



Orchestra National de Jazz

**Møster!**

**Edvard Lygre Møster**

HUBRO CD2527 I ★★★

Kjetil Møster (ts, bar s, elec), Ståle Storløkken (Fender Rhodes, Moog, elec), Nikolai Eilertsen (el b, elec) and Kenneth Kapstad (d). Rec. 3 December 2011

Keyboardist Ståle Storløkken and bassist Nikolai Eilertsen work together in the trio Elephant9, and this new Norwegian quartet led by saxophonist Kjetil Møster picks up on the same heavy jazz-prog vibe, here leant even more weight by the presence of Kenneth Kapstad, drummer with psych-rockers Motorpsycho. The grooves ploughed by bass and drums are deep and dirty – sounding, when combined with Storløkken's Ra-ish cosmic synth, like some kind of intergalactic take on *Bitches Brew*. Elsewhere, Storløkken lets rip with filthily distorted Fender Rhodes while Møster digs into a meaty, echo-drenched tenor and, on the final, and longest, track, 'The Boat', Eilertsen ups the intensity with Hugh Hopper-style fuzz bass. Sure, it's all unashamedly derivative stuff, but this live set burns with enough enthusiasm and raw energy to bring it screaming to life. If anyone is still in any doubt that Norway is the 21st century prog-jazz capital of the world, this should seal the deal.

Daniel Spicer

**Orchestre National de Jazz**

**Piazzolla!**

Jazz Village JV570007 I ★★★

Ève Risser (p, alto fl), Vincent Lafont (Fender Rhodes, Wuritzer, elec), Antonin-Tri Hoang (as, b clt), Rémi Dumoulin (ts, clt, b clt), Matthieu Metzger (bs, as, ss, Systalk-box), Joce Mienniel (piccolo, fl, b fl, alto fl), Sylvain Bardiau (t, flhn, valve tb), Pierre Perchaud (g), Sylvain Daniel (el b), Yoann Serra (d), Daniel Yvinec (artistic dir) and Gil Goldstein (arr). Rec. February 2012

There aren't many jazzers with airports named in their honour. In fact, aside from Argentine

Astor Piazzolla, are there any? Answers on a postcard to the editor. Not that Piazzolla was principally a jazz musician. Anyway, here the oeuvre of the high-flying master of *nuevo tango*, who turned a popular dance into an art form, gets a powerful 21st-century makeover courtesy of Daniel Yvinec's Orchestre National de Jazz, which has previously applied its talents to the music of Robert Wyatt and John Hollenbeck (that one drew a Grammy nomination). This set opens with a snippet of Carlos Gardel's 'El dia que me quieras' (Piazzolla played a newspaper boy in the movie, which had an important impact on the development of tango) before crackly nostalgia gives way to Gil Goldstein's crisp arrangements of much-loved Piazzolla originals ('Balada para un loco', 'Libertango', 'Oblivion') intercut with a few non-canonical outriders (e.g. Matthieu Metzger and Sylvain Daniel's 'Pantélon improvisación'). The ONJ contains many virtuoso instrumentalists but – perhaps just as well – no bandoneónist. Midway through the set we do, however, get another artfully placed clip from the vaults – Francisco De Caro's 'Flores Negras' performed by Roberto Di Filippo, who so impressed Piazzolla that the maestro told him: "Someday we're going to play together and I'll be your second bandoneón." High praise indeed.

Robert Shore

**Klaus Paier and Asja Valcic**  
**Silk Road**

ACT 9538-2 I ★★★

Klaus Paier (acc, bandoneón) and Asja Valcic (clo). Rec. June 2012

Unlike their earlier collaboration, 2009's *Deux*, Croatian cellist Asja Valcic has contributed compositionally to add to the Austrian Paier's tunes here on *Silk Road*. Valcic, better known

radio.string.quartet.vienna, has an energy that complements the charming selection of tunes with their roots in central European café society along with intimations of South America introduced via the bandoneón. Their collaboration can be compared to that of Anja Lechner and Dino Saluzzi's perhaps (although with the bandoneón more to the fore in that pairing), but there are as many differences as similarities at play here. Paier isn't so much a dramatic player as Saluzzi, and *Silk Road* lacks the kind of violent intent that unbridled improvisational abandon sometimes needs. Yet he blends astutely with Valcic, whose semi-improvised approach has a narrative drive that delivers its own welcome rewards. 'Waltz for Mama' is the pick of the 11 songs for me, with Paier in the lilting lead and Valcic enjoying herself that bit more, and that sense of letting go makes all the difference.

Stephen Graham

**Oli Rockberger**  
**Old Habits**

Oli Road Records I ★★★

Oli Rockberger (v, p, kys), plus various personnel including John Shannon (g), Jordan Scannella (b) and Jordan Perlson (d). Rec. date not stated

This second solo album from NYC-based Londoner Oli Rockberger showcases a songwriter and musician of an exceptionally high calibre. What's especially striking about *Old Habits* is how Rockberger can conjure up echoes of other writers at will – Randy Newman, Todd Rundgren and Peter Gabriel would all feature near the top of the list – yet still inhabit a sound world all of his own. As a songwriter he loves to spring textural surprises: the rippling coda of finger picked guitar and layered vocals appended to 'Over the Bridge' (featuring guest vocalist James Maddock), the children's choir that suddenly lights up the chorus of 'Never Grow Old', or the Jarrett-like lyricism of the solo piano vehicle, 'My Home'. Rockberger also has a keen ear for instantly memorable hooks, notably the three and a half minutes of pop perfection that is 'Don't Forget Me'. Old or not, this is definitely a habit you'll be happy to indulge.

Peter Quinn

**Ilia Skibinsky**  
**The Passage**

Mythology MR 004 I ★★★

Ilia Skibinsky (as, ss, p), Glenn Zaleski (p), Edward Pérez (b), Colin Stranahan (d), Matt Jodrell (t), Matthew Silberman (ts), Mike Moreno (g) and Joe Deninzon (strings). Rec.

As regular readers may already know, this reviewer is an ardent admirer of independent-minded American altoist David Binney. He has his own record label, Mythology, to cover his various ventures and occasionally releases albums by other artists, the most notable of whom was probably Donny McCaslin, albeit Binney-produced. So you've got to be special to be on Mythology. David obviously thinks very highly of Skibinsky, who was born in Russia before emigrating to Israel where he became heavily involved with TV and theatre productions before relocating to New York in 2007. A highly talented altoist, he is also a composer who covers a wide area of different genres and almost all nine of his compositions here are greatly diverse in style. The opening title tune in distinctively differing parts features, firstly, warmly expressive Mike Moreno solo guitar after a nicely harmonised alto-tenor-trumpet ensemble: then, with a totally contrasting latinish beat, hard-hitting trumpet and alto. Most of the other tracks have a more peaceful approach, in fact there is a distinctly pastoral feel to Skibinsky's lyrical extended improvisations, on two of which he plays soprano. His classical training is put to effective use on 'When We Forget' with a strong religious feel to the strings score. Zaleski's empathetic piano throughout is equally interesting with Perez strong on bass and Stranahan changing grooves most effectively. Though the majority of tracks are by the basic quartet, the tenor and trumpet add subtle warmth to 'Translucent'. An interesting debut. Tony Hall

Kjetil Møster

