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JANE BUNNETT

FEATURING GUITARISTS
**SPENCER BAREFIELD
& JOE MORRIS**

PLUS VIOLINIST
MARK FELDMAN

IN REVIEW
**ITALIAN MUSIC
MUSIQUE ACTUELLE
PIANO & GUITAR CDS
CANADIAN MUSIC**

PLUS THE 1995
WRITERS CHOICE



JAZZ FROM CANADA

A Regular Feature by SCOTT YANOW



The dozen CD's covered in this article help to define the modern mainstream (with a touch of the avant-garde) that is to be found in today's Canadian jazz scene. Actually there is nothing strictly Canadian about most of this music, but on the other hand on a whole these performances certainly hold their own against comparable recordings by Americans and Europeans.

JOHN STETCH

Carpathian Blues
Terra Nova 9007 (65:03)

Pianist John Stetch and his excellent quartet (tenor-saxophonist Seamus Blake, Jesse Murphy or Ugonna Okegwo on bass and Jordi Rossy or Gene Jackson on drums) start off their Terra Nova set (available from Box 455, Sunland, CA, U.S.A. 90141-0455) by jamming on a couple of common chord changes (*Carpathian Blues* and *Phun Toon* which sounds like *The Preacher* with an added bridge), displaying their individual approaches to fairly basic material. As the program progresses the music becomes more original without losing its enthusiasm and passion. Whether it be the parade rhythms of *Inuit Talk*, a lyrical

Stetch-Blake duet on *Ocean Floors*, Cedar Walton's *Bolivia*, the driving *Baba Bakes* or a dissonant *Oleo*, all of the eight selections heard on this well-rounded set are quite enjoyable. Both John Stetch (who displays touches of Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea) and Seamus Blake have managed to find their own voices within the tradition without sounding stale or predictable. It should be very interesting to see where they go from here!

BRIAN BUCHANAN

Avenues
Jazz Focus 002 (56:47)

Philip Barker originally started the Jazz Focus label to record the great American pianist Jessica Williams but fortunately

he has also documented a few impressive Canadian musicians. Brian Buchanan, a talented modern bop-based pianist based in Calgary, is featured in three different settings on his CD. Six songs (four originals, Nat Adderley's *Old Country* and a swinging version of *I'm Getting Sentimental Over You*) have Buchanan leading a quintet with flügelhornist Bob Tildesley and Phil Dwyer on tenor. Two originals and Carlos Ward's particularly memorable *Pettiford Bridge* utilize a quartet with Buchanan and Tildesley and there are also a pair of duets (*My Foolish Heart* and *All Of You*) performed by the pianist and bassist Ken Coffey. In general the music ranges from straight ahead to post bop, all of it chordal based but none of it derivative. Highlights include Tildesley's trum-

pet solo on *Pettiford Bridge*, some excellent tenor playing by Dwyer on *I'm Getting Sentimental* and a cooking version of *All Of You*. This fine release is available from Jazz Focus, 2217 23rd St., S.W. Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2T 5H6.

DAVE YOUNG / PHIL DWYER QUARTET

Fables And Dreams
Justin Time 53-2 (57:03)

This CD features a quiet quartet that is often filled with inner tension and low-volumed heat. Guitarist Rob Piltch (whose tone is sometimes reminiscent of the late Jimmy Raney's) engages in close interplay with bassist Dave Young while Phil Dwyer contributes lyrical tenor solos along with some moody piano (sometimes sounding a bit like McCoy Tyner) and drummer Michel Lambert is tastefully supportive. Five of the nine songs are group originals while the other pieces (including an abstract *All Of Me* and a rather passionless *Fables Of Faubus*) almost sound like new compositions; the closing tenor-bowed bass duet on *Whims Of Chambers* is most memorable. Even if the music on this session is not all that unique, the well-played set should satisfy most jazz listeners.

