



March Sublime
Alan Ferber (Sunnyside)
 by Sean O'Connell

The concept of a sublime march sounds a little strenuous. Most organized walking isn't that great but maybe it's a reference to the month. Whether trombonist Alan Ferber is enlisting in the army or awaiting the change of seasons, he has brought along a tremendous group of musicians to join him. Ferber composed more than half of the tunes, nearly all of which provide ample space amid the arrangements for the limited solo count to maximize exploration.

His take on Björk's slow-burn "Hyper-Ballad" is much less restrained than the Icelandic original. Horns rise over a quivering synthesizer before drummer Mark Ferber adds a militaristic groove. Keyboardist David Cook is gradually left alone to build the tension before a smattering of brass dances over aggressive handclaps. The manic swell leads to an engaging exchange between trumpeter Alex Norris and trombonist Ryan Keberle. "Wildwood", an homage to the site of Ferber's Northern California wedding, gets a designated intro track, then launches into the rich ballad. The horns move cautiously before guitarist Anthony Wilson takes a quivering solo over the deliberate rhythm section. The title track is regulated by Mark Ferber's snare drum. Trumpeter Taylor Haskins caws with a persistent echo effect before the band bounces in on an uptick. Alan Ferber takes a mournful solo, sighing like stardust above Cook and bassist Matt Pavolka's prodding. Haskins closes the tune with a hazy return. Ferber's "The Compass" flies in within a straightahead horn blast. Tenor saxophonist John Ellis builds up to a rousing horn accompaniment while trombonist Josh Roseman summons the Framptone for a muted solo, which converts that human-like trombone quality into a vocoder. It's a unique effect eventually abandoned for a well-spaced rip alongside the band.

On this record, Ferber has presented a modern big band with modest touches of the strange and electrified. Ferber can bend and mold many voices into an engaging whole and he seems happy to share his forms with a talented array of instrumentalists.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This group is at Citigroup Center Plaza Aug. 1st. See Calendar.



Lamaçal
Lama + Chris Speed (Clean Feed)
 by Stuart Broomer

Lama (the word means "mud" in Portuguese) began in Rotterdam as a trio of Portuguese trumpeter Susana Santos Silva and bassist Gonçalo Almeida with Canadian drummer Greg Smith, the latter two adding electronic elements. They released their debut CD *Oneiros* in 2011, memorable (in contradiction to the band's name) for a developed use of space, form and

distinctive sounds and textures, whether in Almeida's compositions or their improvisations. On *Lamaçal* (the irony continues with a title meaning mud puddle), the group is joined by New York tenor saxophonist/clarinetist Chris Speed, now a regular guest, in a live set at the 2012 Portalegre Jazz Festival.

The music here is almost always lyrical, though moods and textures will change, with the band unusually comfortable at slow tempos that support their sonic emphasis. It's apparent from the beginning of the set with Santos Silva's "Overture for a Wandering Fish", a near-dirge that emphasizes a ragged brassy edge to her trumpet that she presses from village band to multiphonics in consort with Speed. Her expressive power takes a different but equally vocalic turn with the muffled half-valves of the concluding "Manta". Almeida contributed four of the compositions here and his ear for the unexpected makes effective use of Speed's clarinet on the title track, a piece oddly suggestive of both Boulez and traditional jazz, and the middle-East themed "Anémona". Almeida's melodic bass playing and subtle electronics stand out on the whale invocations of his "Moby Dick".

There are plenty of strong individual efforts here, but it's camaraderie and shared invention that ultimately animate the music, from the vitality that the horns bring to the themes to the subtle dialogues that link all the members of the group. The improvised duet between Smith and Speed that opens the former's slightly boppish "Cachalote" stands out, as do the fleet and edgy contributions of Santos Silva and Almeida to Speed's Ornette-reminiscent "Pair of Dice". Rather than sounding like a trio with a guest, Lama + Chris Speed already sounds like a band.

For more information, visit cleanfeed-records.com. Speed is at Cornelia Street Café Aug. 1st-3rd and 16th-17th with Michael Formanek. See Calendar.



The Bones of Art
Steve Turre (HighNote)
 by Joel Roberts

Steve Turre and the three other trombonists (Steve Davis, Robin Eubanks and Frank Lacy) featured on *The Bones of Art* have something in common, besides being among the very best at their instrument in the jazz world. They're all alumni of Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, the legendary drummer's incubator for young jazz talent that flourished for nearly four decades until his death in 1990.

While there have been a handful of multi-trombone groups in jazz, the three-trombone frontline (the four never play together) Turre employs here is rare. But even more than those trombone-centric groups, Turre's group recalls, in spirit and execution, the three-horn frontlines Blakey often used - though Blakey used the traditional setup of trombone, trumpet and saxophone.

Joined by a first-rate rhythm section (pianist Xavier Davis, bassist Peter Washington and drummer Willie Jones III), Turre and friends work their way through a set of boisterous straightahead jazz with an emphasis on the blues. The tunes are all originals, most from Turre, plus at least one from each of the other trombonists. Several are written in honor of trombone greats past and present, including "Slide's Ride", Turre's hard-swinging homage to Slide Hampton; "Fuller Beauty", a lovely ballad for another Blakey alum, Curtis Fuller, and "Julian's Blues", a funky blues

for the neglected avant gardist Julian Priester.

Lacy contributes the crowd-pleasing "Settagast Strut", a swaggering evocation of his hometown of Houston while Davis penned both "Bird Bones", a nod to Charlie Parker, and the Latin-flavored "Sunset", featuring Turre's only turn on his trademark conch shells. Eubanks' "Shorter Bu" pays tribute to both Wayne Shorter and, fittingly, the album's patron saint, Art Blakey. All four trombonists and the rhythm section play brilliantly and soulfully throughout and evince a camaraderie that would make their mentor proud.

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com. This project is at Dizzy's Club Aug. 1st-4th. See Calendar.

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