

approach that lends itself to seamless, romantic lines. "This is New," performed as a duet with bass, finds the saxophonist moving briskly up and down the song's melodic range with a highly personal approach. The other selections feature Hashim with his unique ensemble, sharing a deep love for the music. While this project lends itself to the conformist setting of Cabaret, Weill's music is treated with reverence from a qualified ensemble.

Leading his Straight-Ahead quartet and quintet on (3), saxophonist Matt Olson gives his debut recording a pleasant outlook. His lovely tenor tone moves effortlessly through its upper registers in a seamless portrayal of teamwork and cohesive interplay. Fluid in his approach, Olson provides a clear portrait of grace and beauty. His three original compositions take the quintet on a trip through improvised areas that sometimes lead to fiery statements. Olson uses his alto for "Playing with Fire," which drives with momentum. Better is his hard-driving fierceness on "Snake Eyes," which finds the saxophonist soloing with greater enthusiasm. Everybody solos on this piece, which romps with an assertive mood. Three slow ballads, interpreted through the quartet format, allow him to warm to his audience calmly with a pensive spirit. "Chelsea Bridge," in particular, flows with a warm glow that emphasizes the saxophonist's deep-felt love for the music. An Assistant Professor of Saxophone and Director of Jazz Studies at Furman University in South Carolina, Olson has many experiences from which to gather his interpretations. While the session contains several areas where the quintet seems a bit dry and emotionless, the album's whole picture is one of utmost respect for the fundamental concepts of musicianship and teamwork. They click evenly at all levels and produce a crisp and clear attack. While the album hasn't enough of Olson's improvised solos, the features that he's included are spontaneous, genuine, and warm.

The Carla Marciano Quartet gives (4) a well rounded program that features the saxophonist in a variety of situations, highlighting her appreciation for a lyrical ballad as well as for the fiery quality that one can conjure up through Jazz's resources. The undying stamina that she exhibits through several up-tempo pieces, with sheets of sound flowing in all directions, shows a propensity for excitement and awe-inspiring expression. She communicates on a personal level, taking advantage of her beautiful tone quality on alto to "sing" lyrically with genuine passion. Much of the program is original: Marciano contributed six pieces and her pianist contributed one. Several flow with a lovely ballad air, while others drive forcefully with intensity. On soprano, she pushes "From Where?" and "Spiritual Game" with a powerful drive. Marciano likes to combine a calm, laid-back accompaniment with soloing that builds from medium to high heat. Piano, bass, and drums roll back gently behind her with a firm, crisp attack and direct lines of motion. It gives her plenty of room for exploration. She takes her liberal breaks with a powerful force. Several selections push it to the limit, absorbing all the energy from the room and

channeling it into an open space as would the eruption of a volcano. At other times, the mood shifts toward sensitive ballads that soothe and define. Her title track, for example, allows Marciano to converse eloquently with the listener as if she were sharing a table at the local coffee shop. "A Strange Day," performed as a duet with bass, allows her the luxury of "speaking" at length over a lovely improvised theme. Several of her compositions take on an exotic harmonic timbre, while others revel in their lyrical simplicity. A music major who earned her diploma in clarinet at the School of Music in Salerno, Marciano has adapted the full spectrum of music's magnetic power to her latest album. This one is destined for inclusion on our top ten list for 2006.

Jim Santella

1) FRED VAN HOVE, WOLFGANG FUCHS, FACETTEN,

ALL 12.

Chess / Berliner Roll / Desert. 66:35.

Van Hove, harpsichord, p, acc; Fuchs, b cl. 11/4/04, 11/6/04, Berlin, Germany.

2) TIMUÇIN SAHIN, WINDOW FOR MY BREATH, KALAN 355.

Window for My Breath / It's Time / Situational Situations I / Slicky / Grey / Wish Me Luck / Situational Situations II / Unconditional / Nene. 54:21.

Sahin, el g, g, electron, comp, synth; Kai Eckhardt, el b; Owen Hart Jr., d. 9/23,24/04, Enkhuizen, Netherlands.

Van Hove approaches the live performances on (1) from the Berlin Total Music Meeting in a unique way by playing different instruments on the three titles. The opening and closing selections are duets with Fuchs. They begin with Van Hove on harpsichord, setting a spiritual stage for Fuchs and his bass clarinet. The harpsichord has roots dating back to the 14th century, and its ecclesiastic tonality is in direct contrast to the squeaky, spattering outbursts from Fuchs' horn. Van Hove roams far and wide on the historic instrument, turning it into an improvisational weapon with his long stretches of notes while Fuchs overlaps with staccato phrasing.

The meat of the recording comes on the second cut with Van Hove playing solo acoustic piano on a 49-minute marathon venture. He begins with pensive musings but quickly builds the tension and pressure. Van Hove dexterously manipulates the keyboard, running at breakneck speed to pour out a river of energized sonic waves. Initially he concentrates on the high end, producing a continuously flowing tinkling of crystalline quality that falls to earth with accelerated velocity. The music has sparkling purity, streaming relentlessly as would turbulent currents on a rushing white-water river. Midway through, Van Hove's left hand begins dipping into the lower notes seeking samples to augment the flooding high-end waves. The tones go deeper and deeper, finally settling with thunderous authority in the dark recesses of cavernous emptiness. The trek