

Electric Squeezebox Orchestra

Cheap Rent

OA2 RECORDS 22120

★★★★½

Humor and camaraderie characterize the thoroughly enjoyable debut from this communal big band with an ongoing Sunday residency at a stylish and comfortable subterranean venue in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood.

Led by trumpeter Erik Jekabson, the ESO is an impressively democratic group. On this album, 15 of the 23 members have solos, and five contribute original compositions. *Cheap Rent* opens with a bright-sounding arrangement of Wayne Shorter's "ESP," and the repertoire of Shorter's longtime comrade Herbie Hancock is also visited in the form of a version of "People Music" that maintains the electric cool of the original 1976 recording.

The title track, written by trumpeter Darren Johnston, could be interpreted as an ironic nod to the Bay Area's skyrocketing housing market. Alto saxophonist Sheldon Brown's "Bolenge Shuffle" could energize the dance floor of many a wedding reception. And Garland's "Gap Toothed Grin" brings a welcomed second-line spirit to the bandstand. —Yoshi Kato

Cheap Rent: ESP; Cheap Rent; Electric Squeezebox; Compus Mentis; Bolenge Shuffle; It's Gonna Be Alright; Gap Toothed Grin; Chataigne Grilles; People Music; Trotsky. (66:33)

Personnel: Erik Jekabson, trumpet; Darren Johnston, Doug Morton (1, 2, 4–8), Henry Hung (2, 3, 5–8, 10), Dave Scott (1, 3, 4, 9, 10), Ian Carey (9), trumpets; Sheldon Brown, Kasey Knudsen, alto saxophones; Michael Zilber, Marcus Stephens (1–4, 6–8, 10), Teddy Raven (5, 9), tenor saxophones; Charlie Gurke, baritone saxophone; Rob Ewing, Mitch Butler (1–4, 7, 10), Danny Lubin-Laden (5, 6, 8, 9), Patrick Malabuyo, trombones; Richard Lee, bass trombone; Grant Levin (1–4, 7, 10), Colin Hogan (5, 6, 8, 9), piano; Jordan Samuels, guitar; Tommy Folen, bass; Eric Garland (1–4, 7, 10), Alan Hall (5, 6, 8, 9), drums.

Ordering info: oa2records.com



Scott DuBois

Winter Light

ACT 9810

★★★★

Guitarist Scott DuBois shapes an astonishing variety of sounds on *Winter Light*, an album that changes as starkly as the atmosphere it conjures. In a sometimes joyous, often knotty, tangle with bassist Thomas Morgan, drummer Kresten Osgood and reedist Gebhard Ullmann, DuBois has come up with seven challenging but ultimately winning tracks.

Abstract yet lyrical, these excursions pulsate with determination as they work their way toward wonder. And if they're not exactly swinging—groove is not part of this universe—they're absorbing.

DuBois uses his guitar largely for shadowing and background. He doesn't solo much, but when he does, as on "Early Morning Forest," he's startling and full-bodied, even rhapsodic.

Ullmann is dour on bass clarinet and explosive on tenor saxophone; check out his range on "Noon White Mountain," a joyous mini-symphony unto itself. The tune shifts gears constantly, as does the rest of this album. DuBois' music is proudly irregular, but no matter how discursive the tune, the group keeps it on track. Were these considered classical compositions, they'd be tone poems. —Carlo Wolff

Winter Light: First Light Tundra; Early Morning Forest; Late Morning Snow; Noon White Mountain; Afternoon Ice Fog; Evening Blizzard; Night Tundra. (68:35)

Personnel: Scott DuBois, guitar; Thomas Morgan, bass; Kresten Osgood, drums; Gebhard Ullmann, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet.

