

DROP THE NEEDLE



Children of the Forest
Milford Graves (Black Editions Archive)
by Pierre Crépon

Thanks to Valerie Wilmer's powerful cover art, the music from this deluxe 2-LP gatefold archival release nearly starts before the needle even hits the vinyl. Milford Graves (who would have turned 82 this month) is seated at his drum kit under the bright neon of an unadorned loft, shouting intensely. Lights of the New York night filter through windows, in front of which stand reed players Arthur Doyle and Hugh Glover. Their postures contrast with Graves': Doyle seems to be carefully apposing a flute line, while Glover holds the tiniest of bells. What hope is there for the sound it could make amidst Graves' torrential drumming?

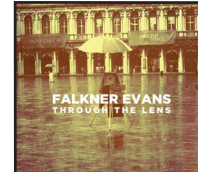
These previously unreleased private recordings show ways in which the gesture could make sense. Recorded in early 1976, when the trio made its only album, *Bäbi*, these sonically raw tapes present the group in a new light. Instead of *Bäbi*'s

drums-plus-two-juggernaut-saxophones, however, things are refocused here around a single wind instrument. During the first session, Glover sticks to "miscellaneous" instruments while Graves plays busy, bouncing rhythms. Doyle starts where he usually did, at the last stop on the way out, seemingly looking for ways to obliterate certain frequencies. At the end, Glover plays a single sound (a Klaxon?) over and over, and to remarkable effect.

It underlines how the point here is not to flow freely in every direction but to work concentratedly on specific registers and how one simple sound could matter. The second session features only Graves plus Glover (on tenor). The mood is somber, ruminating, more subdued. It shows again, with less immediacy, how Graves and his musicians could shift the music's balance in more ways than they've been credited for.

Produced by Peter Kolovos and Eremit Records' Michael Ehlers, this release is an example of archival material done properly: truly unheard music, substantial notes (here an interview with Glover) and great photography (that also includes a shot from Thierry Trombert's deep archives). It follows a first entry in Black Editions' Milford Graves series that featured William Parker and the recently departed Peter Brötzmann. The drummer's small discography has never reflected his stature accurately. This new release seems to confirm that the project of correcting this problem has now been taken up in earnest.

For more info visit blackeditionsgroup.com



Through the Lens
Falkner Evans (CAP)
Blues for Gerry
David Hazeltine Trio (Criss Cross Jazz)
Butcher Block Ballet
Jeremy Manasia Trio (Blujazz)
by Elijah Shiffer

For the modern jazz pianist, the harmonic language of bebop and hard bop is a constant presence to converse with. There are infinite possible ways to interpret this vocabulary. Three new releases by established pianists, one solo and two trio, illustrate very different ways to deal with the lexicon of straight-ahead jazz harmony.

The most inventive of these is *Through the Lens*, Falkner Evans' second solo piano recording for the Consolidated Artists Productions (CAP) label. On this entirely improvised album, Evans often plays recognizable jazz harmonies, but fractures them into unique, abstract progressions. There is an elegiac, reflective mood throughout; the album is a tribute to Evans' late wife. Though some of the five tracks ramble a little, full of fleeting harmonic shifts, others such as the opening "Soul Witness" are laser-focused on a single tonal landscape. "Blues for Lucia" is another of these, a surreal soliloquy in which Evans dances around the blues without ever stating a chorus of blues changes.

Blues for Gerry is a trio album by David Hazeltine, who confronts the hard bop sound much more

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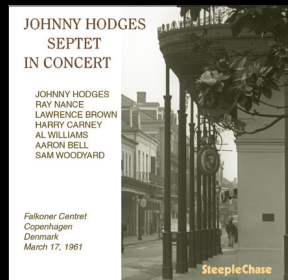
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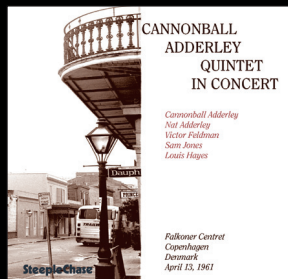
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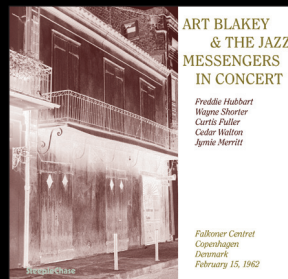
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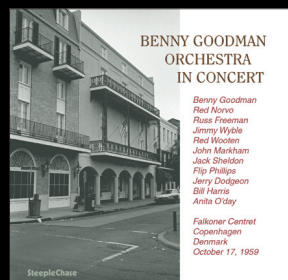
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