

half of the tune, before a wonderful trumpet solo, full of vocalisations and delicious brassy smears, and a tasty brief bass solo, played on acoustic.

Equally at home with a funk beat, Bevan is a pretty hip electric player as well. Whenever Bevan gets to thumping a bit, guitarist Mike "D" Abraham can cut loose some. Abraham, who threatens to go wild at every turn, waits until the closing "Disgruntled Patriot" to really take it out. Strange title for a song, but an understandable sentiment in these times.

Tempos are all over the place, from the slow, slow drag to "Walking Stick" to the upbeat cruising pace of the funkified "Attack of the Mudbugs," and the mood keeps shifting, which is definitely another thing to like. This is an excellent release, and gets better each time around, and it's well worth hunting for.

Stuart Kremsky

1) SØREN KJÆRGAARD, KEYS, ILK 116.

Disc 1: Night and Day / Yesterdays / Stella / Mr. Tutu's Dance Cycle / Ballada For Leo / Now Piece #1 / Body and Soul / Lovethings / Now piece #2 / Lines ; Space / What's New / Prelude / Izerka / bye Lulla. 46:12.

Disc 2: I Remember You / Willow Weep For Me / Brothersister / Mojave ... Rattlesnake / Kubrick / Lemmy Caution / Single Petal of a Rose. 23:41.

Kjærgaard, p (Disc 1); celeste, cembalo, glockenspiel, pump organ, prepared piano (Disc 2). April and November 2005, Copenhagen, Denmark.

2) SØREN KJÆRGAARD, AMFEBIA, ILK 101.

Hdface / Sergie / Goldhofen Suite / And He Discovered Love / Amfebia (In Two Parts) / So In love. 43:25.

Kjærgaard, p; Jonas Westergaard, b; Frands Riffbjerg, d. October 27-28, 2004, Copenhagen, Denmark.

3) SØREN KJÆRGAARD, AKUSTIKA, ILK 102.

Mount Duke / And He Discovered Love / Noface / Montara / Intermezzo / March / Yesterdays / Stormy Rag. 52:51.

Kjærgaard, p; Jonas Westergaard, b; Frands Riffbjerg, d. July, 2004, Copenhagen, Denmark.

4) BANDAPART, ILK 103.

Truckdrive / Home / In De Flat / Quick and Simple / Mount Duke / Masabumi / Vitus / St. Gerbold / Dead End. 52:34.

Søren Kjærgaard, Wurlitzer, loops; Jakob Bro, g, vcl; Jonas Westergaard, b; Jeppe Gram, d. April 14-15, No location listed.

An up and coming presence on the Danish Jazz scene, Søren Kjærgaard is a young pianist/composer with a resume boasting international collaborations as well as home spun successes. Eclectic and stylistically all encompassing, Kjærgaard is the quintessential post-modernist. Although the introspective ruminations of Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett can be heard in the foundations of Kjærgaard's more subtle and pensive statements, he has quite a fondness for mixing it up. When flailing away with muscu-

lar abandon, he can invoke the much ballyhooed Ian Iverson (from the Bad Plus) or Brad Melhdau with their appreciation for pop song structures and themes. Now well past the clichéd concepts of jump-cutting and musical segregation, musicians like Kjærgaard are content to dabble in multiple genres without irony, validating them all with their heartfelt commitment to the music.

In addition to playing with the heavyweights of the Danish Jazz scene, Kjærgaard has toured and lived in the States, collaborating and touring with Michael Blake, Jim Black, Steven Bernstein, and Herb Robertson, among others. These eclectic collaborators share an aesthetic sensibility with the young pianist, whose own compositions, while having one foot firmly placed in the Jazz tradition, also stretch into new territory.

Most revealing is (1). Kjærgaard unveils a set of standards and originals that veer from sublime to edgy on this solo set. An engaging presence, his touch is deft, but forceful, easily grabbing a listener's attention, even during ballads and introspective pieces. Gorgeous covers of standards like "Night and Day," "Body and Soul," and "Yesterdays" reveal a young interpreter with judicious taste. Demonstrating prodigious technique, original tunes like "Lines ; Space" contain virtuosic passages of two-handed counterpoint and brisk linearity.

Awarded the Danish National Radio Jazz Award for his "originality and creative presence on the Copenhagen and Danish Jazz scene, being one of the pioneers in the creative wave of the young generation," Kjærgaard was given free studio time courtesy of Danish National Radio. While recording his solo piano album there, he discovered a store-room full of vintage keyboards, the recordings from which make up the second disc in this set.

The second disc is a tiny three inch CD (remember those?) that consists entirely of pieces played on celeste, cembalo, glockenspiel, and pump organ. The unusual textures and timbral qualities of these instruments bring out the more intriguing aspects of Kjærgaard's talent. His version of "Willow Weep For Me" is bluesy and haunting, while his pump organ take of "A Single Petal of a Rose" is ethereal and heavenly in its spaciousness. If the disc format were inverted, with the longer disc containing these unique explorations, then this would be a truly exceptional set.

