



Toy Tunes

Larry Goldings/Peter Bernstein/Bill Stewart (Pirouet)
by Phil Freeman

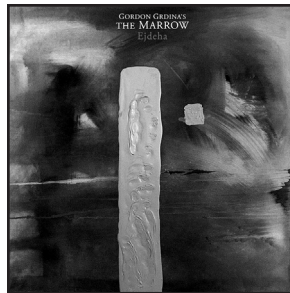
Organ player Larry Goldings, guitarist Peter Bernstein and drummer Bill Stewart first convened as a trio for Goldings' album *Intimacy of the Blues* (Minor Music, 1991); this is their 12th album together. In that time, they've developed a language all their own, one that sounds like conventional jazz but has plenty of weird phrasal quirks and unexpected phonemes.

It's hard not to like an organ trio record that kicks off with a track called "Fagen". Steely Dan has been a stealth influence on a tremendous amount of jazz since its late '70s heyday and this piece has the kind of smooth but subtly tricky arrangement and melancholy hook heard on albums like *Aja* and *Gauche*, as well as a last-minute burst of drum thunder that offers a quick nod to Steve Gadd's epic solo on "Aja". The next track, "Don't Ever Call Me Again", is more uptempo and forceful, with Bernstein uncoiling a stinging, almost Grant Green-esque solo atop a rattling shuffle beat.

Half the pieces on *Toy Tunes* are originals. The others include a version of the standard "I'm In The Mood For Love", Carla Bley's "And Now The Queen", Wayne Shorter's "Toy Tune" and "Maybe", from the musical *Annie*. Could you go your whole life without

ever needing to hear another take on "I'm In The Mood For Love"? Yeah, probably, but this one is fine. "And Now The Queen" is much more interesting; Goldings opens it with some deeply unsettling noises that could come off a Supersilent album, as Stewart bows his cymbals and rattles his kit like he's stress-testing the mounting hardware. Although the piece has a powerful melody, it appears as a series of unexpected surges, punctuation at the end of long bursts of disjointed weirdness. "Toy Tune" builds on a deceptively simple head, allowing the trio to meander around for seven minutes, making it the longest track. "Maybe" is an ideal closer, a gentle tune delivered without disruption or undue exuberance, bringing the mood down to a soothing simmer as the music fades away.

For more information, visit pirouet.com. Bernstein is at *Smoke Nov. 30th-Dec. 2nd* with Jim Rotondi. Stewart is at *Blue Note Nov. 27th-Dec. 2nd* with John Scofield. See *Calendar*.



Ejdeha

Gordon Grdina's The Marrow (Songlines)
by Anders Griffen

The oud is not a new instrument to the jazz idiom, but it sounds fresh here. It is a stringed instrument, like

a lute with a short fingerboard and 11-13 strings, traditionally used in Arabian, Egyptian, Jewish, Palestinian, Iraqi, Persian, Turkish and Armenian music. In the jazz world, the oud has been explored by Ahmed Abdul-Malik, Rabih Abou-Khalil and Anouar Brahem.

Canadian guitarist Gordon Grdina comes forth with a strong, individual voice and the ensemble is assimilated like it's a new discovery of something around for a long time. Percussionist Hamin Honari provides extraordinary accompaniment, especially for listeners used to the American drumset. As he is credited on tombak and daf (traditional Iranian drums), one wonders from where all of his nuanced sounds emanate. The texture and timbre of Honari's percussion provide pronounced character to this group.

Hank Roberts' cello is like the second horn in the combo after the leader and erases borders as the oud has done for millennia. Mark Helias anchors the group with a bass that is rather prominent at times, due in part to the difference between the dynamics of this kind of acoustic ensemble as opposed to a conventional jazz combo. This is exemplary ensemble playing beautifully captured by a clear and balanced recording.

Composition and improvisation share prominence in this music, all written by Grdina. For some of these pieces, like "Idolect" and the title track, the formula consists of a melody or head arrangement for the ensemble, which gives way to an ostinato the group plays together, passing the soloist role from one to another. "Bordeaux Bender" and "Wayward" combine composition with group improvisation. This music is engaging from beginning to end.

For more information, visit songlines.com. Grdina is at *Nublu Nov. 26th* and *Cornelia Street Underground Nov. 27th*. See *Calendar*.

The 2018 Johnny Pacheco Latin Music and Jazz Festival

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-The Kansas State University Latin Jazz Ensemble

Musical Director: Dr. Kurt Gartner

Friday Evening Nov. 16, 7:30 pm

-The Lehman College Jazz Ensemble

Allan Molnar, Director

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Saxophonist & Composer PHILLIP JOHNSTON Returns to New York from Sydney with Two New Albums For His Only 2018 Live Appearance in the US



Phillip Johnston's The Silent Six

[Phillip Johnston / Joe Fiedler / Mike Hashim / Neal Kirkwood / Dave Hofstra / Rob Garcia]

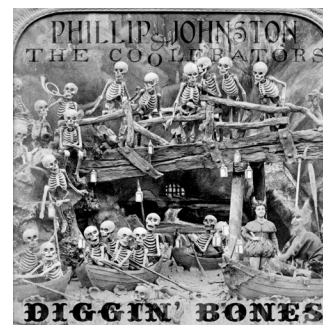
perform tunes from *Diggin' Bones*

November 27, 2018, 7:30 pm

Smalls Jazz Club

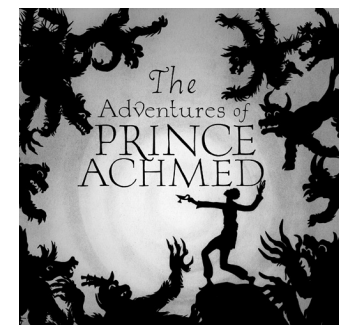
183 W. 10th Street, Greenwich Village, NYC

NEW RELEASES



Phillip Johnston & the Coolers -
Diggin' Bones (Asynchronous Records)

Produced by The Necks' Lloyd Swanton, this debut recording by Johnston's Australia-based jazz quartet with Alister Spence (organ), Nic Cecire (drums), and Swanton (bass) refracts his work with *The Microscopic Septet, Fast 'N' Bulbous* through the lens of funky bitonal organ-based jazz.



Phillip Johnston -
The Adventures of Prince Achmed
(Asynchronous Records)

Musician & composer Phillip Johnston's soundtrack music for *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, the world's first (1926) feature-length animated film, created by female film pioneer Lotte Reiniger.

Available in CD or digital formats:

phillipjohnston.bandcamp.com | waysidemusic.com | downtownmusicgallery.com

www.phillipjohnston.com

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