



Romaria
Andy Sheppard Quartet (ECM)
by Tyran Grillo

Saxophonist Andy Sheppard's quartet with guitarist Eivind Aarset, bassist Michel Benita and drummer Sebastian Rochford pulls out threads from this album's predecessor, 2015's *Surrounded by Sea*, and from them weaves an even more seamless tapestry.

Once again, Aarset proves an integral presence, adding (in Sheppard's words) an "orchestral voice", which percolates as life-giving water through soil. On "Thirteen", one of seven tunes penned by the bandleader, swells of guitar move with a grace rarely encountered since, appropriately enough, Terje Rypdal's contributions to Ketil Bjørnstad's *The Sea*, also on ECM. The title track, by Brazilian songwriter Renato Teixeira, is a vessel drifting on the waves that surround it. Its contours, graceful as they are melodic, accommodate Benita and Rochford's infusions like sail to wind.

"Pop" returns to native lyricism, once again highlighting Aarset's textural relief with aching regard. "They Came From The North" delineates yet another altar for this intuitive rhythm section, whose attention to detail swings from guitar strings into Sheppard's sunlight. The tenderness of "With Every Flower That Falls", written as part of a live soundtrack to Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, sashays with all the monochromatic charm it can muster, turning silence into song and leaving "All Becomes Again" to dance as if alone in the dawn, holding onto last night's dream with the conviction of someone newly in love.

All of this is cloaked in "Forever And A Day", two takes of which frame the album in an aquatic ellipsis. With an atmospheric integrity made possible only by such a combination of musicians, engineer (hat tip to the great Stefano Amerio in Lugano) and producer Manfred Eicher at the helm, the port of your listening may just feel emptier than you ever imagined without its docking.

For more information, visit ecmrecords.com. Sheppard is at *Jazz Standard* Mar. 19th-20th with Carla Bley. See *Calendar*.



Ornettiquette
Chris Pasin (Planet Arts)
Piano Works XIII: Melodic Ornette Coleman
Joachim Kühn (ACT Music)
by George Kanzler

Aside from the keening, authoritative sound of his alto saxophone, there is little to link the variety of Ornette Coleman's music in his six decades of prodigious creativity. These two albums present quite different versions of Coleman (who would have turned 89 this month), which is very understandable as trumpeter Chris Pasin's *Ornettiquette*, also the name of his band here, deals with Coleman's first decade in the jazz limelight, beginning in the late '50s, while pianist Joachim Kühn primarily rescues compositions Coleman wrote for concerts the pair did in the last five years of the 20th century, pieces only performed once and never

recorded. Coleman in his late 20s-30s was considerably more buoyant and blues-bop-ish than the more schematic and more melodic, aesthetician in his 60s.

Ornettiquette is most a tribute album when Pasin recreates the instrumentation of the quartet Coleman originally brought to New York's Five Spot Café in 1959: Trumpet, alto saxophone, bass and drums. The opening track, "OCDC", although a Pasin original, sounds like it would have been right at home on Coleman's groundbreaking Atlantic LP, *The Shape of Jazz to Come*; the title is an homage combining the initials of Coleman and his trumpeter on that LP, Don Cherry. The early quartet sound is also invoked on "Tomorrow Is the Question", the title song of Coleman's Contemporary LP, expressed with a bright, jaunty pop bounce, as well as on the album closer, another Pasin original, "PTU". But Pasin is not just presenting tribute band recreations, he's expanding on and personalizing his admiration for Coleman's music. Bringing distinctive colors to the band are the inclusion, on the five other tracks, of Karl Berger's vibraphone or piano and, on three, of vocalist Ingrid Sertso (both, along with Coleman, founded the Creative Music Studio). Coleman's "Jayne" has a cool, tropical James Bond film theme feel thanks to vibraphone. Sertso adds her own lyrics to Albert Ayler's "Ghosts" and Coleman's "Lonely Woman" as well as adding a scat chorus and monologue to Coleman's "When Will The Blues Leave". Throughout, alto saxophonist Adam Siegel valiantly channels (his sometimes overly caustic idea of) Coleman's style while Pasin, bassist Michael Bisio and drummer Harvey Sorgen conjure up the spirit that animated the Five Spot Café 60 years ago.