(2) is Kjærgaard's piano trio studio debut. A subtle, somewhat meditative affair, it also contains fleeting moments of robust expression. Though "Hdface" is a gentle opener, "Goldhofen Suite" quickly raises the energy level. Drummer Frands Riffbjerg locks into a classic mid-1960s four on the floor hi-hat rhythm right out of the second Miles Davis quintet fakebook and Kjærgaard starts dropping major key chordal voicings. "Sergie" combines tricky meters and rhythm changes, including Ellingtonian Blues abstraction. "And He Discovered Love" ups the ante even

more, by alternating quiet introspection with blisteringly fast Bebop runs. Introspective and patiently paced, the trio works intuitively, demonstrating their long standing commitment. With signposts that hint at Keith Jarrett and even Ellington's own trios, Kjærgaard exposes his dedication to Jazz tradition without making superfluous statements. A predominantly atmospheric record, it reveals all the intricate subtleties the trio is capable of.

(3) captures the same trio in a live setting, and very much invested in the proceedings. More energetic and aggressive than the studio effort, it displays the trio's empathy and interaction in a way that the studio record lacks. "Mount Duke," inspired by Ellington's own "Mount Harissa," opens the record. A beautiful melody, it is a standard of Kjærgaard's. "And He Discovered Love" is reprised here with even more dynamic and boisterous verve. Akin to the sort of free-wheeling, driving improvisation that power trios like the Bad Plus are known for, they even drift close to outright Free Jazz, a place the studio album feared to tread. Conversely, their fragile reading of Bobby Hutcherson's beautiful "Montara" is an album highlight, showcasing their sensitive dynamics and penchant for sumptuous lyricism.

(4) is a collaborative effort with some of Denmark's finest. The most gorgeous and forward thinking album of the four, it bridges the gap between Jazz and popular music. Although described in the press release as combining elements of both Duke Ellington and Sonic Youth, it sounds more like a contemporaneous Danish cousin to Chicago's Post-Rock scene, which features Tortoise and the Chicago Underground.

Jakob Bro's electric guitar and Kjærgaard's Wurlitzer give the quartet a spacious melancholy not present on the other albums. Their name, Bandapart is a play on the film work of iconic directors Jean Luc-Goddard and Quentin Tarantino. The adventurousness of those individuals is mirrored in the quartet's unflagging willingness to push beyond established stylistic boundaries. It also draws a parallel to the group's decidedly cinematic sound, one of dreamy atmosphere and contemplative mystery.

"Mount Duke" is reprised here, from (3) and is lyrically resplendent with Bro's delicate guitar filigrees. "St. Gerbold" kicks the energy level up a notch, with a sprightly Kurt Weill inspired waltz structure that features the strongest Jazz oriented soloing of the date. Although heavily electrified, the group never overwhelms the listener, though they come close on the dense final track, "Dead End." Fans of early ECM-era Bill Frisell, Tortoise, Godspeed You! Black Emperor, The Chicago Underground, and other Post-Rock ensembles will find much to adore in Bandapart's debut.

Kjærgaard is a rising talent worthy of the inevitable acclaim. Those looking for a new voice on the keys would be advised to delve further into his ever growing discography.

Troy Collins

1) SHEILA JORDAN & E.S.P. TRIO, STRAIGHT AHEAD, SPLASC(H) 871.

I Thought About You / You Must Believe In Spring / You Came (Vieste) / Straight Ahead / Like Someone In Love / The Meaning Of The Blues / The Thrill Is Gone / The Promise Of You / I've Never Been In Love Before / So Many Stars / You. 57:04.

Jordan, vcl; Paolo Fresu, tpt, flgh; Roberto Cipelli, p; Attilio Zanchi, b; Gianni Cazzola, d. 2/21-22/04, Uboldo, Italy.

2) NICHAUD FITZGIBBON, DEEP IN THE NIGHT, NEWMARKET 3203.

You Turn Me On Baby / I Don't Believe You / I Wish I Were In Love Again / Where Or When / Living In The Past / Deep In The Night / The Meaning Of The Blues / In The Still Of The Night / The Blues Are Brewin' / Winter Moon / Dindi / Manha De Carnaval. 60:00.

Fitzgibbon, vcl, arr; Mark Fitzgibbon, p, arr; Tim Neil, org; Bobby Venier, tpt; James Sherlock, Shane Ryall, g; Phil Stack, b; Craig Simon, d; Dennis Close, Michael Carmona, Andrew Fitzgibbon, perc, arr; Kylie Auld, Hailey Cramer, Paula Jane, backing vcl. 200?, Melbourne, Australia.

From hemisphere's apart, two singers intent on exploring the "Meaning Of the Blues."

(1) chronicles Sheila Jordan's reunion with the E.S.P. (9/99, p.118) trio, and she was given, as the notes advise, "carte blanche to choose what



Sheila Jordan by Jimmie Jones

she would be singing." So, she selected ballads which she sings in tempos varying from A to AA, or from down to middle up. That she remains one of our more idiosyncratic vocalists, with a penchant for unexpected quivers and sour smears, sudden changes in timbre and abrupt departures from the intonation track, will certainly satisfy her hard core devotees, but I always come away wondering (10/03, p.119) about the degree of congruence between her intention and execution.

Her choice of a ballad program is fortuitous, for despite what one might assume are spontaneous spurts of improvisational dislocation, she seems, in great measure, to be attending to the lyric sense of these songs. Paolu Fresu's muted horn adds to the romantic ambience of the session, as when he opens and prepares the way for her vocal, on "Believe In Spring." The title tune, "Ahead," is a dour Mal Waldron line, with lyrics by Abbey Lincoln, originally recorded at a session