

Morgan Rewind: A Tribute to Lee Morgan, Vol. 1
Roberto Magris Quintet (Jmood)
 by Donald Elfman

Trumpeter Lee Morgan was shy of 34 years old when he was shot and killed at Slugs' in New York in 1972, yet his brash, soulful playing - out of Dizzy Gillespie - is a vital part of many of the recordings that jazz lovers revere. He wrote killer tunes, played with Art Blakey, Wayne Shorter and Jackie McLean, to name just three, and has inspired generations of trumpeters. Italian pianist Roberto Magris has transcribed enough Morgan tunes for two volumes of this very special tribute and even written some tunes in honor of the delightful Lee.

Magris leads a quintet that includes Houston native Brandon Lee filling the trumpet chair, Logan Richardson of Kansas City on alto saxophone, Elisa Pruett from Hemet, California on bass and one of Morgan's Philly boys, Albert "Tootie" Heath on drums. (As an added bonus on the disc there's an audio interview with Heath about his time with and recollections of Lee Morgan.)

These players have the temperament, the sound and the passion to make these tunes come alive. "Ceora", from Morgan's *Cornbread* album, has always been a gorgeous, Latin-ish ballad that is lyrical, swinging and soulful at once. Lee and Richardson

beautifully play the head, with the sensitive and appealing accompaniment of the leader and his rhythm players. Magris' opening solo reveals at once what he's about - someone who's listened to the history but makes his own way. He suggests economy but is busy when he needs to be to get the groove moving.

Magris' own tunes are sassy and very much the 'children' of Lee Morgan. "Lee-Too" is a shuffling gas that calls to mind Morgan's best work with Blakey. Another highlight is the great "Mr. Kenyatta", Morgan's tribute to the African leader. Heath's accents suggest the homeland and drive the soloists to explore the world. The leads blast forth over the rhythm and find warmth as well as excitement. In fact, it's that rhythmic pulse, so beautifully present in every tune thanks to Magris and his cohorts, which reanimates this music.

For more information, visit jmoodrecords.com



Uneathish
Sarah Bernstein (Phase Frame Music)
 by Elliott Simon

Beat poets used jazz as a backdrop for their prose but their approach was more parallel than integrative and more deferential than symbiotic. While *Uneathish*

invites that comparison, violinist/poet Sarah Bernstein has instead created compositions that are post-Beat holistic works of art. Her muse is more the performance poetry of Hedwig Gorski than Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* set to a soundtrack of Miles or Trane.

Bernstein attacks a diverse array of subjects with staccato jibes and jabs that can require some interpretation. "War" is "fear within a square" while "Normality" is feeling that escalates into insanity and is then transformed into normality. Her gift though is the exquisite interlacing of the rhythm and feel of her words with the rhythm and feel of the music. Bernstein's violin is also a versatile voice and she uses some electronics to shape its sound.

Percussionist Satoshi Takeishi is Bernstein's rhythmical partner on these duets and he has never sounded more at home. His multiple percussive timbres result in a broad, at times regal, sonic gestalt that is worldly yet personal. The ironically titled opening track "It's Over" includes beautifully pure marimba tones, which are a wonderfully earthy addition to Takeishi's usual exotic palette. He provides a solid base for Bernstein's soaring violin and vocals while also displaying his own unique voicings. "Possession" has Bernstein dispassionately ticking off weighty concepts to a linear pizzicato/percussive march. The poetic faux-rocker "And I will" includes clever lyrical word play and a middle that would not be out of place as part of a Jim Morrison soliloquy. Two of three instrumental tracks enable the musicians to bob, weave and blend in a less constrained atmosphere while "Three Wishes" shines the spotlight on Bernstein's interesting solo harmonic approach.

For more information, visit phaseframemusic.com. Bernstein is at University of the Streets Sep. 17th. See Calendar.

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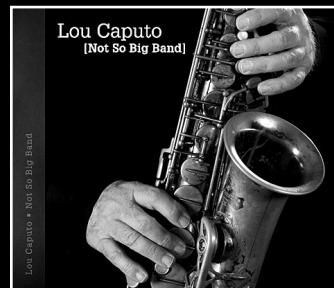
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