

Tim Green Songs From This Season

TRUE MELODY MUSIC

★★★★½

Songs From This Season introduces Tim Green, a commanding alto saxophonist who'll undoubtedly be a major jazz contender in the next few years. The Baltimore native hones an enticing tone that has the right amount of edge. He articulates his tunes with a bare-bones approach and shows an acute regard for melody, even when he displays his considerable improvisational acumen. His passages are buoyed with a pneumatic swing.

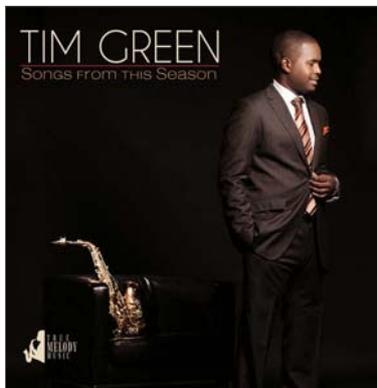
More impressive is that Green is an engaging composer. He underscores most of his originals with Christian themes. And while there's a churchy, emotional immediacy to his music, he doesn't try to recreate conventional gospel. Such is the case with the dazzling "Siloam," on which he pairs his saxophone with guitarist Gilad Hekselman and uncoils knotty figures atop a jostling rhythmic bed created by drummer Obed Calvaire and bassist Josh Ginsburg. "Philippians 4:13" gives off a suspenseful vibe thanks to Allyn Johnson's dual duties on piano and organ, while "The Queen Of Sheba" propels thrilling solos from Green and vibraphonist Warren Wolf.

—John Murph

Songs From This Season: Psalm 1; Siloam; Dedication; ChiTown; Philippians 4:13; Pinochio; Time For Liberation; Shift; Lost Souls; Peace; The Queen Of Sheba; Don't Explain; Hope. (65:34)

Personnel: Tim Green, alto saxophone; Allyn Johnson, piano, organ; Kris Funn, bass; Romain Collin, piano, synthesizer; John Ginsburg, acoustic bass; Obed Calvaire, drums; Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Warren Wolf, vibraphone; Orrin Evans, piano; Rodney Green, drums; Adam Johnson, electric bass; Loren Dawson, organ; Kenny Shelton, synthesizer; Micah Smith, vocals; Iyana Wakefield, vocals; Troy Stuart, cello; Quincy Phillips, drums; Quamon Fowler, EWI.

Ordering info: timgreenmusic.com



Accidental Tourists The L.A. Sessions

CHALLENGE 73322

★★★★★

Pianist Markus Burger, a transplanted German who lives and teaches in Los Angeles, has used his surroundings well. He's collaborated with bassist Bob Magnusson and drummer Joe LaBarbera, two veteran trio players whose knowledge and feeling for the trio format are superlative.

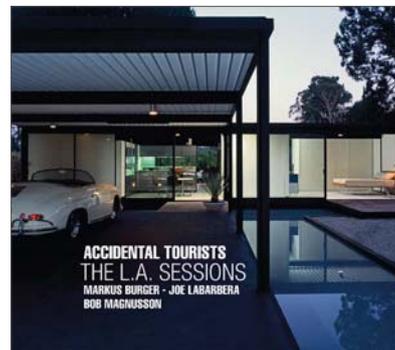
Burger is a lyrical player whose left hand is often recessed. Though Bill Evans is a major source, Burger has several stylistic elements in his playing. Keith Jarrett's lyrical optimism bubbles to the surface. Horace Silver gets a nod via the stabbing chordal theme and solo on "Inspektor Bauton," but he can also caress on a floating treatment of Nat Adderley's "Old Country." Where Burger might channel Evans on "I Love's You Porgy," he instead phrases as minimal as Morse code. Dynamic variation and the shifting roles of soloist and accompanist continually gratify. Burger usually doesn't play a note or phrase that isn't meaningful. His admirable use of space lets Magnusson and LaBarbera bubble up from within the ensemble to take a momentary lead or suggest direction. They're both mixed prominently—a great blessing to pianist and listener alike. Brawny bass tones undergird the ensemble like strong, pliable floor joists and LaBarbera engages in exciting metric dialogue on rhythm tunes.

