

Record Reviews

JJ STAR RATINGS

- ★ Family members only
- ★★ Good playing with moments of inspiration, derivative concept
- ★★★ Professionally executed, perhaps with originality in playing or concept
- ★★★★ Exceptional in concept and execution, a once in a decade recording
- ★★★★★ Epoch-making recording demonstrating hitherto unheard concept

A bracketed star indicates a half-star



ANDERS AARUM SHAKIN' OUR SOULS

Another Day In Suck City; If I Was A Panda; Where The Wild People Go; The Slenderman Can; The Perks Of Being A Loafer; Master Of Disaster; Tell Me It's Raining; Una Muy Bonita (50.45)

Aarum (kyb, syn); Magne Thormodsæter (b); Ivar

JJ CONTENT

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Thormodsæter (d); Julie Dahle Aagard (v). Oslo, 9 and 10 January 2017.

Ozella Music 088 ★★★

An engaging enough combination of styles here: boppish jazz, dreamy beatscapes and the occasional foray into atmospheric electronics. In-demand session musician Anders Aarum seems comfortable across these different styles, and overall the music is very heavily influenced by those dreamy, tripped-out sounds of Fender Rhodes and Moog. In places there are strong influences from French synth group Air, shades of the James Taylor Quartet and some of the music Eric Legnini put out on his Trippin' album.

Brothers Ivar and Magne Thormodsæter are the driving duo behind much of the album's success, with solid, inventive and sympathetic performances on bass and drums. This rock-solid but flowing foundation gives space for Aarum and friends to noodle around and lose themselves – and the listener – in a variety of pleasantly dreamy compositions. Interestingly the release notes make much of the fact that Aarum's music is not designed to leave the listener feeling too comfortable for long. That would tend to suggest more variety and surprises than are actually on offer. As with lots of music like this, it's pleasant, soothing and all rather the same by the end of 50 minutes.

John Adcock

AERIE SONIC

Hits 100 001 stiH; Sonic Complete; Introduction; Fuchsteufelswild; Bad Trash Fish; In The Dumps; Monochrome; Abeilmmmost (54.00)

Sam Comerford (ts); Ingo Hipp (as); Laurent Métaau (elg); David Helm (b); Matthew Jacobson (d). Ludwigsburg, December 2016.

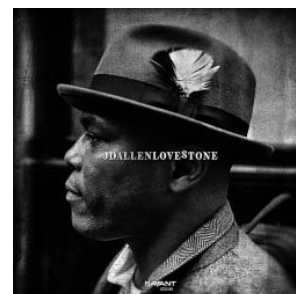
QFTF Records 041 ★★★

After the unashamedly proggy debut *Hatch And Host* (Neuklang, 2015), Ingo Hipp's multinational ensemble return to the famous Bauer Studio in Ludwigsburg to give their eclectic musical kaleidoscope another vigorous shake. Other than the arrival of German bassist David Helm, who replaces Estonian Peedu Kass, Aerie's Irish-Swiss axis remains unaltered. If you heard the group's striking debut then you'll know that any given piece can run the gamut of post-ECM introspection, churning Krautrock rhythms, furious post-fusion unisons and visceral free jazz. Yet Aerie's music seldom sounds contrived, and while they might lack a star soloist, the group's strong collective identity provides ample compensation.

The staccato horn lines and pounding meter of the palindromic *Hits 100 001 stiH* suggests business as usual, and while the two albums are undoubtedly kindred there are some notable points of differ-

ence. With a judicious embrace of electronic textures and processing, *Sonic* is a more layered and composerly affair than *Hatch*. Illustrating the group's extraordinary range, *Sonic Complete* transitions from a low-key sine wave tone through Métaau's raw psych-rock meltdown before resolving in anthemic grandeur. *Introduction* is an all too brief passage of icy minimalist electronica which leads into the dreamy soundscapes of *Fuchsteufelswild*. Along with the brooding *In The Dumps*, it leaves a deeper impression than many of the more conventionally animated pieces. It closes with the enigmatic *Abeilmmmost*, gossamer lyricism juxtaposed against a spiky rhythmic vamp, and it strikes me that the great appeal of Aerie's music lies not so much in its many discombobulating stylistic collisions, but more in the skilful way that even the roughest of junctures is cleverly smoothed over.