Ordering info: actmusic.com



Michel Godard & Le Miroir du Temps

A Serpent's Dream

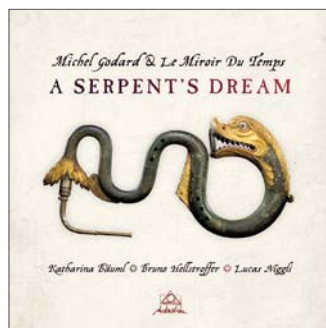
INTUITION 34402

★★★★

French tuba player Michel Godard burst onto the French scene in the 1980s. Since then, he has added to his arsenal the electric bass and the serpent, a medieval and snake-shaped wind instrument that was a predecessor to the tuba. *A Serpent's Dream* is his first recording fully dedicated to the serpent.

His quartet Le Miroir du Temps features other obscure instruments: Oboist Katharina Bäuml plays the *shawm*, which was the main double reed instrument in Renaissance-era music; Brunno Hellstroffer performs on the *theorbo*, a 16th-century string instrument belonging to the lute family; and drummer Lucas Niggli uses a wide array of percussion.

The album has many oases, starting with Bäuml's unaccompanied and straightforward rendition of "In Splendoribus." Other highlights include elements from the jazz tradition, such as when the oboist and tubist weave counterpoint lines on "Le Miroir Du Temps" and "A La Folie." "L'École De La Procrastination" is Niggli's creative tour de force, a virtuosic yet unassuming performance. —Alain Drouot



A Serpent's Dream: Serpent's Dream; Days Of Weeping Delights; In Splendoribus; Le Miroir Du Temps; Miserere; L'École De La Procrastination; Le Gardien Des Rêves; Old Black Snake Blues; Our Spanish Love Song; Les Portes Du 7e Ciel; A La Folie; A Trace Of Grace; Le Sommeil. (49:39)

Personnel: Michel Godard, serpent, electric bass; Katharina Bäuml, shawm; Brunno Hellstroffer, theorbo; Lucas Niggli, drums, percussion; Airelle Besson, trumpet (9).

Ordering info: intuition-music.com

Patrick Williams

Home Suite Home

BFM JAZZ 302 062 432 2

★★★★½

Jovial nostalgia reigns as Patrick Williams, dean of Hollywood studio orchestras, taps a crew of seasoned veterans to play demanding charts with executive precision. On *Home Suite Home*, the band swings with smooth, cinematic grace, scooping up dollops of sixties juggernaut swagger along the way.

The mastermind composer/bandleader who has written some of America's best-loved TV show and film themes (he's won four Emmys and two Grammys) rests his case in this extended family celebration that balances robust brass section work, Dave Grusin's crystal piano and airtight charts.

First-call vocal collaborators make good-natured cameos. Patti Austin kicks off with her animated shout-out to Roseland Ballroom's sepia-tint jitterbuggers, and in a globetrotter's tryst, Tierney Sutton meets Frank Sinatra Jr. to drop-those-other-two-sandals on a sandy strand.

But a tender/tough dedication to Williams' wife, Catherine, is the show-stealer. "Blue Mist" opens with an arresting solo by guest trumpeter Arturo Sandoval, who then engages in three dramatic duos with Grusin. The impeccably tiered piece builds to a sweetly paced conclusion. —Fred Bouchard

Home Suite Home: 52nd & Broadway; Home Suite Home I: Elizabeth (The Beautiful Scientist); II: Greer (The Dreamer); III: Patrick B. (The Real Deal); A Hefti Dose Of Basie; I've Been Around; Blue Mist (For Catherine); That's Rich (For Buddy). (51:01)

Personnel: Dave Grusin, piano; Chuck Berghofer, bass; Peter Erskine, drums; Dean Parks, guitar; Dan Higgins, Jeff Driskill, alto saxophone; Bob Sheppard, Tom Scott, tenor saxophone; Gene Cipriano, baritone saxophone; Wayne Bergeron, Dan Formero, Bob Summers, Michael Stever, Arturo Sandoval, (7) trumpets; Charlie Loper, Andy Martin, Bob McChesney, trombones; Craig Gosnell, bass trombone; Dan Grecco, percussion; Patti Austin (1); Frank Sinatra, Jr., Tierney Sutton (6), vocals.

Ordering info: bfmjazz.com

