

Sue McCreech

Look Back and Love

Tru-Nu TNCD355 ★★

Sue McCreech (v, p, g), plus various personnel including Martin Shaw (t), John Horler (p), Jim Muller (g), Mario Caribe (b) and Stu Brown (d). Rec. date not stated



This sixth album from singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Sue McCreech presents an eclectic anthology of some of her finest original recordings over the last 15 years, including the rim shot driven 'Only Here', the decidedly trippy 'Nut Tree', and the modal explorations of 'Other Times We Fly'. Twice shortlisted for the International Songwriting Competition, there's also a quartet of new songs, all of which are highlights. 'Keep This Love Safe' is a ballad which packs real dramatic heft, while the enigmatically titled 'Mother Sister Father Brothers My Man Child and His Mama' documents the pain of not receiving love from within your own family, and the joy of finding it elsewhere. Recorded live at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, 'Til I Am In The Wrong Place' is a disquieting, brooding slice of urban angst. By contrast, the outer-spacious 'Infinity' casts a warm glow and brings the collection to a beatific close. **Peter Quinn**

Mat Maneri/Evan Parker/Lucian Ban

Sounding Tears

Clean Feed Records CF425CD ★★

Evan Parker (ss, ts), Mat Maneri (vla) and Lucian Ban (p). Rec. September 2014

Mat Maneri so often lends the distinctive cry-point tone of his microtonal viola improvisations to other people's projects that the prospect of him inviting musicians to step inside a world of his own devising is always enticing. Maneri describes *Sounding Tears*, his first release as leader for 12 years, as "Lester Young mixed with something insane; rooted in the past of an alternate universe which may never have existed." We're not told whether Lester Young was explicitly discussed when Evan Parker and the ex-pat Romanian pianist Lucian Ban entered a New Jersey studio to record the album, but the context Maneri provides leads Parker towards seeking out silky, fine-spun lines – this is empathically not the 'hot' Parker we hear in his trio with Alexander von Schlippenbach, nor the Parker who gorges on extended technique or circular breathing. 'This!' veers towards the brilliant melodic corners of Thelonious Monk as diced up, criss-crossed lines are nailed to the spot by Ban's striding,

rolling left hand patterns. Otherwise the textures are noticeably sparse, melting as they coast towards your ears. Maneri's knack of generating melodies that are authentically microtonal, rather than merely microtonally inflected, is unflinching and his explorations oblige Parker to rethink the space, both rhythmic and tonal, between his own notes. Lucian Ban's networks of counterpoint also buckle around the bend of Maneri's crinkled notes; but, as in the final 'Hymn', his habit of subliminally tracing conventional harmonic triads embeds supple tension into the language of this thoughtful, allusive trio. **Philip Clark**

Jason Miles

Kind of New 2: Blue Is Paris

Lightyear (digital-only release) ★★

Jason Miles (ky), Vinnie Zummo (g), Jay Rodriguez (ts, bcl), Adam Dorn, Reggie Washington (b) and Gene Lake (d), plus special guests Maya Azucena (v), Russell Gunn, Theo Croker, Patches Stewart, Jukka Eskola (t), Ricky Kej (v, perc, f), Jeff Coffin (sax) and Ricardo Silveira (g). Rec. date not stated

In December 2015, keyboardist/producer Jason Miles was in Paris promoting his album *Kind of New*. It was the aftermath of the Paris terror attacks, and Miles was moved by the spirit of the city. Back home, he was inspired to write a song, 'Blue Is Paris', a mid-tempo homage to the city. He originally planned to fit the song into a new album and then an idea struck him – why not create different versions of the tune? The idea was inspired, says Miles, when as a child, he heard an album featuring 12 versions of George Shearing's 'Lullaby of Birdland'. In this case, Miles has used nine artists (including himself) to produce nine versions of 'Blue Is Paris', each representing a time period or weather type (such as

