



Ed Partyka Jazz Orchestra feat. Julia Oschewsky

Kopfkino

MONS 874608

★★★★½

Calling a big band a “jazz orchestra” can sometimes seem pretentious, but not in the case of Ed Partyka’s Berlin-based ensemble. His arrangements go well beyond the standard big band palette, exploiting timbre and dynamics to create the most vivid, coloristic sound possible.

Note, for example, the gorgeous pastels he gets at the beginning of “It’s The Peace That

Deafens,” deftly layering horn, clarinets, piano and tuba under a lilting flugelhorn melody. Or cue up his eerily despairing treatment of Harold Arlen’s “Out Of This World” and marvel at how, after breaking the song down to just an expressionist trio of piano, voice and Malte Schiller’s soprano saxophone, Partyka builds an almost Prokofievian sense of foreboding out of saxophones, flute, muted brass and percussion.

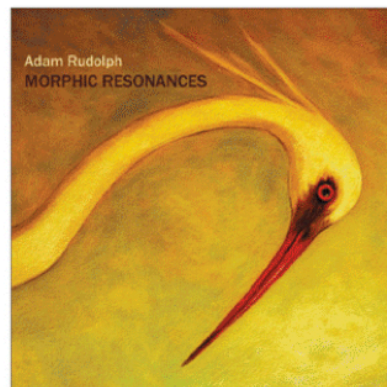
Julia Oschewsky’s creamy mezzo-soprano remains utterly relaxed even when placed against a screaming trumpet section. And the intricate backings Partyka places behind Paul Imm’s bass solo on “Fee Fi Fo Fum” succeed thanks to the band’s masterful command of dynamics. Add in the brassy, blustering swing of “The Summer Of My Discontent (Summer In My Disco Tent),” and *Kopfkino* stands as a thrilling slice of state-of-the-art big band jazz.

—J.D. Considine

Kopfkino: The Summer Of My Discontent (Summer In My Disco Tent); Out Of This World; Fee Fi Fo Fum; It’s The Peace That Deafens; One Two Three Ten; Ataraxia. (59:06)

Personnel: Ed Partyka, conductor and arranger; Oliver Leicht, alto and soprano saxophones, flute, clarinet, alto clarinet; Florian Trübsbach, alto saxophone, flute, alto flute, clarinet; Malte Schiller, tenor and soprano saxophones, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet; Florian Leuschner, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Katharina Thomsen, baritone and bass saxophones, bass and contrabass clarinets; Kirsty Wilson, English horn (5, 6); Felix Meyer, Benny Brown, Gerhard Ormig, Jörg Engels, Martin Auer, trumpet, flugelhorn; Linus Bernoulli, French horn; Simon Harter, Lukas Wyss, trombone; Robert Hedemann, bass trombone; Jan Schirmer, bass trombone, tuba; Hendrik Söll, piano; Paul Imm, bass; Reinhold Schmöler, drums; Julia Oschewsky, vocals.

Ordering info: monsrecords.de



Adam Rudolph

Morphic Resonances

META/MOD TECHNOLOGIES

★★★★½

This is the third collaboration between the Meta and MOD labels, presenting Adam Rudolph’s multifaceted approaches. For this last in the trilogy, several artists interpret a new set of Rudolph’s compositions.

The opening title piece, and second track “Syntactic Adventures,” are written for New York’s Momenta Quartet. Cello, viola and a pair of violins negotiate a dramatic and dark environment, delivering an opening flourish that breaks out into a scampering pizzicato section. These modes alternate, as singing tonalities paint a warm shimmer, organically turning from activity to reflection and back again. Nearing the end of the second piece, a purposeful canter develops, suggestive of works by Steve Reich or Kevin Volans.

Two compositions are penned for Kaoru Watanabe (flute) and Marco Cappelli (acoustic guitar), this duo adopting a cautious interaction on “Garden, Ashes,” pacing around each other and eventually discovering common ground as they stride off in tandem. Rudolph is primarily concerned with creating a depth of concentrated listening, usually resolved by a process of propulsive activation. Sometimes he takes the musicians back for further contemplation before continuing the journey.

The album’s closing “Lamento” sees Watanabe and Cappelli departing softly, immediately following the more vigorous “Coincidentia Oppositorum,” which is almost as brash as a typical Louis Andriessen work. One of the album’s best pieces, “Orbits,” is performed by the Odense Percussion Group, from Denmark, their spread ranging from vibraphone to tympani.

—Martin Longley



Cowboys and Frenchmen

Bluer Than You Think

OUTSIDE IN MUSIC

★★★★★

Cowboys and Frenchmen, a quintet led by saxophonists Ethan Helm (alto and soprano) and Owen Broder (alto and baritone), embraces and expands on a range of influences that’s exceptionally broad even for this eclectic era. Also featuring pianist Chris Ziemba, bassist Ethan O’Reilly and drummer Matt Honor, the ensemble is smart, cohesive and credible in a way like The Bad Plus or Mostly Other People Do The Killing, using virtuosic skills and rhythmic power to walk the line between irony and earnestness, with listenability as high a priority as group creativity.

Bluer Than You Think, their second album, opens with the John Coltrane-meets-klezmer orientalism of “Wayfarer,” then takes a hard turn with “Beasts,” based on episodes of a Steve Reich-style phased phrase alternating with a kinky line. On “Companion Plan” a ’60s soul vamp gets a riff and harmony update, and Helm and Broder—on alto and bari, respectively—solo with guttural power. “Lillies Beneath The Bridge” is a vehicle for pianist Ziemba’s balladic lyricism and Honor on brushes, Helm and Broder sighing

in mournful unison; “Clear Head” includes a brisk, bright sax duet that evolves within prescribed but not limiting parameters to end with multi-tracked soprano sax. “Bluer Than You Think” has the funky bass intro, gospelish piano comping and bold, dark hook of a radio hit, but opens wide for blowing and a drums dance that leads to a genuine, live-performed fadeout. —Howard Mandel

Bluer Than You Think: Wayfarer; Beasts; Companion Plan; Lillies Beneath The Bridge; Clear Head; Bluer Than You Think; C&F Jam; Uncommon Sense. (57:30)

Personnel: Ethan Helm, alto and soprano saxophones; Owen Broder, alto and baritone saxophones; Chris Ziemba, piano; Ethan O’Reilly, bass; Matt Honor, drums.

Ordering info: outsideinmusic.com

Morphic Resonances: Morphic Resonances; Syntactic Adventures; Garden, Ashes; Strange Thought; Orbits; Coincidentia Oppositorum; Lamento. (55:00)

Personnel: Momenta Quartet, strings; Kaoru Watanabe, flute; Marco Cappelli, guitar; Sana Niagano, violin; Odense Percussion Group; Figura/Kammerat Orkester Ensemble.

Ordering info: metarecords.com