



Matt Marantz *Offering*

(SELF-RELEASE)

★★★★½

As the cover art to this CD suggests, religious conviction is a big part of tenorist Matt Marantz's life and many of his compositional ideas here are inspired by the works of The Creator, including "Hope,"

which dwells in awe at the midwinter night sky in Texas.

The undulating, loose rhythmic flow and somewhat somber—or "pastel," as one title suggests—hues of this record wouldn't be out of place on the ECM label. It should be noted that "Pastel" is one of the more burning tunes on this collection, rather higher in saturation than the title suggests. Despite residency in New York, Marantz is fascinated by scenes and the sea, reflected in such cuts as "Coastlines" and "Dream's Harbor" (his note about the latter, "a place where you protectively lay up treasures of ideas," is nicely evocative). Over the long haul, the cuts could use more conceptual variation or greater moodswing, but then again, there is programmatic cohesion as a result and the group (heavy but not bloated with harmony given both guitar and keys aboard) seem perfectly at ease, riding buoyant then turbulent and splashy cymbal work from Davis.

Despite flashes of Michael Brecker-ish chops here and there, Marantz is not a bombastic, vainglorious player but deeply sincere and meditative, and the "Offering" is given with an open hand, no hidden agendas, ending on a nice bowing subtone.

—Michael Jackson

Offering: The Narrow Path; Quiet; Patience; Coastlines; Hope; Pastel; Rainfall; Sketches; Dream's Harbor; Offering; Prayer. (65:03)

Personnel: Matt Marantz, tenor saxophone; Sam Harris, piano; Martin Nevin, bass; Michael Davis, drums; Steve Cardenas, guitar (2, 4, 6, 10); Reuben Samana, bass (8).

Ordering info: mattmarantz.com

David Binney *Aliso*

CRISS CROSS JAZZ 1322

★★★★½

From the opening drum hit from Dan Weiss, *Aliso* imparts a rock/fusion vibe, with tight breaks, stationary rhythmic undercurrent and twisting, fractal guitar from Wayne Krantz. One wonders what Gerry Teekens made of it, since his Criss Cross label has been a bastion of straightahead acoustic jazz. With that said, apart from the stipulation that musicians include standard ballads and burners in their sets, Teekens has also provided an outlet for original compositions from the top tier of New York talent.

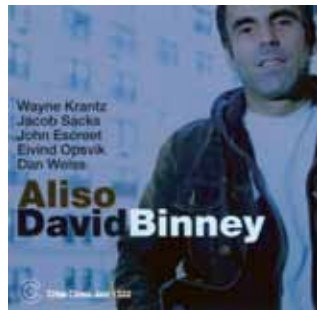
As well as being a jaw-drop alto technician, rivaling Rudresh Mahanthappa as prima virtuoso, Binney is a prolific writer. Liners allege this session was thrown together day of, since all were insanely busy immediately prior, which might explain some of the prosaic titles ("A Day In Music," "Bar Life") but doesn't explain how tight this unit is in the circumstances. Binney describes his 11th hour cover selections as lingua franca, but few folk play Wayne Shorter's "Toy Tune" or "Teru." Sam Rivers' "Fuschia Swing Song" and John Coltrane's "Africa" are also atypical. "Strata," inspired by Charles Tolliver's Strata East recordings, is similar elementally to the kick-off track, but with the implied beat a tad slower, allowing Weiss to interpolate other rhythms from his bag of spices as Indian percussion master. Opsvik nicely suspends the time on bass as Binney winds up a chromatic solo. Sacks gets a probing taste here (he has more fun later on the Serengeti-wild "Africa"), which turns a little classical before restatement of the bassline. Krantz fashions a subtle bubbling riff at the fade.

—Michael Jackson

Aliso: Aliso; A Day In Music; Toy Tune; Strata; Teru; Fuschia Swing Song; Bar Life; Think Of One; Africa. (73:23)

Personnel: David Binney, alto saxophone; Wayne Krantz, guitar; Jacob Sacks, piano; John Escreet, piano (1, 7, 9); Evvind Opsvik, bass; Dan Weiss, drums.

Ordering info: crisscrossjazz.com



HU-31810-02

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