

Simple Life
Paul Jost (PJ Music)
by Marilyn Lester

Paul Jost's second album not only represents an evolution of his growth as a vocalist, but also his talents as an arranger. Jost actually refers to himself as a vocal musician, clearly evident on the 13 tracks of this offering. He possesses a gravelly tenor, liberally applied to an amazingly facile ability to scat, utilize parlando and sprinkle in straightforward vocalizing. His style, especially in phrasing, is percussive, no surprise since he's spent the greater part of his career behind a drumkit for a plethora of A-list jazz artists such as Morgana King, Mark Murphy, Sylvia Syms, Ann Hampton Callaway and Billy Eckstine.

Two of his originals, "Bela Tristeza" and "Livin' in the Wrong Time", appear in the mix of standards and more modern material. Paul McCartney's "Blackbird" is given a fresh bebop treatment with scat threading through instrumental turns, particularly by vibraphonist Joe Locke, who is featured on the first four tracks. His work on Harold Arlen-Yip Harburg's "If I Only Had a Brain" fits perfectly into Jost's brilliant, wistful balladic arrangement. Locke is also front and center on Juan Tizol's "Caravan", done bebop style, and a slow, dramatic arrangement of Fred Neil's "Everybody's Talkin'", an emotive Jost delivering the lyric in parlando. The traditional "Shenandoah" and especially Bob Dylan's "Girl from the North Country", Jost adding harmonica playing to his vocalizing, are slowly and carefully delivered, with an intense longing and pathos that pops the lyric.

Jost's regular trio of Jim Ridl (piano), Dean Johnson (bass) and Tim Horner (drums) each have spotlight moments on a trippy arrangement of Sonny Rollins' "No Moe", with Jost scatting along through the rhythm changes. Ray Noble's "The Touch of Your Lips" is transformed into a bebop wonder. Rube Bloom-Harry Ruby's "Give Me the Simple Life" anchors the conceptual through-line of the CD. Jost starts with a spoken quote of his father's, a philosophy of life he expresses by singing the tune straightforward. He ends it by whistling, including a riff of the theme song from *The Andy Griffith Show*. It's a nice touch.

For more information, visit pauljostmusic.com. Jost and his trio are at 55Bar May 29th. See Calendar.



Diom Futa
Cheikh Tidiane Fall/Bobby Few/Jo Maka (Komos)
by Pierre Crépon

The continued vinyl reissues trend often carries things a bit far in terms of adjectival offerings. "Seminal" might be slightly overused in label blurbs, but the presence of the great Bobby Few is certainly a good enough reason to bring a record back in print. Heard with the American pianist are Guinean saxophonist Jo Maka—a noted member of the '70s French scene,

notably with François Tusques and Edja Kungali—and Senegalese percussionist Cheikh Tidiane Fall.

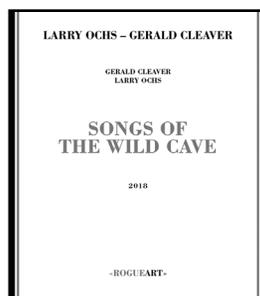
The sound of this Parisian date, recorded 40 years ago this month, is defined by Fall's purposely soft touch on hand percussion and Maka's economical approach. The rhythmical side of what Fall called "African contemporary music" dominates and carries the session.

The main word might be 'bright', with its multiple meanings. Key to Few's playing is his ability to sprawl and occupy as much of the spectrum as possible while maintaining just the right balance, something his work in the dense Frank Wright Quartet may certainly have helped hone. Brightness also defines the session's overall mood. Fall is credited with two of the four compositions; no liner notes confirm it, but the extended section launching the title track might showcase "corpo", a technique Fall developed and taught, consisting in using the human body as a sound production device in conjunction with percussion.

Probably more than a "Parisian answer to Black Jazz and Strata-East", as the label puts it, *Diom Futa* may be better heard as an example of the uniqueness of the era's French scene. It had been cracked wide open by the strong impact of free jazz, both local and imported by ex-pats, and could integrate a lot of what the country's crossroad position made possible.

Few's closing pieces add vocalist Anedra Shockley and goes into territory closer to so-called 'concert music', further confirming the music's openness. A 2002 CD reissue titled *Jom Futa* added two newly recorded tracks. The Komos vinyl is remastered from the original tapes. Jo Maka died in March 1981. His beautiful, Coltrane-esque sound should be heard, as should Few and Fall's playing in this interesting context.

For more information, visit komosrecords.bandcamp.com



Songs of the Wild Cave
Larry Ochs/ Gerald Cleaver (Rogue Art)
by John Sharpe

Songs of the Wild Cave does what it says on the tin. Saxophonist Larry Ochs, one of the driving forces behind the ROVA Saxophone Quartet, teams up with resourceful drummer Gerald Cleaver in an adventurous duet performed in the subterranean darkness of a cave in the southwest of France in 2016. It was recorded the day after the pair was privileged to view Paleolithic paintings in another cave nearby and was clearly imbued with the spirit of that encounter. Inevitably primal elements spring to the fore from the already primal instrumentation of drum and horn.

"First Steps" begins with percussive rustling from Cleaver and annunciatory long tones from Ochs on tenor, as they interact in a call and response between both themselves and the cave and its past. Both their exchanges and the ambience are spacious and resonant. At times Cleaver creates plopping noises that evoke dripping stalactites. It's about as far from the seminal drum/saxophone template of John Coltrane's *Interstellar Space* as you can get, both literally and figuratively. Over the course of seven off-the-wall duets the pair try out a variety of approaches, largely defined by Cleaver's choice of attack, whether throbbing pulsation, free cavalcade or rattling atmospherics.

Ochs becomes expansive and intense as the tracks progress. On "Deeper", Cleaver's pounding tattoo invites Ochs into an answering stream, which combines almost lyrical turns of phrase with gruff abstract

overblowing, to fashion a wall of sound. He switches to soprano for "Down", where his corkscrewing lines expand into multiphonics, calling up the ancestors. The final cut, "Light From The Shadows", seems almost a song of celebration. Foghorn tenor brays against pulsing drums, as the pair becomes more continuously engaged, only to end with Cleaver's unaccompanied funky shuffle providing the closing moments of a singular, unlikely to be repeated, experience.

For more information, visit roguart.com. Cleaver is at Ibeam Brooklyn May 17th with Igor Lumpert, Soup & Sound May 22nd with Aruán Ortiz and 244 Rehearsal Studios May 23rd with Simon Nabatov. See Calendar.



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