



Glare of the Tiger

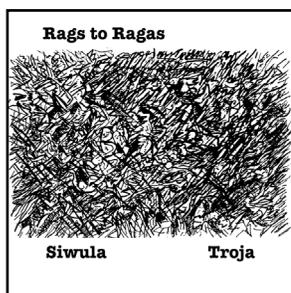
Adam Rudolph's Moving Pictures (Meta/M.O.D. Technologies)
by George Kanzler

Percussionist and ethno-musicologist Adam Rudolph periodically releases soundscape recordings under the group imprimatur Moving Pictures. This latest, the first in five years, skews toward world music impressionism as much as jazz, with the overall sonic character taking precedence over individual voices. Those include Rudolph and two other percussionists, Hamid Drake and James Hurt (also heard on Fender Rhodes and synthesizer), as well as cornet/flugelhorn player Graham Haynes, keyboard player Alexis Marcelo, guitarist Kenny Wessel, reed player Ralph M. Jones and electric bassist Damon Banks. Electronic and synthesizer effects are also applied liberally by various participants.

The opening and title track, also the longest at just under a quarter-hour, is the one that most resembles the *Bitches Brew* period of Miles Davis, but with even more of an AfroWorld music influence. Cornet reinforces the Davis vibe while the piece itself weaves through a seamless, continuous flow where lead and accompanying instruments are constantly exchanging roles, with voices ranging from guitar, organ, cornet, saxophones and hypnotic electronic pulsing all tumbling along over rolling Afrofunk beats.

With occasional short interludes featuring Haynes in duet with Jones' flute, the program proceeds with longer tracks developing variations of the group interplay and sonic impressionism of the title track while shorter ones, notably "Dialogics", create a shimmering, spacey atmosphere akin to ambient music. Rudolph showcases his own hand percussion skills on another shorter track, "Lehra", a stripped-down cut also featuring guitar and keyboards. Drake's drumkit drives one of the jazziest tracks, "Ciresque", with swinging solos from Jones' flute and saxophone. The other long—again almost a quarter-hour—track, "Wonderings", settles into a pulsing, hypnotic groove with solos from flute and cornet, electronics-enhanced, floating on top for nine minutes, then kicks into a higher rhythmic gear, chattering guitar and keyboards bouncing under Haynes' emphatic horn swells. Working at the intersections of AfroWorld, jazz and mood music, Rudolph is able to sustain largely mesmerizing performances.

For more information, visit metarecords.com. Rudolph is at Brooklyn Conservatory of Music Apr. 8th. See Calendar.



Rags to Ragas

Blaise Siwula/Luciano Troja (nofrillsmusic)
by Ken Waxman

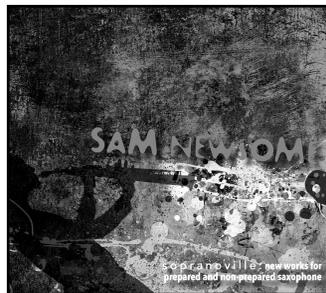
Actors like Lee Marvin and James Gandolfini surprised many when they shifted from playing heavies to leading men. Followers of avant garde sounds may find themselves in a similar head-spinning position hearing Blaise Siwula on *Rags to Ragas*. Known

for his shepherding of the long-running C.O.M.A. series and a slew of advanced jazz CDs, the alto saxophonist/clarinetist reveals a new musical persona on this disc with Sicilian pianist Luciano Troja. It's probably the reed player's CD closest to the mainstream. That's mainstream in quotes, however, for Siwula hasn't suddenly been transformed from rugged Superman into a Clark Kent-like smooth jazz. Like thorns hidden in a rose bush there are still spiky tones audible during the half-dozen tracks.

