

Mp3 Ben Adams Quintet - Old Thoughts For A New Day



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An impressively triumphant effort, *Old Thoughts For A New Day*, shows Adams to be one the most talented musicians of his generation equally skilled as a vibraphonist and composer. 9 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Weird Jazz, JAZZ: Traditional Jazz Combo Details: *Old Thoughts For A New Day*, the third cd from Ben Adams, shines a spotlight on the young veteran vibraphonists substantial talents as a skilled bandleader and innovative composer, in addition to his already established facility as a versatile soloist more than living up to the promise of his first two well received discs. On his debut quartet album, *The Figured Wheel*, Adams showed himself to be a swinging disciple in the vibes tradition of Milt Jackson, playing both originals and jazz standards. On his second date, *Music For Six*, Adams vibes were presented performing the innovative contemporary music of composer Todd Brindley Hershberger within the context of a jazz quartet (with guitar) plus strings (violin and cello). Now, *Old Thoughts For A New Day* finds Adams leading his fiery Bay Area quintet through a program comprised completely of his own forward looking compositions. Seeking to stretch the language of harmony with this date (much in the way Bobby Hutcherson did with his groundbreaking 60s Blue Note titles), Adams foregoes the usual piano chordal accompaniment much like the Dave Holland Quintet featuring Steve Nelson - choosing instead to allow his vibraphone (and writing) to investigate shifting tonal centers and unconventional harmonic progressions. The result is a record of refreshing compositions that inspire the creative impulses of the leader and his groups other talented young members trumpeter Erik Jekabson, tenor saxophonist Mitch Marcus, bassist Fred Randolph and drummer Sameer Gupta each of whom make considerable contributions to the success of the satisfying disc. The date opens with the pretty Averys *Bedtime Song*, a peaceful lullaby written by Adams for the young son of a friend. The soothing melody proves to be a particularly effective vehicle for Jekabson, whose thoughtful style of improvisation flows out of the

tradition of such masters as Woody Shaw, Art Farmer and Booker Little. Adams shines as both an accompanist and soloist, first setting the dreamy background over which the horns state the theme and Jekabson solos, then embarking on his own finely crafted reflective improvisation. Conversation With Martin, an Adams composition dedicated to an poet colleague, is a hard bopping jaunt that effectively evinces the intensity of one of the argumentative bards confrontational exchanges. Guptas drumming interjections enliven the songs melodic line, which moves straight ahead over Randolphs walking bass with occasional unexpected twists. Marcuss dark boisterous tenor, displaying a wide range of influences from Wayne Shorter to David Murray, sets the extroverted tone, while Adams and Randolph contribute more measured statements to the exciting piece. The ironically named Patron Saint of Lost Causes is an infectiously lilting Latin line that simultaneously portrays the incongruous emotions of melancholy and optimism implied in its title. Slight dissonances in the melody and solos that walk the line between strength and vulnerability by Adams, Jekabson and Marcus contribute to the songs ominous spirit. Adams tribute to Wayne Shorter, The Actual, was inspired by the great composers Miles Davis classic Prince of Darkness. The rhythmic anthem recalls the energy the saxophonists earlier days with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers with Randolph and Gupta providing the relentless drive over which Adams delivers his hard bopping solo, followed by Marcus, who takes things out, and Jekabson, who then executes a masterful, more conventional improvisation over the songs chord changes. The Sheltered Circle is an emblematic sixteen bar blowing excursion that kicks off with a short drum solo by Gupta before Jekabson and Marcus introduce the songs pleasing bluesy melody that proves to be an excellent vehicle for swinging solos by Adams, Jekabson, Marcus and Randolph. The dates title track, Old Thoughts For A New Day, reflects Adams admiration for the writing of both Herbie Hancock and Kenny Wheeler. The pensive piece utilizes some uncommon harmonics at the beginning of the melody, providing its introspective character, but then modulates into a brighter mood, giving the impression of temporal movement. Solos by Adams and Randolph follow the songs sense of direction Pocket Fiction is a clear demonstration of Adams ability to stretch compositional conventions without sacrificing musicality. The vibrant tracks A section is an urgent straight ahead 4/4 outing with a bar in 2 at the end, while the tunes bridge is a waltzing 3/4 segment. Adams stretches out with his improvisation, swinging hard over the walking bass line. Marcus begins blowing brooding legato lines over Randolphs bass, then moves into more wildly extroverted expression as Gupta drumming becomes increasingly animated; Jekabsons solo

returns the piece to its boppish beginnings. The simple staccato melodic line of Ghost At Infancy melds with its more complex harmonic form to make it one of the dates most rewarding tracks. The songs buoyant tempo inspires satisfying solos by Jekabson and Marcus before Gupta takes an exciting solo in the tradition of Max Roach over the horns statement of the rhythmically driven melody. Adams solo again shows him to be one of the most talented players of his instrument today and the tunes clever outchorus is yet another testament to his impressive skill as a composer. The concluding Sea Of Cortez is another Wayne Shorter inspired piece a lament reflective of Adams experience contemplating the state of the worlds environment on the shores of the spoiled Mexican beach. The music soars freely over the unfettered tapestry of tones and rhythms provided by Randolph and Gupta with Adams playing with poetic poignancy and Marcus delivering moments of unmitigated anguish. Despite the melancholy mood of most of the track, it manages to close the date on a somewhat optimistic note as it ends. An impressively triumphant effort, Old Thoughts For A New Day, shows Ben Adams to be one the most talented musicians of his generation equally skilled as a vibraphonist and composer who is eminently qualified to move the music into the future while continuing to perpetuate the glorious tradition of its past.

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