

*Trio Caveat - Introspective Athletics /
Josh Sinton - Pine Barren
(Engine)
by Clifford Allen*

It's hard to tell exactly where it started, but the 'split' album can be traced back at least to the heyday of punk rock, related bands each gracing one side of a seven-inch single. Coming from punk rock as Engine Records founder Steven Walcott does, it's not particularly surprising that he'd find a way to cater to the fans' interests, releasing budget double-disc sets and this curious split CD by two rather different projects, Trio Caveat and reedman Josh Sinton's Pine Barren.

Bassist James Ilgenfritz and saxophonist Jonathan Moritz have been working in Trio Caveat for the better part of five years. Their initial EP, *Compliments of the Season* (KMB, 2008), joined them with drummer John McLellan. *Introspective Athletics* finds the drummer's chair absent and the addition of Chris Welcome on guitar. The instrumentation reflects Jimmy Giuffrè's trio with Jim Hall and Ralph Peña, but musically this is a far spikier affair, marking tension with flinty guitar strokes and tough, breathy saxophone harmonics. Were it not for Ilgenfritz' gorgeous, full tone and bright, keening pizzicato lines, the music might seem too rarified. Throughout nine improvisations, the trio

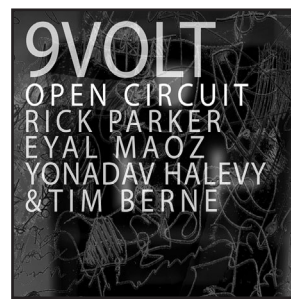
eke out a furrowed palette of metallic footfalls and eliding cubistic tendencies, resulting in a series of skewed but fascinating conversations.

Reedman Josh Sinton is primarily known for his soprano-less Steve Lacy repertory ensemble Ideal Bread and work with Anthony Braxton, Nate Wooley and Harris Eisenstadt. While all of this music is important and part of Sinton's personality, he hasn't had much chance to step out on his own as a leader. This solo recording of ten vignettes shifts focus to Sinton's arsenal and vision, with muscular and often aggressive pieces for baritone saxophone, contrabass and bass clarinet. An ensemble version has been recorded and released digitally on Prom Night, but these unaccompanied iterations stand up well, ranging from bright and mouthy boppishness to bluesy weight, microtonal sputter and layered minimalism. While the music is rooted in autobiographical excavation (as the accompanying online notes detail), Sinton's playing is wry and pure and his music relatable rather than cagey.

For more information, visit enginecompilation.bandcamp.com. Sinton is at Douglass Street Music Collective Nov. 2nd with Erika Dagnino and Nov. 26th-29th with Nate Wooley and ShapeShifter Lab Nov. 27th. See Calendar.



*Weight
Yoni Kretzmer 2Bass
Quartet (OutNow)*



*Open Circuit
9Volt
(OutNow)*

by Donald Elfman

Tenor saxophonist Yoni Kretzmer, guitarist Yair Yona and guitarist Ido Bukelman have come together to found OutNow Recordings, a new music label whose motto is, "Search for the sound you never stop hearing". The releases considered here celebrate the essence of improvised music: the convergence of what is happening now and what might be in the offing.

Kretzmer slams these notions to us immediately in how he approaches his own classic sax-bass-drums ensemble on *Weight*. For one thing, he adds an extra bass (uprights courtesy of Sean Conly and Reuben Radding), adding depth and expanding the core. The album states that the "written ideas" are by Kretzmer, indicating that the music blends a sense of the composed and the improvised. The album opens, appropriately, with "Number One" and all the players work to move the music forward but also up, down and sideways. It recalls the playing of avant garde pioneers like Frank Lowe, Albert Ayler and of, course, John Coltrane. "A Bit of Peace" almost suggests a kind of Ayler hymn, something that gives true shape to the word "peace". It's not necessarily quiet or even peaceful but rather it suggests that in some important ways the notion of peace may be clarified or measured in the form of music. After the tenor plays the 'theme', first the basses and then drums (Mike Pride) step forward to make forceful solo expressions.

