



Here Today
Jason Palmer
(SteepleChase)



Somewhere Meeting Nobody
Jochen Rueckert (Pirouet)

by Ken Dryden

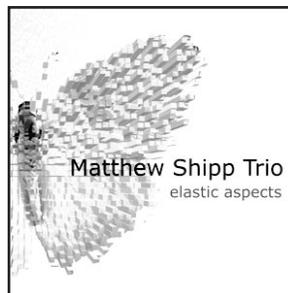
Mark Turner is a key player in both of the CDs featured in this review. Since arriving in New York City in the early '90s after studying at Berklee College of Music, he has been an in-demand sideman with Lee Konitz, Chick Corea, Jimmy Smith, Enrico Rava, Jon Gordon, Leon Parker and Edward Simon, usually appearing on several CDs a year, in addition to touring as a member of the SFJazz Collective since 2011, being one-third of the cooperative group FLY and making a number of albums as a leader. The tenor saxophonist has long shown an adventurous spirit in his choice of material and eagerly locks horns with fellow tenorists without fear.

Jason Palmer is a promising young trumpeter who began getting noticed a few years ago. For his third CD as a leader, *Here Today*, he shows plenty of confidence leading a postbop quintet (which is actually his working band) with Turner, guitarist Nir Felder, bassist Edward Perez and drummer Kendrick Scott, mixing striking originals with potent interpretations of familiar works. "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow" was intended to be played once in concert and never again;

fortunately, his fellow musicians dissuaded him from trashing this potent chart, in which he shows surprising maturity in his solo. "3rd Shift" (written to honor his mother, who long worked nights), is a peppy quartet feature (omitting Turner) while Palmer takes an extended, exotic solo to open "Takes Courage to Be Happy", which quickly shifts into a brisk cooker as the leader and Turner engage in an infectious unison line; its title was inspired by a comment made by Abbey Lincoln to its young composer. Palmer shows imagination in his pairing of the standard "Skylark" in a medley with Stevie Wonder's "I Can't Help It" and the soloists especially shine throughout this track.

Turner has a more prominent role in drummer Jochen Rueckert's *Somewhere Meeting Nobody* as the only horn in the quartet, rounded out by fellow SFJazz Collective veteran Matt Penman on bass and guitarist Brad Shepik. Most of the songs are the leader's originals and Rueckert has a light touch. The band opens with the fluid postbop vehicle "The Itch", featuring Turner and Shepik to good effect. The melancholy ballad "Buttons" has a haunting air while "Dan Smith Will Teach You Guitar" is a tense affair with the rhythm section pushing Turner's explosive solo. Rueckert's sauntering title track showcases Shepik and Turner and an interpretation of Herbie Hancock's "The Sorcerer" is a bit novel, focusing primarily as it does on an intricate duet between Penman and Rueckert.

For more information, visit steeplechase.dk and pirouet.com. Mark Turner is at Village Vanguard Feb. 14th-19th. See Calendar.



Elastic Aspects
Matthew Shipp Trio (Thirsty Ear)
by Clifford Allen

The piano trio is one of the most enduring collective formats in improvised music. It's certainly not the only place where heightened collectivity can be found, but following the lead of Bill Evans' trio with Scott LaFaro and Paul Motian, it's safe to say that the egalitarian, cooperative nature of the music was realized in a special way. In that ensemble, the piano was able to take a back seat to what the other musicians were doing as Evans understood the value of collaborators who could push the music and who demanded their own creative space. Pianist Matthew Shipp might at first seem like the furthest thing from an heir to Evans' group conception - indeed, the prevalence of cyclical, abstracted weight points to an entirely different aesthetic - but his trio recordings have increasingly outlined the importance of a band in which the nominal leader is not always at the center.

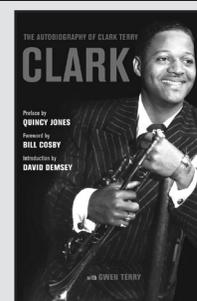
Elastic Aspects is the second disc on Thirsty Ear to feature Shipp's working trio with bassist Mike Bisio and drummer Whit Dickey. The opening "Alternative Aspects" is a spare soliloquy for bowed bass and malleted gongs with Bisio's meaty, crying tone taking front and center. A rhapsodic solo piano link alludes lightly to "Psychic Counterpart", the first full-trio piece on the disc. It's a blueprint for the unexpected, a jaunty circular kaleidoscope of repeating cells that bounce off one another and dive into scumbled, earthy deposits as Dickey moves with shimmering impulsions and Bisio maintains a hearty walk underneath. The piano solo "Frame Focus" follows in slivered rhapsodies and tessellated blocks that neatly lead into a gritty bass and drums duet while Shipp and Bisio

bring forth a gorgeous, stripped-down pointillism to the bluesy dance of "Raw Materials". There's a lively rollick to the proceedings, which reaches its apex in the woody knocks and wire pluck of "Stage 10".

In a recording career that has spanned nearly three decades, Shipp has emphasized weight and concision within complex, often shifting harmonic relationships. Brought to a group level, interdependence and empathy coexist with crisp logic - and yet Shipp, Bisio and Dickey will continue to refine their art long after *Elastic Aspects* has left the CD player.

For more information, visit thirstyyear.com. This trio is at Jazz Standard Feb. 28th-29th. See Calendar.

IN PRINT



Clark Terry: The Autobiography of Clark Terry
(University of California Press)
by Ken Dryden

Long one of the most important and easily recognized jazz stylists, Clark Terry is a gifted trumpeter, flugelhornist, composer and bandleader, in addition to creating his sidesplitting "Mumbles" vocal feature. Terry's positive attitude has come across in numerous interviews, articles and on stage throughout his career. A long awaited autobiography, written with the assistance of his wife Gwen over a 20-year period, has a friendly, conversational tone.

Some may be surprised to learn of the extreme poverty of Terry's early life, his alienation from his father and firstborn son, along with the tragic death of his second wife Pauline and the numerous major health issues he has faced over the past few decades. Terry also battled racism for a long time while working as a budding professional, when he sought to buy his first home or dealing with African-American youth (whom he taught free and also provided instruments to) who thought his providing a white substitute jazz instructor when the trumpeter was on the road beneath them.

Young players can learn a lot by reading of Terry's determination to become a jazz musician. He taught himself circular breathing by watching another player and made the most of his stints with Count Basie and Duke Ellington, though he isn't afraid to discuss how he disappointed both leaders on rare occasions, though in the latter case, he rose to the challenge presented by Ellington's on-the-bandstand punishment by premiering a new twist in his playing that wowed the audience.

Terry also discusses his taking part in Quincy Jones' ill-fated European tour, becoming the first African-American in the *Tonight Show* Orchestra, the acclaimed quintet he co-led with valve trombonist Bob Brookmeyer, his swinging Big BAD Band and the difficulties he had producing his own record date with it. The jazz master doesn't gloss over things as Duke Ellington did in his memoir, nor does he go into lengthy diatribes against those who wronged him, opting for a middle ground. This is an easy, entertaining and informative volume that will please his fans and introduce budding jazz listeners to his many contributions.

For more information, visit ucpress.edu

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