Troja, who often works with vocalists, may contribute to Siwula's change in orientation. After all even avant garde Italian musicians have a tendency towards romance and throughout the pianist cushions the reed work with balladic motifs. Yet as the giveaway title indicates, improvisations are frequently rooted in earlier song forms, Siwula's hitherto unknown link to a recumbent Lester Young approach revealed. Playing clarinet on the title tune, Siwula offers relaxed output that is bluesy not heavily syncopated, with the pianist supplying a multi-fingered attack as the piece evolves, concluding the tune as a happy foot-tapper. Low-pitched and gently vibrated "Sun Surgency" matches similar bluesy reed slurs and the pianist's bottom-note patterning for an exercise in storytelling.

Don't be lulled into a false sense of normalcy. Looming abstract sequences arrive on the final tracks. During "When There's Freedom for All", kinetic piano sprays meet staccato reed pops wrenched from Siwula's horn, the latter's final cadences referencing both *A Love Supreme* and "Jumpin' with Symphony Sid". Transformed like Bruce Banner into The Incredible Hulk and back again on "Next Time George", Siwula changes his clear midrange flutters to stutters and tongue slaps, relaxing into a steady swing line by the finale. Meanwhile, Troja's tough tremolo warms to become a near-lullaby. A unique take on Siwula's art and a delineation of his partnership with Troja, this CD is well worth investigating.

For more information, visit nofrillsmusic.com. This project is at Scholes Street Studio Apr. 9th, The Owl Music Parlor Apr. 12th and ShapeShifter Lab Apr. 17th. See Calendar.



Sopranoville
Sam Newsome (s/r)
by Terrell Holmes

Sam Newsome, one of our most talented and important jazz voices, completely outdoes himself with *Sopranoville*, essentially a treatise on mining the sonic possibilities of the soprano saxophone. Newsome is renowned for his lyricism and extensive vocabulary and with the use of overdubbing and other effects this album takes the horn to rarely explored territories. And although Newsome is the only inhabitant of *Sopranoville*, it never really feels like he's alone.

Some of the effects Newsome uses are basic, such as straight multiphonics on "Two-Man Orchestra", flutter-tonguing on "Sunrise" to produce a whistle-like effect above gogi chimes or indefatigable circular breathing on "The Doppler Effect" and "Jagged Breath". Newsome gradually increases the complexity. "The Morning After" is an enchanting blend of soprano, finger cymbals and piano resonance. Mouthpieces? Who needs those to play a saxophone? Not Newsome, who casts them aside and weaves striking sonic contrasts on "Hiss and Kiss". He uses aluminum foil to produce the siren-like tones on

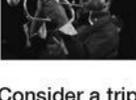
"Japanese Court Music" and his flicking tongue is the motor behind "The Soprano-sphere". He combines prepared and non-prepared horns to create a virtual menagerie on "The Funhouse Effect"; "The Reed Straw Effect" is self-explanatory. Manipulation of the saxophone pads are at the heart of the "Clicktopia" trilogy. The percussive sound is used to create African-inflected rhythms and build a foundation to support the ethereal tone of glass chimes.

Newsome also overdubs a soprano septet whose click chorus underscores a bluesy and surprisingly linear solo horn. Seven sopranos is formidable, but it takes serious discipline to simulate 15 horns playing together without them sounding like garden weeds grown wild. Newsome does this splendidly on the tongue-clicking "Horns of Plenty" and "Micro-suite for Fifteen Sopranos", a big-band-inspired tour de force peppered with suggestions of Monk's "Evidence". On Coltrane's "Giant Steps" and Steve Lacy's "Deadline" Newsome flips the prepared piano form around. Through a technique described as "sympathetic resonance" Newsome plays the soprano over the piano strings to produce a striking contrast in texture. John Cage would laugh at the irony of a piano preparing another instrument. (Or, more likely, he would be silent.) Newsome attaches bell chimes to the soprano on "The Quiet Before the Storm" and as he moves the horn while he plays the chimes shimmer. So in a distinct way the instrument itself becomes another player.

When one strips away the overdubbing and removes the other instruments and accessories (and perhaps reattaches the mouthpieces) what defines *Sopranoville* is the genius and vision of Sam Newsome.

For more information, visit sopranosaxtalk.blogspot.com. Newsome plays solo at 440Gallery Apr. 2nd. See Calendar.

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