

## Wax in' Your Ears

Mark Isham/Art Lande  
*We Begin*  
ECM 1338

Time was that ECM was the advanced guard in this style of formal, Third Stream eclecticism. But what with Windham Hill capturing the New Age front and ECM moving to embrace the black guard, the pastiche of influences evidenced here adds up to a little of everything but not enough of anything. A kind of '80s sampler, *We Begin* offers one cybernetic dirge, a twelve-tone-meet-Miles piece, some Reichian minimalism, a New Age processional or two and a Monkian harmonic exercise.

Lande—fondly remembered for his years here at Cornish and ever the imp of the musically perverse—and trumpeter/synthesist/soundtrack composer Isham were stalemates in the spasmodically brilliant Rubisa Patrol sextet of the late '70s. They are both fine stylists—Lande owing to Bill Evans harmonies and a rhapsodic, classically-influenced approach that echoes Bartok and Chopin. In Isham you hear the harmon-muted cry of mid-to-late period Miles. Many of these tunes, particularly the title cut and the opening “Melancholy of Departure,” are tone poems set around simple, declarative, three-or five-note trumpet chants, shaded by synth and percussion. The former is stately and processional with the feeling of Burgundian folk music, the latter a dirge set to a jitterbug drum figure that manages to recall both Jo Jones and Sousa... this is some serious eclecticism, folks.

“Surface and Symbol” is a Riley/Reich development of multiple voices shifting against a steady state synth pulse. On “Sweet Circle” the unadorned piano of Lande takes us on a Monk-inflected stroll around the cycle of fifths, a respite from multi-tracking that showcases Lande’s richly informed phrasing and crisp attack. If you are an adherent of Isham’s movie music, this set represents an expertly-crafted variation on that theme. If you prefer Lande’s stellar solo work, or his perfectly-matched collaborations with Paul McCandless, this set falls short in humor, muscle and piano.

Joseph Murphy

Art Lande  
*Hardball/Piano Solos*  
Great American Music Hall Records

*Hardball* is the first of four planned solo piano recordings by Art Lande for the new Great American Music Hall label. Folksy liner notes inform us that these were first-take, let-the-tape-roll affairs that had the pianist putting down 43 tracks in two nights—a Zen painting approach where the fingers never leave the keys. They are testament to Lande’s skill and spontaneity. A loose-limbed, lolling swing



Art Lande

colors such tunes as “Ain’t Misbehavin,” “Willow Weep for Me” and “Summertime,” with the whole project evoking an all-American tone—starry nights, small boys at swimmin’ holes, etc. Even on the standards there is enough surprise—a dropped phrase here, a change-up in delivery there—to prevent musical ennui. Hints of the late Vince Guraldi’s bright, melodic style show up in “Carry Me Back”; Lande’s own playful chopped cadences show up throughout. Although this is not a pyrotechnic set by any means, the sprung phrases of “Round Tripper” remind that here is a pianist that, given the setting and desire, can dazzle as well as entertain.

One of the hallmarks of Lande’s style is a Monkian regard for the humorous and so here, in the kinetic “Round Tripper,” and the Pete Incaviglia dedication, “The Wiggle,” we get the wink and nod and unexpected turn of phrase that lightens up and focuses each tune. *Hardball* finds us around the piano bar with our eccentric Uncle Art, a few umbrella drinks maybe, the steady babble of the game on the bar TV. Hey, lighten up, it’s always summer somewhere.

Joseph Murphy

The Capp/Pierce Juggernaut  
featuring Ernestine Anderson  
*Live at the Alley Cat*  
Concord Jazz CCD-4336

Seven seconds into this disc and you’re hooked. The Basie-influenced Frank Capp/Nat Pierce Juggernaut plays with clarity, precision, and irresistible energy. In short, they swing. The 16-man group maintains an impressive roster of soloists (Snooky Young, Conte Condoli, Bob Cooper and Red Holloway to name a few) backed up by an impeccable rhythm section: Capp (drums), Pierce (piano), Ken

Pohlman (guitar) and Chuck Berghofer (bass). The live recording is superior. Each instrument is clearly defined yet perfectly blended. The opener, a Pierce original called “A Jug or Not,” sets a pace that never lets up. Five joyous cuts later Ernestine Anderson joins the band with a rollicking version of “I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart.” Relaxed, in great voice and obviously having the time of her life, Ernestine follows with “Spring is Here” and a bossa nova treatment of a personal favorite of mine, “Street of Dreams.” Then Ms. E bends your ear with an uncut version of “Never Make Your Move Too Soon”—bluesy, sassy, world-wise and endearing. Already on my “Top Five of ’88” list, this is a winner! My nomination for a Grammy.

Sandy Burlingame

Lunar Adventures  
*Lunar Adventures* (Cassette)  
*New Moon* (Cassette)

Available from Coat Cooke, 1150A Forge Walk, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6H 3P9

Vancouver, B.C.’s Lunar Adventures has hit upon a unique ensemble sound that gathers the innovations of the last 20 years of jazz history—’60s free jazz rave ups, ’70s Ornette Coleman harmolodics, ’80s no-wave minimalism and scronk guitar—into a new package that’s tied off with a bow of urban color. The ensemble sound derives its integrity from the unison lines of altoist Coat Cooke and guitarist Ron Samworth. Cooke is not your typical post-Parker saxophonist. His lines are deliberate and sparse, avoiding virtuosity for its own sake. He is also effective as a counter-melodicist behind Samworth’s scronk guitar and proficient at a number of styles. He can rock with appropriate growl, scratch and feedback, or can sound like Jim Hall with Paul Desmond (one of Ornette’s early influences).

The rhythm tandem of bassist Clyde Reed and drummer Greg Simpson is one of the most together sections I’ve heard in the Northwest. They bring a traditional jazz feel to whatever sound the group is exploring. These two tapes share some of the same tunes. It’s instructive to note how the group’s approach has solidified. The headlines are now more concise, the improvisations more thoughtful. “Pacific Lean Time” has also grown into a fully-realized performance gaining both length and clarity.

Lunar Adventures is from the provinces, but they’re sure not provincial. This band is so New York I can’t stand it.

Gary Bannister