



Miroslav Vitous *Ziljabu Nights*

INTUITION 71320

★★★★★

As bassist Miroslav Vitous says during the on-stage interview that closes out the European Jazz Legends series recording *Ziljabu Nights: Live At Theater Gutersloh*, his designs were to play his instrument as musically as possible, rendering his time-keeping rhythm-section role moot. What Vitous, now 68, has accomplished with this live album is to remind listeners of the place he occupied during the seminal early years of the 1970s, when he was a founding

member of Weather Report with keyboardist Joe Zawinul and saxophonist Wayne Shorter—and to display where he's taken it since.

Gary Campbell (tenor saxophone) and Robert Bonisolo (tenor and soprano saxophones) provide the melodic heft, while Aydin Esen the colorist on keys occasionally works in tandem with Vitous to provide what bottom end does exist to this relatively weightless music. Four Vitous compositions delight in abstraction when not lyrically swimming, and are mostly pulseless. Then there's a nearly 14-minute dance through "Stella By Starlight Variations," featuring the leader's characteristically squishy bass and arco leading the charge, and "Gloria's Step Variations," Vitous' obvious nod to major influence Scott LaFaro. On the one solo piece, "Gloria's Step," the bassist leans in and out of the song's endearing melody with a more conventional approach.

The recording quality is excellent, each member heard crisply and cleanly. Gatto's drums, in particular, sound immediate, every subtle move and crack gesture a necessary punctuation or sheen. —John Ephland

Ziljabu Nights: Ziljabu; Morning Lake; Ziljabe; Gloria's Step Variations; Miro Bop; Stella By Starlight Variations; Interview with Miroslav Vitous. (68:36)

Personnel: Miroslav Vitous, bass; Gary Campbell, tenor saxophone; Robert Bonisolo, soprano, tenor saxophone; Aydin Esen, keyboards; Roberto Gatto, drums.

Ordering info: challengerecords.com

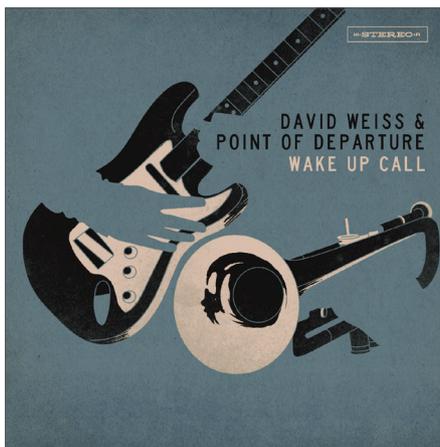
David Weiss & Point of Departure *Wake Up Call*

ROPEADOPE 328

★★★★★

Miles Davis stalks the new album by trumpeter David Weiss & Point of Departure, as a source of pleasures past and inspiration of things to come. *Wake Up Call* rings with directions in music Davis charted in the late '60s and early '70s, starting with "Sanctuary" from *Bitches Brew*, which Weiss arranges for twined electric guitars to float over oh-so-laid-back bass lines and spacious but increasingly emphatic drumming. As his own dark, penetrating trumpet is offset by Myron Walden's beseeching, grainy tenor saxophone, Weiss evokes his master while clarifying the original, somewhat murky soundscape and promotes Ben Eunson to the heroic guitar role first filled by John McLaughlin.

Big guitar statements by Eunson, Travis Reuter and Nils Felder are spotlit throughout PoD's adaptations of compositions by Wayne Shorter, Tony Williams, Joe Henderson, Charles Moore, Kenny Cox and Lelo Nazavio. But Weiss does not spare himself from grappling with the open modal forms that in their day supplanted (if they didn't eclipse) the hard-bop/post-bop structures characteristic of



another of his ensembles, The Cookers. And stretching himself as well as responding to and with his collaborators—including tenor saxophonist JD Allen—Weiss sets a high bar for today's generation of mainstream modernists.

If *Wake Up Call* doesn't posit a brand new future, it reiterates how far jazz has come, and moves confidently toward the next horizon.

—Howard Mandel

Wake Up Call: Sanctuary; Two Faced; Multidirection; Noh World; Gazelle; Sojourn; Pee Wee; Sonhos Esquecidos; The Mystic Knights Of The Sea. (76:12)

Personnel: David Weiss, trumpet; Fender Rhodes (1, 5); Myron Walden (1, 5–9); JD Allen (2–4), tenor saxophone; Ben Eunson, Travis Reuter (1, 5–9); Nir Felder (2–4), guitar; Matt Clohesy, bass; Kush Adabey, drums.

Ordering info: ropeadope.com



Madeleine Peyroux *Secular Hymns*

IMPULSE/VERVE B0025437

★★★★★

Madeleine Peyroux's reputation is based on the understated passion of her singing. She doesn't have to raise her voice to express the conflicted emotions that mark the human condition. She made this album with her touring group—electric guitarist John Herington and acoustic bass player Barak Mori—in an English church built in the 12th century. The wooden roof of the small cathedral brings a warm, natural reverb to Peyroux's voice, lending these live performances a universal appeal.

Her quiet reading of "The Highway Kind," Townes Van Zandt's memo to a woman he may never meet, makes the lyric sound even more hopeless than Van Zandt's weary original. Stephen Foster's "Hard Times Come Again No More" is usually played at a tempo that alleviates its sad poetry. Not so here. Herington's guitar adds blue, sliding, sustained notes that echo the crying tone of a steel guitar to support Peyroux's somber vocal. She drops into her lower register to give the usually uplifting chorus a prickly, downward spin.

The trio includes a few uptempo numbers in the set. Mori and Herington slip into a reggae groove on Linton Kwesi Johnson's "More Time." Peyroux darts in and out of time, with Herington's bluesy noodling giving things a little boost. The guitar and bass bring some low-key funk to "Everything I Do Gonh Be Funky (From Now On)." After her sultry delivery of the verses, Peyroux steps back to let her band mates trade some buoyant licks. Rosetta Sharp's "Shout Sister Shout" is the album's most exuberant workout. A call-and-response between Peyroux and the boys underscores the song's humorous put-down of male foibles. —j. poet

Secular Hymns: Got You On My Mind; Tango Till They're Sore; The Highway Kind; Everything I Do Gonh Be Funky (From Now On); If The Sea Was Whiskey; Hard Times Come Again No More; Hello Babe; More Time; Shout Sister Shout; Trampin'. (33:37)

Personnel: Madeleine Peyroux, vocals, guitar; John Herington, electric guitar, vocals; Barak Mori, bass.

Ordering info: impulse-label.com