

the **JAZZ PROJECT**
by Jean-Keith Fagon

A critic's choice of new CDs. Check them out online to choose the ones that speak to you.



start to finish. Expertly partnered by Paul Motian on drums and the talented Jason Moran on the piano, "Lost In A Dream," is truly a first-rate modern recording. The album overflows with innovation. Listen to the sure winners "Casino," or "Blue Midnight," and you will be made more than aware of Mr. Motian's rhythmic intricacies as well as his imperturbable fluency and skill. The title track, "Lost In A Dream" gives one the feeling of what's it's like to dream on a lazy, somnambulant summer afternoon, only to be awakened by the robust and affectionate sounds of "Mode VI." Superbly recorded, with three top-quality musicians, this an excellent album.

The Avatar Sessions •••

The Norrbotten Big Band, Fuzz Music

This album features the music of Tim Hagans (trumpet) with musicians Randy Brecker (trumpet), Peter Erskine (drums), George Garzone (tenor sax), Dave Liebman (soprano sax), Rufus Reid (bass), and the Norrbotten Big Band. This is a very expressive and ingenuous work, which exerts its magic on the listener with its strong contrasts of color and mood. Highlights include "Box of Canoli," "Here With Me," "Palt Seanuts," and "Song for Mirka."

In Hi-Fi Stereo •••

Mindi Abair, Heads Up

This is a sexy, nitty-gritty, and groovy, fine-stepping album that I guarantee you're going to love listening to. This music is all about celebrating the sounds of the past decades — specifically the '60s and early '70s, a period widely regarded as the sweet golden age of R&B, soul and funk. According to Mindi Abair (saxophone) the album is a reflection of some of the older, more soulful records from her favorites like Al Green, Junior Walker, King Curtis, Alain Toussaint, Archie Bell and the Drells. "It's not an intellectual record," explains Ms. Abair. "It's a fun, feel-good record inspired by some of those great sounds and grooves from that period, but recast for a modern audience." And trust me, it's a cool album for cool folks. Start with "Get Right," "It's A Man's Man's Man's World," and "Girls Night Out." And if that's doesn't do it, have

fun with "Be Beautiful," "The Alley," and "Take Me Home." Featured performers include vocalist Lalah Hathaway and drummer James Gadson, plus Reggie McBride (bass), Ryan Collins and David Ryan Harris.

Anticipation •••

David Smith Quintet, BJU Records

This is trumpeter David Smith's second album (following his debut recording "Circumstance," 2006) and finds the musician in a reflective mood with some bluesy and sometimes intense, soulful messages. Good, strong performances from Kenji Amae (sax), Nate Radley (guitar), Gary Wang (bass) and Greg Ritchie (drums). Standouts include "Anticipation," "All Or Nothing At All," "Bittersweet" and "Alone."

Adverse Times •••

Carl Fischer & Organic Groove Ensemble, Fischmusic Records

As a talented trumpeter, Carl Fischer's latest album has some outstanding performances on "Adverse Times," "Downeaster Alexa" and "Tutu" (by Miles Davis). Another plus point is the combination of the soulful, bluesy vocals and instruments that achieve a better musical balance, starting with the most brilliant piece "Movin' Out and On," and increasing in weight to the resounding "Freeport to Fire Island."

Levanto •••

CBJMusic.com

This is contemporary flamenco music with a more hip, urban beat that is most notable on pieces like "Levanto" (Rise), "Mi Faro" (My Lighthouse), "Esperanza" (Hope), "Amore" (Love), and "A Mi Hermana" (To My Sister). Flamenco music lovers should check this album out at www.levantomusic.com.

All CDs and DVDS reviewed in this article are heard through Bowers & Wilkens 802D Speakers and ASW 4000 subwoofer, and Rotel Preamp 1070, amplifier 1092 and CD player 1072. CDs are available for purchase through amazon.com For more information about this column, please email your questions to fagon@hillrag.com. ★

Lost In A Dream ••••

Paul Motian, ECM

The songs, "Be Careful It's My Heart" and "Bird Song," are so sweet and comforting, that one's heart simply wraps itself around the music. It's a delightful experience — forever drifting off to nowhere and yet everywhere. Rarely have I heard such consistently pure tones from saxophonist Chris Potter, who offers a commanding performance, polished and full of flair, magnetically spontaneous from