

Authority Melts From Me
Bobby Avey (Whirlwind)
 by David R. Adler

Inspired by a visit to Haiti in 2012, pianist Bobby Avey sought to develop his own musical response to the voodoo drumming ensembles he studied. The result is *Authority Melts From Me*, a quintet with alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón and guitarist Ben Monder as well as Avey's longtime trio mates Thomson Kneeland (bass) and Jordan Perlson (drums).

There are three extended movements and two briefer interludes in this nearly hour-long suite, a musical mountain confidently scaled by these ambitious and well-matched players. The music breathes, churns tumultuously, slogs through mud, digs its way out into soaring melodic releases. "Kalfou" moves from highly configured staccato passages to expanses with Monder in a wailing fuzztone mode. Zenón solos assertively but fulfills many functions, doubling bass or piano figures or picking up counterlines as the tracks unfold.

Between Avey and Monder, there are layers upon layers of impenetrable harmony in this music, as well as textural reach and an intriguing give-and-take of acoustic and electric sounds. Monder's hovering, scratchy, sculpted, machine-like swells during "Louverture" give an uncanny shape and feel to the latter part of that nearly 18-minute piece. On the closing "Cost", by contrast, Monder's acoustic guitar gives a sense of solid ground, a tactile foundation, under all the harmonic and rhythmic flux.

In his liner notes Avey makes an impassioned case for righting injustices toward the Haitian people. He notes the harmful role of much U.S. policy toward Haiti, citing the CIA-backed ouster of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1990, though not mentioning the U.S. military action that reinstated Aristide in 1994. In any case, Avey's opinions are strong and worth knowing more about, as they shed light on the knowledge and commitment that lays behind this exceptional album.

For more information, visit whirlwindrecordings.com. Avey is at Dizzy's Club Nov. 10th-12th with Dave Liebman and Beethoven Piano Nov. 21st. See Calendar.



Introducing
Musette Explosion (Aviary)
 by Elliott Simon

You can still hear an accordion, violin or guitar playing dusky tunes that swing and sway in certain sections of Paris. The enchantingly erotic dance music that is musette is the result of a meeting of jazz with French folk styles and Italian instrumentation. All the rage in pre-WWII Paris, musette served as the soundtrack for a Bohemian subculture whose seedy streets and coarse clubs presaged the Beats and spawned virtuosos. Will Holshouser (accordion), Matt Munisteri (guitar and banjo) and Marcus Rojas (tuba)

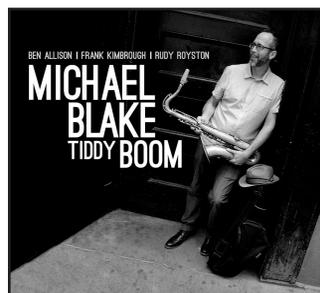
are introduced on this release as Musette Explosion.

Holshouser and Rojas are well known as sidemen comfortable in a broad variety of ethnic and Downtown settings. The rare tuba player who combines an incredibly melodic horn with perfect basslines, Rojas adds punch and immediacy to tunes written for brassless string and accordion-based bands. He invigorates the great musette accordionist Gus Viseur's "L'incomprise" and Django Reinhardt's "Swing 39" with new strength while adding beautiful countermelodies.

Munisteri is likewise comfortable in downtown circles but brings a penchant for early jazz and bluegrass. He adds an old timey feel, avant slant and mysterious balalaika touch to "La Sorcière" while keeping time on "Swing Valse", allowing Rojas to play melody before adding his guitar's own beautiful tone to the middle of this Viseur classic.

It is Holshouser, though, who is at the center of these pieces. His accordion swings with speed and clarity, sways with mystery and eroticism and defines this session as musette. Three Holshouser originals include the oddly constructed opener "A Recurring Dream", elegantly voiced "Chanson Pop" and thoroughly modern, musette nouveau "Grey Eyes is Glass". Not simply an archeological paean to past masters, this debut recording from Musette Explosion makes the genre relevant to NYC's musical landscape.

For more information, visit willholshouser.com. This project is at Cornelia Street Café Nov. 11th. See Calendar.



Tiddy Boom
Michael Blake (Sunnyside)
 by Terrell Holmes

Tenor saxophonist Michael Blake honors saxophone colossi Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young on *Tiddy Boom* (whose onomatopoeic title is derived from a Young catch phrase), an outgrowth of his commissioned work *Contrasts in Individualism: Reinterpreting the Innovations of Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young*. Blake avoids shallow impersonations or rehashes of tunes, choosing instead to incorporate their harmonic and melodic approaches into his compositional framework.

Blake does include direct tributes to Bean and Pres' silky tonality. On "Hawk's Last Rumba", more of a relaxed sip of whiskey than a rump-shaker, Blake plays as Hawkins always seemed to, seamlessly and effortlessly. And the use of harmonics and soundless blowing over bassist Ben Allison's pizzicato and Frank Kimbrough's barrelhouse piano on "A Good Day for Pres" shows how, within these tips of the pork pie hat, Blake firmly establishes his improvisatory strategies.

The quartet of Blake, Allison, Kimbrough and drummer Rudy Royston is so good that it makes the innovation and complexity behind these tunes seem almost pedestrian. The collective excellence drives the sometimes strident but completely cool "Skinny Dip"; hip title cut, a blend of soul, big band swing and postbop grooves; "Boogaloo", which has a clever, challenging structure; Blake and Kimbrough's wicked, humorous dialogue on the scampering "Coastline"; affirmatory, gospel-tinged "The Ambassadors"; and "Letters in Disguise", a standout whose brooding intro, fiery middle passage by Blake, brilliant channeling of McCoy Tyner by Kimbrough and quiescent conclusion recall the eminence of the Coltrane Quartet.

Tiddy Boom is an absolute gem, not merely about the sounds of Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins and the glorious past, but how their legacies influence musicians today and will do so in the future. The range of Blake's writing and the passion with which he plays tenor shows an abiding respect for tradition that has helped his own growth as a musician. It wouldn't be a surprise if, in about 50 years, a young tenor player with an eye toward tradition writes a commissioned work entitled *Contrasts in Individualism: Reinterpreting the Innovations of Michael Blake*.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This project is at Jazz at Kitano Nov. 12th. See Calendar.

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