



The Ideal Bread **Ideal Bread**
Compliments of the Season **Trio Caveat**
(Kordova Milk Bar Jazz)
by Ivana Ng

According to Eric Devin, founder of Kordova Milk Bar (KMB) Records, it is much harder for a free jazz group to sell a record than it is for a punk band which is why he started KMB in 2006 - to promote avant jazz. The latest offerings are *Ideal Bread's* self-titled album and *Trio Caveat's Compliments of the Season*.

The Ideal Bread is a tribute to the late soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy, who mentored group leader Josh Sinton. Here, Sinton reworks the arrangements on Lacy's 1979 record *NY Capers & Quirks* and uses unusual instrumentation (his baritone sax and Kirk Knuffke's trumpet replace Lacy's soprano sax) to honor Lacy's compositional genius and his ability to inspire brilliant, probing improv.

On most tracks, sax and trumpet play in unison. A careless listener might say that this quartet's interpretations are very loyal to Lacy's compositions. Lacy's songs are constructed, however, to give the musicians freedom in exploring the boundaries of his melodies. In "Capers", for example, drummer Tomas Fujiwara deviates from the script with an AfroCuban rhythm. *Ideal Bread* follows Lacy's unusually traditional style: play the melody several times over, improvise and then return to the beginning. The quartet's innovation lies in its improv sessions during each song. Sinton and Knuffke respond to each other's exploratory melodies with an innate sense of the other's thought process. Bassist Reuben Radding and Fujiwara support them with tight, angular rhythms.

The theme of *Compliments of the Season* is just as distinct as that of *The Ideal Bread*. Though there are countless volumes of Christmas music in existence, *Trio Caveat* may be the only one to take such a minimalist approach to the warmth and happiness that the winter holidays invoke. Notes creep out of Jonathan Moritz' tenor and soprano saxophones purposefully, but at a snail's pace. Bassist James Ilgenfritz and drummer John McLellan are not much faster. Only patient listeners will be able to discern any Christmas motifs in these eight tracks. For the rest of us, we can at least appreciate Moritz' use of silence in "Sleigh Ride" and Ilgenfritz' arduous solo playing in "Baby In The Manger".

For more information, visit kmbjazz.com. These groups participate in the KMB Jazz Festival at Douglass Street Music Collective Jun. 8th-9th. See calendar.



Thought Forms
Adam Rudolph Go: Organic Orchestra
(Meta-Ruby Red)
by Matthew Miller

About a minute and a half into "Mirrors", track two on *Thought Forms*, the distinct voices of Adam

Rudolph's Go: Organic Orchestra begin to blend. Percussive tongue slaps, growling flutes and slashed cymbals collect in a glowing sonic aggregate; overtones arch up, out and over the 30+-member band. The effect is otherworldly and, like everything else on *Thought Forms*, fleeting.

Rudolph describes the music on the orchestra's fourth album as "a suite with interludes of calligraphic bridges. Romances, that (express) emotional colors and a moving picture for the mind's ear." The percussionist, composer, conductor achieves this in 12 concise tracks by varying moods and grooves, trusting his performers and exploiting his orchestra's vast, vast timbral palate.

With 15 woodwind players doubling on every conceivable variety of flute, a battery of percussionists, four acoustic bassists and a full string section of violin, viola, cello, electric guitar and harp, Rudolph has no shortage of options and he marshals the full force of his band with the perfect mix of assurance and restraint. The ethereal "Mirrors" is brought into sharp focus by the hypnotic, percussive feel of "Overture" and "Axis", the pieces that bookend it, in a method that anchors more esoteric material to brief, infectious grooves. This works wonders at the album's midpoint when the flitting, impressionistic "Interior" is followed by the dissonant, polyrhythmic groove of "Circular".

In addition to channeling the potentially unwieldy elements of his orchestra into condensed ensemble passages, Rudolph allows individual voices and duos to occupy the foreground in a number of pieces. "Kaleidophone" is a spiky vehicle for Emily Hay's flute and "Atmos" pairs Harris Eisenstadt's rippling percussion with Jeremy Drake's minimalist guitar. These episodes are more accent than feature and each performance is contained enough by Rudolph to maintain focus and momentum all the way to the transcendent conclusion, "River Run".

For more information, visit metarecords.com. Rudolph is at Belarusian Church Jun. 7th and Drom Jun. 13th. See calendar.



Optics
Søren Kjaergaard/Ben Street/Andrew Cyrille
(Ilk Music)
by Francis Lo Kea

The title track of *Optics* provides a good overview to this beautiful and fascinating recording. While some young musicians seek to capture their audience with a fusillade of notes, pianist Søren Kjaergaard's trio proceeds with the flowing confidence of a Zen master. That's not to say that *Optics* doesn't have its intense, passionate or loud moments, but the balance of moods and dynamics comes from a self-assurance that is not doctrinaire or pretentious. "Optics" takes on a unique three-part (yet seamless) form. It starts with tremolos in the piano and drums with the bass joining the piano for a simple eight-note question followed by a seven-note answer. Out of mystical Messiaen-sounding chords emerges bassist Ben Street's gently singing solo. The third major part of this piece is a kaleidoscopic jazz waltz that functions as a coda and ends as subtly as it began. The musical point being made, nothing else needs to be said.

Throughout the recording the balance and blurring of the composed and improvised is

splendidly accomplished. Drummer Andrew Cyrille is arguably best known for his explosive work with Cecil Taylor starting in the '60s. Street, much younger than Cyrille, has been involved with a slightly calmer improvising scene that includes guitarists Ben Monder and Kurt Rosenwinkel. Kjaergaard is the bridge between them: sometimes he plays the piano fiercely and percussively while at other times the space between the longer held, soft chords gives the bass voice a lot of space through which to sing.

Kjaergaard's respect for Cyrille and Cecil Taylor becomes particularly clear in two pieces: "Cyrille Surreal", a series of hypnotic chord sequences for Cyrille to groove and solo upon, and "Work of Art", which channels that intense '60s Taylor/Cyrille energy in focused, concise composition.

Both "Elegy" and "Radio House Requiem" might be described as ballads and they are both gorgeous CD highlights. The latter does portray a sense of loss, but the sophisticated harmonies played at a slow, steady tempo make for riveting listening.

With eight tracks from 3 to 13 minutes in length (at a total running time of approximately 56 minutes) and varying greatly in sonic and emotional dynamics, repeated listening will reveal more detail.

For more information, visit ilkmusic.com. Kjaergaard is at Jazz Standard Jun. 18th with Blake Tartare. See calendar.



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