

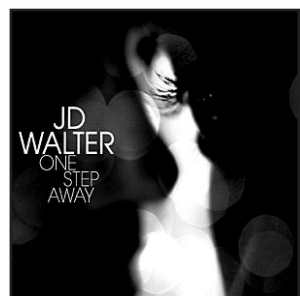
The Destructive Element
Harris Eisenstadt September Trio (Clean Feed)
by John Sharpe

Drummer Harris Eisenstadt garners as much recognition for his composing as for his instrumental performances, but on *The Destructive Element*, the second outing by his September Trio, he manages to combine both in an expansive expressive delight. Tenor saxophonist Ellery Eskelin and pianist Angelica Sanchez move around, through and out of Eisenstadt's artful constructs with such command that they make them flexible breathing frameworks, rather than something prescriptive or straitjacketing. And that's just as well when you have as much to say as this pair.

Eskelin takes plaudits as MVP. He's everywhere, integrating the spirits of Ben Webster and Gene Ammons into a thoroughly modern sensibility. Rugged and bluesy, he instills the program with a gritty late-night ardor both impassioned and opinionated. Sanchez proves the perfect foil, moving seamlessly between tumbling chords, earthy comping and sparkling repartée. Eisenstadt covers the bases, from delivering a master class in maintaining momentum without settling into a steady tempo to savvy tonal shading and probing commentary, all with an easy grace. His one feature, a languidly pulsing intro to the opening "Swimming, then Rained Out" is over before you know it, as the other two take over for a deep indigo ballad while a brace of flinty duets with Eskelin's tenor emerge organically from the staccato interplay of "From Schoenberg, Part One" and "From Schoenberg, Part Two".

Nothing can be gainsaid about the charts as Eisenstadt keeps everyone guessing. On the flag-waving "Additives", hard-driving sections continually morph into open form improv while the portentous closer "Here Are the Samurai" sees three separate lines converging and diverging until one final knotty dash. One of the strong suits of this band is a way with a ballad and they don't disappoint. Eskelin's slow burning lyricism illuminates "Back and Forth" while his tender lament percolates up through the lilting solemnity of the lovely "Cascadia". Here and throughout, they keep you coming back only to discover more on each listen.

For more information, visit cleanfeed-records.com. Eisenstadt is at The Stone Sep. 3rd-4th and Greenwich House Music School Sep. 12th. See Calendar.



One Step Away
JD Walter (Jwal)
by Alex Henderson

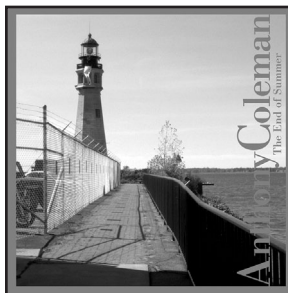
Those familiar with jazz vocalist JD Walter know that the Philadelphia native has been putting out risk-taking CDs since the '90s and his adventurous spirit doesn't let up a bit on *One Step Away*. This session was produced by pianist Orrin Evans (another Philly

jazzman) and bassist Eric Revis, who comprise two-thirds, along with drummer Nasheet Waits, of the trio Tarbaby, who back up Walter here along with guitarist Marc Ducret. The accompaniment is as free-spirited as the leader on an album that mostly falls into the postbop category but sometimes detours into the avant garde realm.

Walter emphasizes original material, writing or co-writing six of the nine selections, which range from the impressionistic "How to Die and Where to Fly" and haunting "It's Raining Today" to the eerie "Inward". Most of the songs have lyrics, but on the funky-yet-abstract "Inside Outfluence" (the album's most overtly avant garde offering), Walter offers stream-of-consciousness wordless scating. The three selections not by Walter are Paul Simon's "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover", Todd Rundgren's "Pretending to Care" and Michel Legrand's "I Will Wait for You". Cabaret singing this is not: Walter and his colleagues turn the melodies inside out and take liberties with the lyrics as well. Anyone who claims that rock material doesn't give jazz artists enough room to improvise should hear Walter on the Rundgren and Simon songs.

Walter brings a strong Mark Murphy influence to the table, whether he is scating or performing lyrics but one can hear Bob Dorough, Jon Hendricks and Betty Carter as well. But Walter is his own person and his willingness to take chances yields consistently absorbing results on *One Step Away*.

For more information, visit jdwalter.com. This project is at Jazz Standard Sep. 4th. See Calendar.



The End of Summer
Anthony Coleman (Tzadik)
by Sean Fitzell

Influenced as much by composer Anton Webern as he was by Duke Ellington, pianist Anthony Coleman always bristled at the distinction between "composition" and "jazz composition". Since he started teaching at New England Conservatory, his compositional focus has shifted from small group improvisation to classically influenced works. His rotating cast of student musicians and different instrumentation has provided the opportunity to experiment with sonic combinations.

The End of Summer gathers together recent chamber works, ranging from solo piano and a quartet (piano, trombone and two alto saxophones) to his Survivor's Breakfast ensemble. Inspired by foreign films and musings on snow, as well as personal loss, the music patiently unfurls over long cycles at slow tempos, reflecting Coleman's interest in minimalism and Southeast Asian forms.

The ensemble piece "Matter of Operation" opens with heightened drama that dissipates to introduce voices. Coleman writes high pitches for the strings, horns and voice, which blend to create a tense, discomfiting line like the hum of insects, relieved only by his deft use of space. Similarly, the unusual quartet instrumentation on "The Taste of Saury" results in unexpected intertwining sounds that strain until leavened by the composer's tinkling keys. The title composition makes expert use of the large ensemble with a swelling call-and-response cycle between instrumental groupings. It intensifies to a concluding section boasting a funereal trumpet theme bolstered by raking percussion accents.

Conversely, the solo piano piece "Whorfian Hypothesis" illustrates Coleman's instrumental mastery, as he modulates between soft touches and emphatic strikes over its austere structure. Subtle shifts of inflection underlie the meditative piano étude "Aioli", which seems to add a phrase with each repetition. The four-movement "And Life Goes On" is at times bombastic with pounding percussion and piano accents and then ruminative with airy woodwinds and strings as the principal tones.

For more information, visit tzadik.com. Coleman is at Issue Project Room Sep. 5th as part of the venue's 10th Anniversary Celebration. See Calendar.

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