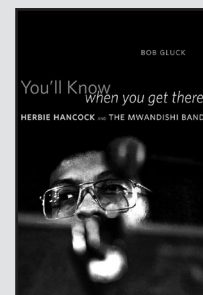
Imagine the energy enabled by a 9-volt battery and you begin to get a sense of the power generated by *Open Circuit*. Trombonist Rick Parker, guitarist Eyal Maoz and drummer Yonadav Halevy utilize electronics and sheer drive to create music with shape and pulse. Saxist Tim Berne complements this band with incisive, thrusting alto playing on four of the eight tracks.

Parker's "Squeegee" opens the set, building in intensity thanks to Halevy's propulsive drumming and the dynamic use of electronics. There is thematic material but the power and volume make it sound as if

it's growing organically on its own. Maoz wrote much of the material and he makes clear just how open his ears are with a tune like "Wind of Water", a combination of the most creative kind of rock balladry with the imagination of jazz and other new musics. "Yes Your Majesty" shares 'composer' credits among the three group members. It's a synthesis of many things that define powerful 'new' music - electronics and other sound elements, very free improvisation and the passion of the world of rock. It builds to powerful climaxes and ends suddenly and with conviction.

For more information, visit outnowrecordings.com. An OutNow showcase is at ShapeShifter Lab Nov. 23rd. See Calendar.

IN PRINT



*Herbie Hancock and The Mwandishi Band:
You'll Know When You Get There
Bob Gluck (University of Chicago Press)
by Tom Greenland*

With a few recent exceptions, surprisingly little scholarly work has focused on pianist/keyboardist Herbie Hancock, an oversight redressed by Bob Gluck's *You'll Know When You Get There*, which focuses on Hancock's post-Miles Mwandishi group, arguably the most creative period of his stunning career.

An accomplished keyboardist and electronic synthesist himself, Gluck provides a wealth of insight into Hancock's music, discussing his early influences and development; his solo and comping styles; his early solo career and tenure with Miles Davis; his experiments with timbre, ostinati, abstract harmony, open musical forms, electronic keyboards, sound effects and studio postproduction techniques and his approach to musical collectivism and spirituality. The book gives close readings of all of the Mwandishi band recordings, track by track, section by section, revealing the intricate interplay of improvisation and mixology, form and flow, funk and freedom that produced this innovative music. It also compares recorded versions of the repertoire with extant bootlegs of live concerts to give an indication of how the music evolved on the road.

Casual readers may get lost in the dense musical descriptions, particularly because the music itself is highly abstract, but for those who have heard these recordings, or are willing to follow the guided listening tour, Gluck's commentary is enlightening. Even better, he conducted extensive interviews with bandmembers and others affiliated with or influenced by the group, quoting them at length to provide insider perspectives, supplementing these with published reviews of gigs. Gluck also takes time to introduce the distinctive musical personalities of Buster Williams, Billy Hart, Bennie Maupin, Eddie Henderson and Julian Priestner and examines the influence of producer David Rubinson and synthesist Patrick Gleeson. What emerges is an incredible coalition of collective improvisers that straddled the 'divide' between postbop and postmodernism, the ultimate jazz jam band.

For more information, visit press.uchicago.edu. A book release event is at 92Y Tribeca Nov. 2nd.

ShapeShifter Lab

presents

Andy Milne - Benoît Delbecq
Crystal Magnets Piano Duo
November 28th-30th



with special guests

Nov. 28th - Ethan Iverson
Nov. 29th - Fred Hersch
Nov. 30th - Greg Osby
Michael Attias
Jacob Garchik
Vincent Chancey

doors @ 8pm, shows @ 8:30pm
\$15 cover for 2 sets (\$30 for 3 nights)

18 Whitwell Place, Brooklyn
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