—Kirk Silsbee

The L.A. Sessions: Grolnicks; Air Canada; Black Sea Pearl; Full Circle; I Loves You Porgy; Rodeo Drive Hustler; In Love in Vain; Inspektor Bauton; The Old Country; Blue in Green; One World; Morning Smile. (66:21)

Personnel: Markus Burger, piano; Bob Magnusson, bass; Joe LaBarbera, drums.

Ordering info: challengerecords.com



Paradoxical Frog Union

CLEAN FEED 262

★★★★½

This trio named itself after a South American amphibian that is four times as long at tadpole stage as it is in adulthood. Just what this has to do with the music at hand is not clear, since Paradoxical Frog's performances are all about sustained tension.

This music doesn't contract, it elongates; it doesn't jump, it flows.

Tellingly, pianist Kris Davis wrote a piece called "Feldman" for the group's previous album in honor of a composer whom both she and drummer Tyshawn Sorey hold dear. The music on *Union* is as sparse and deliberate as Feldman's, but not necessarily spacious. Davis seems to trace a dotted line through the discrete sections of "Masterisk," pausing just enough for the interruption to register but not enough for you to savor a note's decay. Laubrock's tenor shadows the piano melody while Sorey's cymbals rise up under it like a surfacing sea lion, balancing the tune on his back before disappearing. There's no front line/rhythm section division of labor here, but three equal partners united in their determination not to capsize the music with gauche, self-obsessed showboating. This music is so concerned with essence that it sometimes errs on the side of severity; one wishes for just a bit more payoff after so much restraint.

—Bill Meyer

Union: An Intermittent Procession; First Strike; Fear The Fairy Dust; Second Strike; Figment 2012; Union; Masterisk; Repose; Third Strike, You're Out. (72:07)

Personnel: Kris Davis, piano; Ingrid Laubrock, tenor and soprano saxophone; Tyshawn Sorey, drums, melodica, trombone.

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com



Greg Ruggiero My Little One

FRESH SOUND NEW TALENT 397

★★★

Brooklyn-based guitarist Greg Ruggiero is a player of taste and subtlety. His harmonies run warm and lush. But on *My Little One*, his sophomore release, all of that takes a backseat to The Song.

On his website, Ruggiero explains that the tunes were inspired by Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra and Antônio Carlos Jobim. The spirit of Jobim is especially evident. "Balance" dances along on Dan Reiser's infectious samba beat, and the leader's buttery, Latin-tinged soloing serves as a perfect complement to the lyrics. And the title track, which gives the illusion of a string section by pairing Jon De Lucia's flute with Christian Frederickson's cello, hinges on a bossa nova groove. Pockets of *My Little One* are also in debt to country and pop. "Broken Trail" would fit on a Norah Jones album, with its aching piano, twangy guitar, and unfussy trap-kitting. "Chorale," the album's lone instrumental, clocks in at less than two minutes. But it's gorgeous: over a driving drum-and-bass beat, long, determined cello tones intertwine with rough bass thuds and mysterious guitar chords. *My Little One* could have used a little more of that.

—Brad Farberman

My Little One: My Little One; Afternoons With Gramps; Balance; A Simple Gift; Chorale; A Christmas Wish; Glowing; Broken Trail; A Christmas Wish (Reprise). (42:32)

Personnel: Greg Ruggiero, guitar; Luisa Sobral, vocals; Gary Wang, bass; Dan Reiser, drums, percussion; Pete Rende, piano; Fender Rhodes, pump organ, Hammond organ; Jon De Lucia, flute; Christian Frederickson, cello.

Ordering info: freshsoundrecords.com