PAUL BLEY / JANE BUNNETT

Double Time
Justin Time 58-2 (46:43)

Paul Bley learned long ago what it took many other avant-garde musicians (particularly saxophonists) years to realize, namely that it is not necessary to play free improvisations at a consistently ferocious level; one can improvise freely with lyricism, melodies and an inventive use of space. Throughout his often-fascinating duet set with Jane Bunnett (the latter is mostly on soprano but also plays some of her very individual flute), Bley is very much the leader, setting the atmosphere and the groove (when there is one). Other than *Music Matador* (which was written by Prince Lasha and Sonny Simmons 30 years ago), all of the 11 selections (which range in length from 41 seconds to eight minutes) were composed by Bley and / or Bunnett, much of it improvised on the

spot. Generally the performances are concise enough not to overstay their welcome with the most memorable tracks being Bunnett's scalar (a la Steve Lacy) *B&B On The Rocks*, the ballad *Foolishly*, and the delightfully overcrowded and constantly evolving *Green & Brown*. This is stimulating music that is subtle enough to reward repeated listenings. (These two releases are available from *Justin Time*, 5455 Rue Pare, Suite 101, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H4P 1P7)

NEW ORCHESTRA WORKSHOP

Now You Hear It
Nine Winds NWCD 0151 (66:02)

Although the title of New Orchestra Workshop makes it sound as if one large ensemble was featured throughout the CD, there are actually six adventurous and sometimes overlapping groups interpreting 11 selections from 1991. Lunar Adventures (during their two numbers) performs some free bop improvising with a steady pulse and highly individual solos by tenor-saxophonist Coat Cooke and the rockish guitarist Ron Samworth; the contributions of bassist Clyde Reed and drummer Gregg Simpson should not be overlooked. Roger Baird & MuseArt matches the leader-drummer with the potent team of pianist Paul Plimley and bassist Lisle Ellis. Plimley (one of Canada's great jazz treasures) uses percussive chords on the floating *Blues Out* a bit like Cecil Taylor circa 1960 while Ellis and Baird follow his every move; this track is the standout of the release.

Altoist Bruce Freedman (supported by bassist Clyde Reed and drummer Buff Allen) is lyrical on two fairly free ballads. Paul Plimley and Clyde Reed follow by engaging in three concise and explorative duets before one of Vancouver's most intriguing groups Garbo's Hat (a trio with singer Kate Hammett-Vaughan, saxophonist Graham Ord and bassist Paul Blaney features Hammett-Vaughan's warm voice on *Ossisil's Topic* and indulges in some odd sound explorations on *New Directions*. This consistently interesting disc concludes with Ord, Blaney and drummer Baird (along with percussionist

Jack Duncan and Joseph Dana on shakuhachi) improvising on the long and wandering *Extra Bar*. All in all, *Now You Hear It* allows listeners to hear some of the more advanced musicians active in Vancouver in 1992. (Available from *Nine Winds*, P.O. Box 1082, Beverly Hills, CA, U.S.A. 90213)

ART ELLEFSON

As If To Say
Sackville 2-2030 (64:42)

Art Ellefson is a tenor-saxophonist with a sound and style on the tenor that is reminiscent of Don Byas, Lucky Thompson and Benny Golson. It took a little while for this listener to get all that interested in his Sackville CD for the first three songs seemed overly dry and lacked strong melodies or much drive. However, Ellefson's enthusiastic soprano on *Motion Notion* seemed to have woken up the session (is it programmed on this release in chronological order?), and from then on plenty of heat is generated.

Ellefson is featured with a pianoless quartet comprised of his son Lee Ellefson on guitar, bassist Russell Botten and drummer Buff Allen. The joyful tenor-guitar duet on *Unframed*, the sly *Up Down Some Blues*, a cooking *Almost Will Be Mine*, the swinging and bluish *Meat Draw Blues* and a five-minute unaccompanied tenor solo (*Mellonova*) are five good reasons to acquire this release despite its slow start.

LABARBERA / SWAINSON / THOMPSON

JMOG
Sackville 2-2031 (56:59)

Tenor-saxophonist Pat LaBarbera, pianist Don Thompson, bassist Neil Swainson and drummer Joe LaBarbera team up on this Sackville CD for a set of originals (two apiece from the saxophonist and Swainson and three by Thompson). The music is generally modal-based with Pat LaBarbera showing the influence of John Coltrane. In fact, were it not for the sophistication of Swainson's bass playing, much of this session could have taken place in the late 1960's instead of 1992. >>>>>