Fred Grand



J.D. ALLEN LOVE STONE

Stranger In Paradise; Until The Real Thing Comes Along; Why Was I Born?; You're My Thrill; Come All Ye Fair And Tender Ladies; Put On A Happy Face; Prisoner Of Love; Someday (You'll Want Me To Want You); Gone With The Wind (44.51)

Allen (ts); Liberty Ellman (g); Gregg August (b); Rudy Royston (d).
New York, 9 January 2018.

Savant 2169

★★★

Ballad projects used to be a requirement for tenor saxophonists – one of John Coltrane’s commercially most successful albums was *Ballads*. J. D. Allen is known as a modernist, but here he returns in some ways to tradition, with this established format. The album features long-time trio partners, bassist Gregg August and drummer Rudy Royston, plus guitarist Liberty Ellman. In fact it’s the trio’s second collaboration with Ellman after 2017’s *Radio Flyer*. Ellman is also known as an experimenter, but here shows considerable sensitivity to the tradition.

Born in Detroit, and now based in New York, Allen had a formative tenure with Betty Carter, and worked with Lester Bowie, Louis Hayes, Butch Morris and David Murray. His work is of a high quality, though perhaps this album isn’t quite pulling me in as much as his more contemporary work. He hews to a Dexter Gordon model – slow tempos and a fat sound – though with a hard, post-Coltrane edge. But then I think I’m right in saying that Gordon himself, like other saxophonists of the bebop generation, emulated the Coltrane sound in his later career. The only soloist apart from the leader is Liberty Ellman, whose approach to standard material is oblique and fragmentary.

It’s an intriguing selection of well-known and lesser known songs. Allen draws on the public domain with *Come All Ye Fair And Tender Ladies*, but otherwise it’s standard material of varying familiarity, with *You’re My Thrill* especially moving. A worthwhile release, that repays repeated listening.

Andy Hamilton

AMBROSE

WHEN DAY IS DONE

CD1: (1928-1935) *Happy Days Are Here Again; Sunshine; Singapore Sorrows; If I Had You; Cryin’ For The Carolines; ‘Leven Thirty Saturday Night; The Free And Easy; The Peanut Vendor; I’m Through With Love; Mei; Home; She Didn’t Say Yes; The Sun Has Got His Hat On; The Clouds Will Soon Roll By; Let’s Put Out The Lights And Go To Sleep; How Deep*

CRITICS’ CHOICE

The 10 CDs JJ critics most wanted to hear from this month’s review pile

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Tony Bennett & Diana Krall | Love Is Here To Stay | Decca, no number |
| Black Art Jazz Collective | Armor Of Pride | HighNote 7313 |
| Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers | Complete Concert At Club Saint Germain | Essential Jazz Classics 55745 |
| Dave Brubeck | Bossa Nova U.S.A | State Of Art 81242 |
| Joe Farrell | Quartet/Outback/Moon Germs | Beat Goes On 1346 |
| Dexter Gordon | Espace Cardin 1977 | Elemental 5990431 |
| Jim Hall | Concierto/Big Blues/Studio Trieste | Beat Goes On 1342 |
| John McLaughlin & Jimmy Herring | Live In San Francisco | Abstract Logix 059 |
| Wayne Shorter | Emanon | Blue Note, no number |
| Lester Young | The Complete Aladdin Recordings | Essential Jazz Classics 55748 |

Is The Ocean; Lazybones; It’s The Talk Of The Town; Who’s Been Polishing The Sun?; The Continental; Embassy Stomp; I’m On A See-Saw; Hors D’Oeuvres; Big Ben Is Saying Goodnight (78.23)

