

All about Jazz 18.12.2009

Lacy Pool

Uwe Oberg / Christof Thewes / Michael Griener | Hatology 677
By Glenn Astarita

Three well-versed European progressive-jazz denizens impart a rather majestic blend of song-form and improvisation when covering the late, great soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy's discography. Approaching this album from a mindset that eliminates comparisons to Lacy's original performances lent to a more appropriate route for the listening experience.



Without a saxophonist and bassist, the piano-trombone-drums format offers a penetrating and sometimes deviating musical climate, where more traditional propensities might prove the opposite. The musicians form the right blend here. Featuring elements of wit and pathos, they stir the pot with blitzy unison choruses and counterbalancing movements. Moreover, they morph some of Lacy's familiar melodies into stately proclamations, while transforming the sum of the moving parts into an unrestraining environment. They summon the best of many proposals.

On "The Crust," the musicians fuse impacting crescendos with tenderly melodic moments, while incorporating Lacy's bluesy proclivities into various passages, then imparting a sense of friendship on this endearing track. The trio turns the tide during the turbulent "Blinks" and continues to deconstruct components of Lacy's work via heated swing vamps and rapidly executed meltdowns. "The Whammies" is a rambunctious workout; the artists' momentum based on an orbital theme accelerated by Christof Thewes' frenetic trombone solo.

The unit performs in a hybrid of a loose groove and a tightly structured gait. It's music stuffed with an energized string of flows and highly imaginative persuasions, spiced with the instrumentalists' personalized conception of Lacy's aura and timeless legacy.

Personnel: Uwe Oberg: piano; Christof Thewes: trombone; Michael Griener: drums.