

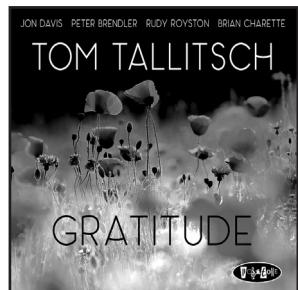
Live at The Tranzac, Vol. 1
Ken Aldcroft/William Parker (Trio)
by Ken Waxman

Toronto's Tranzac isn't Carnegie Hall. The midtown space, initially a social club for Australians and New Zealanders—hence the name—is now one of the city's busiest outposts for music, improvised and otherwise. Like NYC's ABC No-Rio or 5C Café, adventurous sounds compensate for the grungy environment. Besides collaborating with many locals, guitarist Ken Aldcroft has built up ongoing relationships with out-of-towners like Wilbert de Joode and Joe McPhee. *Live at The Tranzac, Vol. 1* preserves a particularly inspired set by the guitarist and bassist William Parker. Unlike some players who arrive in town as if they're Old West gunslingers, Parker is more like a visiting firefighter called in for a natural disaster. He's there to cooperate in order to get the job done the best way possible.

In this case that means providing a steadfast rhythmic pulse or aggressively strumming and hammering on the bass strings to provide melodic continuum, reacting immediately to any changes in the guitar patterns. With sharp tangy down strokes Aldcroft pushes themes forward at a moderated pace, only turning to staccato chording at the midpoint of the single 47-minute improvisation, his sudden ferocity matched by Parker pulling on the strings as if launching arrows from a bow.

The bassist's shrill shakuhachi hoots introduce a Third World element to what was a First World abstract improvisation. Although the transformative mood is amplified when Parker hums while strumming his donso n'goni (Malian harp), false exoticism never replaces accomplished unity. Despite their independent origins, the textures from both string instruments shape this interlocking mosaic of beauty and daring.

For more information, visit kenaldcroft.com. This project is at Downtown Music Gallery Jul. 10th. See Calendar.



Gratitude
Tom Tallitsch (Posi-Tone)
by Mark Keresman

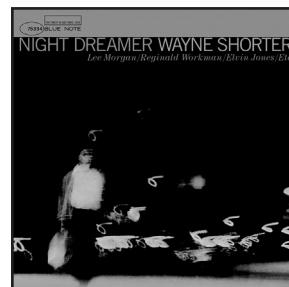
Tenor saxophonist Tom Tallitsch is an Illinois-bred, New Jersey-based bandleader and *Gratitude* is his seventh album as a leader. Tallitsch plays straightahead postbop, tossing a few curve balls to keep things interesting. He is of the generation(s) of players that doesn't rely on the Great American Songbook for material (9 of the 11 tracks herein are originals) and he dips into the rock world for inspiration.

The album opens with "Terrain", a surging, modal midtempo tune evoking '70s McCoy Tyner. Tallitsch has a notable tone—burly approach of Sonny Rollins, flow of Dexter Gordon and cool of Lester Young, etc.—but no one influence dominates in a fascinating blend of robustness and yearning. Drummer Rudy Royston kicks up as much dust (and propulsion) as Art Blakey

and Jon Davis' piano is spare, slightly percussive (that Tyner influence) and possessed of an easy lyricism. He and Tallitsch share a very measured approach, taking an almost leisurely tack in constructing their solos.

Fleetwood Mac's "Gold Dust Woman" might not seem the kind of fare a jazz combo might tackle, but Tallitsch shows its majesty. The saxophonist invests some elegant blues feeling into the proceedings while Davis, Royston and bassist Peter Brendler slyly add a soul-jazz groove more implied than overt and guest Brian Charette deftly adds slightly gothic-sounding organ. These lads close out the program with another seemingly unlikely tune, Led Zeppelin's "Thank You", essayed with a gospel feel thanks to organ (especially) and Davis' sparse, slightly Thelonious Monk-like chords. Tallitsch gets to shine in a poignant manner without ever getting cloying or going over the top. *Gratitude* is an album that displays a rare and very engaging balance of fervor and restraint, expressive ace musicianship and terseness.

For more information, visit posi-tone.com. This project is at Club Bonafide Jul. 13th. See Calendar.



Night Dreamer
Wayne Shorter (Blue Note)
by Anders Griffen

Wayne Shorter's *Night Dreamer* was recorded Apr. 29th, 1964. He had already spent four years with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, debuted for Vee-Jay and recorded with others, including Miles Davis' sextet, becoming part of his second great quintet later in 1964. Even after all that activity, *Night Dreamer* was an artistic breakthrough, the first of 11 Blue Note records in 6 years and the start of a groundbreaking period. While he continued to develop as a soloist, his original voice as a composer became prominent during this time.

It's not well known that Shorter performed with John Coltrane's band in 1959, using his sidemen on his first Blue Note recordings. Here he is joined by McCoy Tyner (piano), Reggie Workman (bass) and Elvin Jones (drums), with Lee Morgan on trumpet completing the quintet. Nat Hentoff's original liner notes mistakenly identify "the characteristically lithe piano of Herbie Hancock". This was corrected on the 2004 CD reissue, though not explained. The LP reissue experience is different: more spacious and dreamy on Side A and more of a hardbop edge on Side B.

The title track opens with a rubato piano flourish before setting up 3/4 time joined by Jones' signature groove. The piece gets bluesier during the solos as the major7 chords supporting the first 4 bars are changed to dominant7 chords. Shorter solos first and last and again as the track fades out. "Oriental Folk Song" has a mysterious intro and melody, changing for the solos, which are more pronounced and accompaniment more aggressive. After the solos, there's a three-bar figure played by Shorter and Morgan, followed by a five-bar break by Jones; those are repeated before returning to the head. "Virgo" is dreamier yet: an unusual 29-bar form with a 7-bar main theme, recapitulated after 16 bars and then a six-bar ending starts with the 7th bar of the original theme repeated twice with harmonic variations before a 7-3-6-2-5 turnaround over the final three measures. This piece is reminiscent, particularly Tyner's accompaniment, of "I Wish I Knew" from Coltrane's *Ballads*, recorded December 1962.

Side B comes out more fleet-footed with the hard-

swinging "Black Nile" while "Charcoal Blues" is a straightahead 12-bar blues. Shorter plays with the fringe and with his timbre, especially on his final chorus. After its big intro, "Armageddon" brings back some of the dreamlike quality of Side A.

This is a portrayal of the city. Even the album cover is a depiction of traffic and streetlights blurred by a moving camera as a hazy figure moves in the foreground. "In the wide, warm night," wrote E.B. White, "the horn is startlingly pure and magical."

For more information, visit bluenote.com. Shorter's Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame entry is celebrated at Dizzy's Club Jul. 14th. See Calendar.

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