

# Record Reviews



## JD ALLEN RADIO FLYER

*Sitting Bull; Radio Flyer; The Angelus Bell; Sancho Panza; Heureux; Daedalus; Ghost Dance* (53.59)

Allen (ts); Liberty Ellman (g); Gregg August (b); Rudy Royston (d). New Jersey, 2 January 2017.

### Savant 2162 ★★★★

Radio Flyer is the official maker of the Little Red Wagon and other toys that spark imagination. So says its website. For saxophonist JD Allen, imagination is what's needed under Trump, where "previous assumptions and expectations are no longer to be taken for granted". Allen is much absorbed with the state of

the nation. His fine 2016 album *Americana* reflected a country seen through the prism of blues-and-roots music; it was the re-emphasis of a culture.

Post-election, the cultural issues are wider, and the new album takes off with verve. Allen, while answering new "existential imperatives" takes a middle way, which in the musical terms of this album involves free-ish impro before bassist Gregg August accelerates away four to the bar and the rest follow. Allen's chattering excursions with August and drummer Rudy Royston echo a Sonny Rollins format, but his influences are clearly Coltrane, perhaps Ayler, and almost certainly his days with the Betty Carter band. Thematic spareness and modal structures give a direction to what among the "free" fraternity often results in aimless thrashing.

*Sitting Bull* and *Heureux* find Allen and guitarist Liberty Ellman in unison at the start before they're off questing, the impressive Ellman less determinedly. Royston is an indefatigable churner before assuming propulsive mode. Don't look to *Sancho Panza* for any suggestion that the activity is quixotic, but, as the fades on a few tracks illustrate, the search goes on.

Nigel Jarrett

## TONY ALLEN THE SOURCE

*Moody Boy; Bad Roads; Cruising; On Fire; Woro Dance; Tony's Blues; Wolf Eats Wolf; Cool Cats; Push And Pull; Ewajo; Life Is Beautiful* (63.55)

Indy Dibongue (elg); Jean Phil Dary (p, org); Yann Jankielewicz (ss); Nicholas Giraud (t, fh); Jean Jacques Elangue (ts); Remi Scuito (bar, as, f); Daniel Zimmermann (tb, bb); Vincent Taurelle (clav); Damon Albam (p); Mathias Allamane (b); Allen (d). No location or dates listed.

## Blue Note, no number ★★★

Allen leads a 10-piece band on all but one selection. It combines all original compositions by the leader and Jankielewicz, utilising tuba in a bright, sensuous ensemble sound. Although he can be a driving, inventive jazz drummer, on some tracks Allen is also into rock styles and rhythms. The opening selection has strong tuba in what sounds like a rock-inspired Gil Evans pastiche.

Pianist Dary contributes to *On Fire*. The various soloists all get their chances with Zimmermann shining on both tuba and trombone. Allamane is a good steady bassist and works well in tandem with the leader's drums. Dary has a few good solo spots at the piano. The overall sound of this small big band is a combination of contemporary, swing and fusion with a few good bop solos added to the rather unusual mix. It is a bright, lively sound and somewhat individual in character.

Unfortunately the original compositions are not distinguished and only function as springboards for the solo spots. Scuito has a very good baritone outing on *Woro Dance* with the band riffing steadily behind him. The cover design is a dead ringer for mid 1960s Blue Note style but the music is "out there" in a groove of its own. Sample before purchase.

Derek Ansell

## TONY ALLEN A TRIBUTE TO ART BLAKEY AND THE JAZZ MESSENGERS

*Moanin'; Politely; A Night In Tunisia; The Drum Thunder Suite* (24.31)

Nicolas Giraud (t); Yann Jankielewicz, Jean Jacques Elangue (ts); Remi Scuito (saxes); Jean-Philippe Dary (p); Mathias (b); Allen (d). Paris, 2016 (?)



## Blue Note, no number ★★★

This EP-length CD is a taster for drummer Tony Allen's Blue Note album reviewed above. The Nigerian percussionist, evidently inspired by Max Roach and Art Blakey, sounds like neither of those giants, not least in the swinging department. Heading a bunch of fellow Paris-based musicians he reconfigures to scant purpose three Blakey staples plus *The Drum Thunder Suite*. Plenty of bash and bang, but an overall absence of subtlety.