dawn, afternoon, twilight and sunshine). It's a brave venture, because repeating the same tune throughout an album asks a lot of the listener, no matter how good the song is. But his idea pays off, because the artists he has gathered together approach the music in a variety of ways that keep the music sounding fresh. These include four trumpeters, a vocalist and a world music artist, each stamping their identity on the music. Highlights include, 'Dawn', featuring Jukka Eskola on open horn, complete with Echoplex effect; Russell Gunn's stirring trumpet on 'Nighttime'; 'Sunset', where guitarist Ricardo Silveria lays down a series of Wes Montgomery-style licks; 'Sunshine' features Maya Azucena's powerful, anguished vocals that tell the story of loss and grief, while Ricky Kej's lyric-less vocals, tabla and flute on 'Morning' infuse the tune with an Eastern flavour. A note too, for Miles' own playing, which provides a solid foundation and occasionally comes to the fore. *Blue Is Paris* is an interesting concept and proof that even the darkest moments can create some light. **George Cole**

Misha Mullov-Abbado

Cross-Platform Interchange

Edition EDN1091 ★★

Misha Mullov-Abbado (db, bg), James Davison (t, fhn), Matthew Herd (as), Sam Rapley (ts, cl), Liam Dunachie (p, Fender Rhodes), Scott Chapman (d) and Elad Neeman (perc). Rec. October 2016

Cross-Platform Interchange is the young bassist Misha Mullov-Abbado's second album for Edition following debut *New Ansonia*, which he recorded after winning the Kenny Wheeler Jazz Prize in 2014 having graduated from the Royal Academy. The bassist is the only son of the Russian violinist Viktoria Mullova and late Italian conductor Claudio Abbado. At this

point comparisons could be made between Mullova-Abbado and a certain Kyle Eastwood, another double bassist with a high-profile artistic family background and composer of an enjoyable, light-hearted, high-spirited, yet fairly innocuous brand of jazz with solid ties to the tradition. Leading his septet, Mullov-Abbado's unruffled musical eclecticism reflects the album's dedication to a love of travelling and movement, hence the title. The musical journey mirroring the physical one. The retro 'Gromit's Grand Outing' is a novel mix of flapper jazz dancehall and 52nd Street bebop, and is very convincingly executed by the septet made up of the bassist's ex-Academy peers; 'Still Hidden Morning' is super-chilled cosmic lounge nu-jazz, 'Waves' showcases the impressive young Sam Rapley's Stan Getz-ish tenor saxophone, and the Afro-Cuban party vibe of 'Hair of the Bop' rounds things off nicely. Impressively mature playing all-round, and a quality sound courtesy of the bassist-leader alongside experienced producer Duncan Bridgeman. If it's not clear at the moment where the bassist-composer might be going with all this, he's certainly spreading some good jazz vibes along the way. **Selwyn Harris**

Quinsin Nachoff/Mark Helias/Dan Weiss

Ethereal Trio

Whirlwind Recordings WR4706 ★★

Quinsin Nachoff (ts), Mark Helias (b) and Dan Weiss (d). Rec. 26 April 2016

This is a quintessential modern saxophone trio album. The instrumental mastery of all three players is beyond doubt and they make a strong band of equals. All the compositions are Nachoff's and they range from the relatively swift 'Clairvoyant Jest', with all three stepping around each other in an elaborate modern dance, to the more serene 'Gravitas', in which Nachoff sets gently swooning, long notes against arco bass and rustling brushes. 'Imagination Reconstruction' has the mood of three men absorbed in finding their way through a complex mathematical puzzle. There is composed music and there is improvising in a relatively free manner, but the joins between the two methods are barely discernible. The intellectual searching of this music overrides any wild emotions making it sometimes an overly cerebral experience, an impression exacerbated by Nachoff's dry tone. The listener must rely upon the richness of Helias' sound and the atmospheric range of Weiss for a wider range of rewards. **Peter Bacon**

Quinsin Nachoff

