bass solo progresses and gradually gives way to a full scale tenor saxophone outing. Erica's tenor is right in the tradition with flourishes of her own style taking over gradually. The piece ends with another arco bass segment. Overall this music is fresh and original, never borrowing from funk, rock or even free elements but seeking its own new pathways and worthy of any enthusiast's attention.

Derek Ansel

JJ CONTENT

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GARY ALESBROOK

JAZZ IN MOVIES

I'll See You In My Dreams; Smile; On The Street Where You Live; The Death Theme; Pure Imagination; Marlowe's Theme; Alfie; If I Only Had A Brain (37.59)

Alesbrook (t, fh); George Cooper (p); Will Harris (b); Scott Hammond (d); Elliott Cole, Phil King, Thomas Meighan (v).

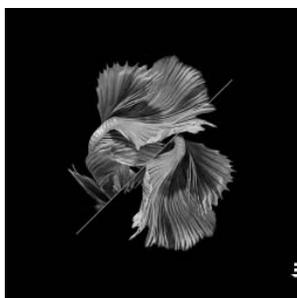
garyalesbrook.com

★★★

This limited edition of 250 CDs presents eight well-known and reasonably well-worn themes from films over the years. Gary's quartet is straight ahead in the bop/hard bop style and he plays mainly flugelhorn with a soft focus, melodic style. Most of these movie songs will be well known by jazz enthusiasts with the possible exception of *The Death Theme* – now where did that one come from? I don't know if it was deliberate or coincidental but all three vocalists have very similar styles and approaches to the material. *Pure Imagination* has a very laid back vocal and a gentle, lyrical contribution from both the leader on flugel and pianist George Cooper.

This CD is smooth listening from start to finish and the right sort of disc for late night or casual listening. It doesn't sound as if any musician or singer used much exertion but the sounds are warm and melodic, occasionally melancholy and fully relaxed. I have number 92 of the 250 so if you fancy it don't hang around too long.

Derek Ansell



JULIAN ARGÜELLES

TONADAS

Alala; Alfama; Bulerias; Tonadilla; Barrio Gotico; Alegrias; Sevilla; Tia Mercedes (55.08)

Argüelles (ts, ss, pc); Ivo Neame (p); Sam Lasserson (b); James Maddren (d, pc). Udine, Italy, November 2017.

CRITICS' CHOICE

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

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Julian Argüelles | Tonadas | Edition 1116 |
| Nat "King" Cole | Cole Español Greatest Hits | New Continent 648053 |
| Ronnie Cuber | Live At Montmartre | Storyville 1018458 |
| Fletcher Henderson | A Study In Frustration | Poll Winners 27380 |
| Arve Henriksen | The Height Of The Reeds | rune grammofon 2201 |
| Dave Holdsworth & New Brew | Wodgi | Capton 01 |
| Dizzy Gillespie/Dave Brubeck | Live At Newport | Sounds Of Yester Year 2096 |
| Stan Kenton | Concerts In Miniature Part 23 | Sounds Of Yester Year 2091 |
| Mapping Oceans | Marea | Just For The Records 726 |
| Art Pepper Quartet | Modern Art/The Russ Freeman Sessions | Poll Winners 27371 |

Edition 1116

★★★(★)

Now into his early 50s, Julian Argüelles should now be regarded as one of the mainstays of British jazz; an individual we should never simply take for granted as he continues to impress in performance and as a composer. Tonadas is inspired by his Spanish roots, hence the tune titles, although even if the music does carry some Iberian tinges, particularly in the melody line of *Alegrias*, this is no castanets and flamenco fest but very good contemporary jazz. The leader switches between soprano and tenor, constructing intelligently moulded solos where impetus is required, offset by a more measured approach as on the wistful *Tonadilla* or the lyrical closer *Tia Mercedes*, both pieces featuring the soprano.

The themes do not always take an obvious path, *Barrio Gotico* being a case in point where the playful melody has a unison delivery via tenor and piano, or alternatively, the aforementioned *Alegrias*; a lively option with an exhilarating passage of soprano and drums only. The saxophonist's colleagues have more than a walk-on part, with Neame's single note runs a constant ear-grabber and Maddren's inventive work on cymbals carrying similar weight. This is just the latest example of Argüelles being able to construct a first-class body of work.

Peter Gamble

MIRIAM AST & VICTOR GUTIERREZ

SECRET SONGS

Don't Get Too Cocky; 'Round Midnight; Song For Stan; Love Song; Alone Together; Divergence; Night And Day; Spanish Song; Ode To A Lost Love; The Song Is You (58.31)

Ast (v); Gutierrez (p). Plus guest Stan Sulzmann (ts). Penarth, 22-23 August 2017, 1 March 2018.

Mons 874613

★★★



Rather like "cool", the term "jazz singer" has surely reached the level of overuse where it ceases to have much meaning. I'll assert that Miriam Ast is a jazz singer in the same way as Helen Merrill. She seems quite naturally inclined to understatement, and the resulting lack of hyperbole ensures that she makes something of the far from secret *'Round Midnight*; it gets the depth of interpretation that also allows for Gutierrez's individuality to come through.

The unsurprising wistfulness and poignancy of *Ode To A Lost Love* is shot through with a vitality that keeps it well away from being mawkish. Stan Sulzmann has now reached a point where his undoubted facility is allied with the interpretative depth that comes with age. This depth is nicely contrasted by Ast's youthful vigour on the wordless *Spanish Song*. Ast's scatting is more convincing than most because her phrasing, even at this relatively early stage in her career, carries few echoes of her many forerunners. On this song perhaps more than anywhere else in this set the relationship between teacher (Sulzmann) and the two pupils who make up the trio is most obvious, and it

manifests itself in their deep and mutual understanding.

Nic Jones

ALLEN AUSTIN-BISHOP

NO ONE IS ALONE

Ordinary Fool; That's All; The Way We Were; The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face; Summertime; No One Is Alone; They Long To Be (Close To You); Alfie; If You Really Love Me (Really Love); What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life; Poor Butterfly; That's All (alternate version); Amazing Grace (47.00)

Austin-Bishop (v); Alex Maydew (p); Mao Yamada (b); Rob Hervais-Adelman (d, pc). No date or place of recording given.

austinbishop.com

★★★(★)

Allen Austin-Bishop was born and raised in New Jersey but has been living in London for some time. He released his debut album, *Sorry Grateful*, in 2017 and followed it with an EP in 2018. *No One Is Alone* showcases his warm voice (which put me in mind of Cy Grant more than once), distinctive approach to lyrics and fondness for slow tempos, long notes and down-beat themes. On *No One Is Alone*, Austin-Bishop is joined by the same trio of musicians that accompanied him on his debut. The group works well together on both outings. *Sorry Grateful* concentrated on jazz standards: *No One Is Alone* covers some similar ground – Sondheim, Gershwin, the Bergmans – but also moves into less obviously jazzy territory.

It's always interesting when a vocalist puts their stamp on a beautiful but little-heard song. Austin-Bishop opens this album with his take on Paul Williams's *Ordinary Fool*, from the musical *Bugsy Malone*. Austin-Bishop brings a maturity to his rendition which, coupled with the warmth