Piano Works XIII: Melodic Ornette Coleman presents 11 of the 170 pieces that Coleman wrote and performed with German pianist Joachim Kühn in concert from 1995-2000. From them and different, bookending versions of "Lonely Woman", Kühn has created a rich, melodic tapestry sounding more like a piano rhapsody, or series of études, in the European classical musical tradition than it does anything that could be called avant garde jazz. Kühn shows that Coleman could create memorable, simple melodies ("Physical Chemistry") as well as complex, choral-like passages ("Songworld") and sumptuously lyrical ones ("Lost Thoughts"). He even borrowed, slyly, more than the title of "Somewhere" from Leonard Bernstein (an early Coleman admirer). Kühn's seven-plus minute bonus track, "The End Of The World", is as explosive as the previous tracks are rhapsodic.

For more information, visit planetarts.com and actmusic.com



The Hands
Fire! (Rune Grammofon)
Svårmod Och Vemod Är Värdesinnen
The End (RareNoise)
Timeless
Mats Gustafsson/Jason Adasiewicz
(Corbett vs. Dempsey)
by George Grella

Hybrids like jazz-rock have been deeply and permanently established for decades and jazz in general has fruitfully engaged with other musics since its earliest years. But despite the Jaco Pastorius tune "Punk Jazz" and the personal efforts of John Zorn, there's been little in the way of successful punk-jazz. Perhaps the irreverence of punk, its essential quality, is too much at odds with a music that carries a lot of ancestor worship around in its baggage.

So thanks to Mats Gustafsson for playing. The talented saxophonist has bridged the world of jazz and

punk, not merely through the superficial connection via aggressive noise that can link Peter Brötzmann with electric-guitar feedback, but by working with such boundary demolishing and musically skillful artists like Neneh Cherry, The Ex and Sonic Youth. Of the three albums on review, two of them are further extensions of Gustafsson's main focus of work, the third is something of a surprise.

The Hands and *Svårmod Och Vemod Är Värdesinnen* come, respectively, from Fire! and The End, two collaborative ensembles in which Gustafsson is a key member. The music is riff-based, raw, quasi-belligerent, very punk in the stripped-down materials and driving forward motion, a DIY aesthetic expressed by excellent, improvising musicians.

The Hands is heavy, mosh-pit jazz, the trio of Gustafsson, bassist Johan Berthling and drummer Andreas Werliin a darker, rougher, more obsessive version of the saxophonist's group The Thing. In their publicity materials, the band claims they've been likened to The Jimi Hendrix Experience, but they are nothing like that. *The Hands* is subterranean music, not just that it sounds like a band playing in a basement club, but that it seems to have been brought out from underground with a grim determination.

The Hands is visceral and exhilarating in such a way that's it's more than fair to call Fire! a rock band—they have the beat, riffs, an aggressive spirit that comes in no small part out of Gustafsson. This is a setting that concentrates his talents more directly than Colin Stetson, more concisely than Peter Brötzmann, favoring recognizable pitch over sheer sound. The stripped-down material and expressive weight on tracks like "Up. And Down" and "To Shave the Leaves. In Red. In Black" have a fierceness that, with their grinding heaviness, sounds like protest music.

Svårmod Och Vemod Är Värdesinnen is close in feeling, but more varied and ultimately inconsistent. The core of Gustafsson and a rhythm section that includes drummer Greg Saunier (of Deerhoof fame) is terrific but the pairing of Gustafsson with fellow saxophonist Kjetil Møster is odd—the two neither blend nor contrast and the live electronics obscure just who is saying what. Vocalist Sofia Jernberg is all over the place. On rugged, howling tracks like "Svårmod" and "Vemod" her wordless singing is a gripping, colorful counterpoint to the jackknife grooves. Jernberg has an impressive array of techniques and an ear for great sound, but her longer improvisations are disorganized, so aimless that they become irritating, then boring, and it's a challenge to stay interested across longer tracks like "Translated Slaughter" and "Don't Wait". The band's best efforts, and they are devoted, can't overcome the trite philosophizing of "Music is political / Music is political / It has to be" and the general egocentric void that opens when Jernberg is on an extended soliloquy.

But then *Timeless*, a duo album with vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz, is altogether different, somber and contemplative. It channels the spirit of its surprising source, guitarist John Abercrombie's classic 1974 ECM album and tune of the same name *Timeless*. Gustafsson spends more time on tenor than baritone, more time on melodies than gruff growling, and he and Adasiewicz even get near to swing on "Dagger". The music still has a darker emotional and intellectual edge than one normally encounters in jazz, but the album is about two musicians working with harmony and thematic material, stating it, reworking it between each other, having a conversation based on notes and phrases. To say this is straightahead playing is no slight. It's two intense musicians who have a great deal to say to each other and is packed full of abstract beauty and honest tenderness.

For more information, visit runegrammofon.com, rarenoiserecords.com and corbettvsdempsey.com. Fire! is at *Zürcher Gallery* Mar. 28th. See *Calendar*.