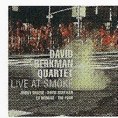


## REVIEWS Undertones

By Bill Milkowski

### DAVID BERKMAN QUARTET

*Live at Smoke* (Challenge)



This excellent disc documents David Berkman's quartet with saxophonist Jimmy Greene, bassist Ed Howard and drummer Ted Poor at the intimate Upper West Side haven for New York's straightahead set. While the reliably swinging pianist and accomplished composer might be bending the rules a bit on the club's criterion, particularly on the ominous groover "The Mayor of Smoke" and "Carroll Street Pop Tune," pieces like "Weird Knack," "Hidden Fondness" (based on "Secret Love") and his tasty cover of Benny Golson's "Along Came Betty" fit right in.

### MAREK DYKTA/JOHN ABERCROMBIE

*Cradle of Light* (EFCM)

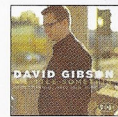


This enchanting duet project features Polish-born guitarist-composer (and Berkeley grad) Marek Dykta

engaging in some intimate guitar dialogues with his friend and mentor John Abercrombie. Between four delicate waltzes, including Dykta's affecting "2642," the playfully dissonant "How They Dance" and the lovely "Ten Nights," along with Dykta's gorgeous "The Day That Wouldn't End" and Abercrombie's introspective "Foolish Door," this is a brilliant collection of luminous, warm-toned improvisations.

### DAVID GIBSON

*A Little Somethin'* (Posi-Tone)



Trombonist David Gibson, a classy J.J./Curtis/Slide-inspired player and accomplished composer, has an easy chemistry on the frontline with pungent-toned alto saxophonist Julius Tolentino. But the secret weapon here is organist Jared Gold, whose B3 comping and walking basslines underscore buoyantly swinging fare like "The Cobbler" and "This End Up" while also fueling urgent-

ly funky throwdowns like "Hot Sauce" and "In the Loop." Gold also brandishes a killer right hand on his solos, helping to make Gibson's fourth effort as a leader his best yet.

### DANIEL KELLY

*Emerge* (BJU)



Pianist Daniel Kelly channels loads of upstart energy on this renegade trio offering with electric bassist Chris Tarry and powerhouse drummer Jordan Perlson. They play the Bad Plus card on the hard-hitting opener "Moroccan Nutchuck," then thrash unapologetically on the propulsive, drum 'n' bass-fueled "Obfyor" before settling into the atmospheric "Transience." Kelly also dabbles in prepared piano, Brazilian *baião* and Cuban *son montuno*. Add a couple grunge-inflected Rhodes numbers and the romantic waltz-time ballad "July 25th" and you get a sense of his ambitious scope here.

### FRANK LONDON/LORIN SKLAMBERG

*Tsuker-Zis* (Tzadik)



Trumpeter Frank London and accordionist-vocalist Lorin Sklamberg have been collaborating for 20 years, going back to their Klezmatiks classic, *Rhythm & Jews*. On this intriguing outing, part of John Zorn's Radical Jewish Culture series, they join forces with Psychedelic Furs guitarist Knox Chandler, Armenian oud legend Ara Dinkjian and Indian percussion master Deep Singh; the repertoire includes unorthodox but reverent renditions of *nigunim* (traditional Hasidic melodies for Sabbath and holidays). Sklamberg sings like an angel and London shades him beautifully, like Miles sitting in with a cantor during Pesach services. Chandler provides grunge tones and the occasional sick solo.

### PETE McCANN

*Extra Mile* (19/8)



On this excellent outing, guitarist-composer Pete McCann fronts an interactive crew including drummer Mark Ferber and keyboardist Henry Hey. From the lyrical, breezy opener "Fielder's Choice" to the urgently angular "Isosceles," the wildly cathartic "Stasis" and the darkly probing title track, McCann explores a wide range of six-string expression with authority. "Angry Panda"

sounds borrowed from the Mahavishnu Orchestra songbook while the intricate, polyrhythmic workout "Hybrid" sounds like John Scofield jamming with Steve Coleman's Five Elements. Add the noirish, Frisell-ian waltz "Lonesome Prairie Dog" and guitar fans have plenty to savor here.

### TOM MCDERMOTT

*New Orleans Duets* (Rabadash)



The gifted two-fisted pianist Tom McDermott encounters 21 fellow denizens of the Crescent City on this engaging collection. From his charming "Insouciance" with accordionist Richard Scott to a 12/8 reading of Fats Domino's "Blueberry Hill," a soulful version of Sam Cooke's "Cupid" with singer John Boutte and a spirited rendition of "Stars and Stripes Forever" with sousaphonist Matt Perrine, this is pure fun. Two former Crescent City dwellers, Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong, appear via studio magic.

### CLAUDE PAULY

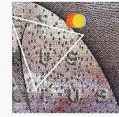
*Mind Meets Matter* (Claude Pauly)



Luxembourg-born guitar slinger Claude Pauly flaunts dangerous Scott Henderson-styled chops on thunderous fare like "Moorish Maze," the edgy "Haunted" and the powerhouse, Indian-flavored "Incarnation Highway," all fueled by the Garaj Mahal rhythm tandem of bassist Kai Eckhardt and drummer Alan Hertz. Pauly's lyrical string-bending prowess on "The Mirror Trail" recalls Jeff Beck's classic "Because We've Ended as Lovers," while his audacious fretboard work on the fuzz-inflected funk-rocker "The Dipp" tips into the Allan Holdsworth zone. A must for fusion fans.

### BEN PEROWSKY

*Esopus Opus* (Skirl)



Drummer Ben Perowsky, a ubiquitous figure on NYC's alternative jazz and pop scenes and a charter member of Steven Bernstein's Millennial Territory Orchestra, premieres his quartet with accordionist Ted Reichman, saxophonist-clarinetist Chris Speed and bassist Drew Gress. Together they turn in slightly eccentric renditions of Jimi Hendrix's "Manic Depression," Hermeto Pascoal's "Nem Um Talvez" and George Harrison's "Within You Without You,"



Pete McCann