Mark Gardner

## ADAM BALDYCH & HELGE LIEN TRIO BROTHERS

(1) *Prelude; Elegy; Faith; Love*; (2) *One; Brothers*; (1) *Hallelujah*; (2) *Shadows*; (1) *Coda* (50.00)

(1) Baldych (vn, renaissance vn); Lien (p); Frode Berg (b); Per Oddvar Johansen (d). (2) plus Tore Brunborg (ts). Berlin, 12 & 13 November 2016.

## ACT 9817 ★★★★★

Baldych has recorded some fine music for ACT recently, including his contributions to Iiro Rantala's *My History Of Jazz* and *Anyone With A Heart*. If you play this latest session from the young Polish virtuoso after listening to his previous ACT releases *Imaginary Room* and *Bridges*, a growing distillation of

### JJ CONTENT

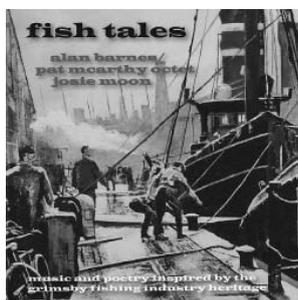
Material is received for consideration of review by *Jazz Journal* (that term including its website) only under the following conditions: Any party supplying any material for review automatically indemnifies JJ Publishing Ltd and its staff against any consequences whatsoever arising from publication of review of that material and accepts that the material is non-returnable. All letters published in *Jazz Journal* appear only under the following conditions: Any party submitting any letter for publication automatically indemnifies JJ Publishing Ltd and its staff against any consequences whatsoever arising from publication of such letter. Although every care is taken to ensure accuracy and propriety, neither the editor, nor the publishers necessarily agree with opinions expressed in JJ by contributors, nor indeed by readers in their published letters.

feeling and form, allied to a fructifying breadth and depth of musical resource and poetic sensibility, is pleasingly evident.

Less rhythmically upfront – but nevertheless as compelling – as the award-winning Bridges, Brothers shows how far Baldych and his fellow travellers have gone beyond old and sometimes laboured ideas of third-stream music, cultivating an organic confluence of ideas and inspiration as free-flowing as it is ultra-disciplined. Witness the transition from the hushed chamber music intimacy and intensity of the brief violin and piano duet that is *Prelude* to the rock-like power of the searing violin figures and group dynamics in the opening moments of the following *Elegy* – or the way in such thematic signposts give way to the lyricism of Lien's beautifully sprung solo.

Baldych's trademark pizzicato touch and sound distinguish the tender and folk-like *Love*, one of the finest pieces here: his spacious, patiently stepped figures are followed by a typically nuanced transition in the group dynamics, precipitating a further excellent outing from Lien. Brunborg's carefully weighted Nordic tenor enriches several cuts, including the passionate title track, and Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* has, to my ears, rarely sounded better, its opening bars reprising the fragile pensiveness of *Prelude* before the Baldych/Lien arrangement soars high and wide. A beautiful album.

Michael Tucker



**ALAN BARNES OCTET**  
**FISH TALES – A JAZZ SUITE FOR OCTET**

*All Aboard; A Drowning Man; Fisherman's Blues; Sea Jewels; Sea Jewels; Three Day Millionaires; Three Day Millionaires; Witches In Eggshells; Witches In Eggshells; The Fisherman And The Seal Woman;*

**CRITICS' CHOICE**

The 10 CDs JJ critics most wanted to hear from this month's review pile

Django Bates	Saluting Sgt. Pepper	Edition 1094
Liane Carroll	The Right To Love	Quiet Money 0004
Kenny Clarke/Francy Boland Big Band	All Smiles	MPS 0211956MSW
Don Ellis Orchestra	Soaring	MPS 0211977MSW
Vijay Iyer Sextet	Far From Over	ECM 576 7386
Wes Montgomery	The Incredible Jazz Guitar	State Of Art 81182
Alphonse Mouzon	In Search Of A Dream	MPS 0211966MSW
Gary Peacock	Tangents	ECM 574 1910
Boyd Raeburn	Collection 1944-48	Fabulous 2062
Alan Skidmore	After The Rain	Miles Music 084

*Fisherman's Waltz; Longing For Home; Long Long Way From Home; Engine Room; Engine Room; Face Of Beauty, Face Of Rage; Face Of Beauty; Minesweeping; Deadly Catch; Barfrost; Ice Tune; Homecoming; Homecoming (68.19)*

Barnes (as, bar, cl, f); Gilad Atzmon (ss, as, bcl); Dean Masser (ts, cl); Mark Nightingale (tb); Martin Shaw (t); Pat McCarthy (g); Dave Green (b); Sebastian de Krom (d). London, 23 January 2017.