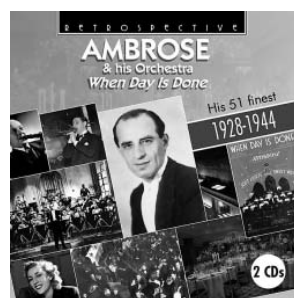
CD2: (1935-1944) *Streamline Strut; Maracas; B’Wanga; Anything Goes; I’ll Never Say Never Again; Copenhagen; She’s A Latin From Manhattan; Limehouse Blues; The Piccolino; Night Ride; Wood And Ivory; Hick Stomp; Escapada; Champagne Cocktail; Cotton Pickers’ Congregation; Caravan; Deep Henderson; Moonlight On The Waterfall; Message From Mars; Two Sleepy People; Blue Skies Are Round The Corner; My Prayer; I’m In Love For The Last Time; I Don’t Want To Walk Without You, Baby; Lili Marlene; When Day Is Done (79.31)*

CD1 includes Max Goldberg (f); Ted Heath (tb); Danny Polo, Sid Phillips (cl, as, bar); Harry Hayes (as); Billy Amstell, Joe Crossman (cl, ts); Max Bacon (d).

CD2 includes Tommy McQuater, Max Goldberg (f); George Chisholm; Eric Breeze, Lew Davis, Ted Heath (tb); Danny Polo, Sid Phillips (cl, as, bar); Andy McDevitt (as); Billy Amstell (cl, ts); Ivor Mairants, Albert Harris (g); Tiny Winters (b); Max Bacon (d); Anne Shelton, Vera Lynn, Denny Dennis (v).

Retrospective 4338

★★★



Bert Ambrose was born in London in 1917. He travelled to New York as a violinist when he was 20, spending most of the next decade working in American bands. He eventually returned to England in 1927 when he was appointed musical director of the Mayfair Hotel in London. His American experience shows, for, right from 1928, these bands were superbly rehearsed and featured a very high quality of musician. The BBC regularly broadcast live from London’s Mayfair Hotel, and as a result Ambrose’s band became one of the most popular in the country. Deservedly so, for his was the only British band to rank with its US equivalents. Only Lew Stone’s band came near as competition.

The earlier records were made for HMV, but classic Ambrose came in the 30s on Decca. That’s where, on the second volume, you’ll find *Night Ride, Cotton Pickers’ Congregation* and all the other fine arrangements by Sid Phillips. The American clarinetist Danny Polo was a mainstay of the band from 1929 and stayed until the end of the 30s when he went home to play with Teagarden, Hawkins and Claude Thornhill. Phillips was no doubt a disciple of his poised and precise clarinet playing.

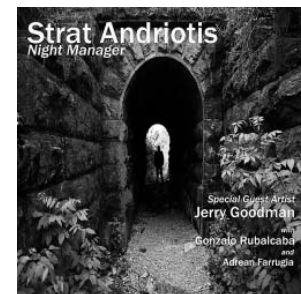
Unfortunately for us, this is not a jazz album, although all the jazz tracks are included alongside the vocals of the various singers, all of whom were pretty far from jazz.

But the intention is to give a portrait of the Ambrose operation as a whole, and as such the set is an admirable four-star success. A lot of people will no doubt want it for its great historical value, but the quaint commercial tracks don’t manage to suppress the jazz. Compiled by Ray Crick, a name rapidly becoming a quality

guarantee, the music has been perfectly transferred and thoroughly researched.

Ambrose liked to stand in front of the band at society gigs. That’s about all he did. It was people like Sid Phillips and Tommy McQuater who ran the band for him.

Steve Voce



STRAT ANDRIOTIS

NIGHT MANAGER

(1) *Song 21; (2) Secrets; Chili’s Blues; (3) Can’t Wait; Avid; Feverpitch; The Arrival; (4) I Hear A Rhapsody (34.33)*

Andriotis (g) on all tracks; Jerry Goodman (vln). (1) add Gonzalo Rubalcaba (p). (2) add Adrean Farrugia (p) but omit Rubalco. (3) omit Rubalco and Farrugia. (4) omit Goodman. Ontario, no date, c. 2018.

Dekatria 003

★★★

Strat Andriotis was born in Greece but departed with his parents from there when aged four and is now a resident of Ontario, Canada. As a budding guitarist he was initially inspired by Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton, so his forename (or nickname?) seems appropriate. But despite the heavy-metal moniker, on this recording Andriotis plays a Gibson J-200 for the rhythm tracks and a Gibson Super 200 for his lead guitar work. On the Fragos/Baker/Gasparre cover of