**Woodville 149**  
★★★★

Fish Tales connects original music with new poetry and local artwork to portray a local industry and, regrettably, a local loss. The location is Grimsby, Lincolnshire, where the appalling decline of the city's fishing industry may now return to our consciousness as Britain prepares to leave the European Union. *Fish Tales* brings together Josie Moon's poetry, the orchestrations of Alan Barnes, the compositions of guitarist Pat McCarthy and the paintings of Cleethorpes-born painter Dale Mackie.

Gill Wilde – enabler, amateur, fund-raiser and friend of jazz – is the initiator and motivator behind this admirable project. Known for her tireless support of local jazz, notably for the annual Cleethorpes Jazz Festival, Wilde deserves high praise for placing her considerable enabling skills behind Fish Tales. And full marks to Alan Barnes, not only for his playing in, and scoring of, the pianoless octet, but also for his good-humoured willingness to appear in fisherman's oilskins and sou'wester for publicity pictures. The pictures alone are worth seeking on the internet.

In that all-too-large category of "talent deserving of wider recognition" both saxophonist Dean Masser and composer Pat

McCarthy should be credited. Both shine. Executed with love and skill, *Fish Tales* represents a jazz concept of a type all too rare.

John Robert Brown



**DJANGO BATES**  
**SALUTING SGT. PEPPER**

*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band; With A Little Help From My Friends; Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds; Getting Better; Fixing A Hole; She's Leaving Home; Being For The Benefit Of Mr Kite!; Within You Without You; When I'm Sixty Four; Lovely Rita; Good Morning Good Morning; Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Reprise); A Day In The Life (45.24)*

Bates (kyb, v); Frankfurt Radio Band; Stuart Hall (stringed instruments); Martin Ullits Dahl (v); Jonas Westergaard (b, v); Peter Braun (d, v). Horfunkstudio II, Hessischer, October 2016.

**Edition 1094**  
★★

There is a world of difference between covering a famous song and covering a famous album. There are some recordings that are so big, so monumental, that anything performed other than by the original artist is simply unacceptable. That is not musical intolerance or snobbishness – it is just a fact! Sgt. Pepper is one of those albums. It is legendary in every sense of the word.

Django Bates and the Frankfurt

Radio Big Band clearly intended to pay homage to the Beatles and their recording. As the title implies, they wanted to salute Sgt. Pepper. They wanted to mark the 50th anniversary of its release and I have no problem with any of that. But it should have stopped at live performances or a radio show, not advanced to CD.

The musicianship is good and the cover versions passable. The big band doesn't sound out of place because the Beatles made a big sound themselves. Bates explains in the press release that he "folds his own colours, rhythms and sound into the music, resulting in a thoroughly kaleidoscopic examination of this iconic album". But therein lies the problem. Whilst there is some attempt to interpret, vary and improvise, the songs are so famous that they constantly have to be pulled back to how they have to be played – otherwise the salute becomes a farewell wave!

It doesn't help that the songs are played in the same track order as the original (inevitable – but inviting more comparison) and include many of the peculiar vocal phrasings unique to the Beatles. To my ear, it is less a salute and more a pale imitation. It would be unkind to call it karaoke because the musicians deserve better than that; but I would prefer to watch the Bootleg Beatles than listen to this.

Ian Lomax

**LIANE CARROLL**  
**THE RIGHT TO LOVE**

*Skylark; The Right To Love; It's A Fine Line; If You Go Away; You Don't Know What Love Is; Goin' Back; Lately; Georgia On My Mind; In The Neighbourhood; I Get Along Without You Very Well (47.00)*

Carroll (v, p); Mark Edwards (p); Malcolm Edmonstone (p); Mark