

The Truth of What I Am > The Narcissist
George Burton (Inner Circle Music)
by David R. Adler

George Burton, in-demand pianist from Philadelphia, teamed with producer Derrick Hodge for this strong and often surprising debut album. Piano and Rhodes are very present and the vivacious, hard-swinging rapport between Burton, bassist Noah Jackson and drummer Wayne Smith, Jr. gives the album its backbone.

There's more going on, however. Horn players drop in and out of rotation: trumpeter Jason Palmer and saxophonist Tim Warfield are particularly well represented on a few cuts; trumpeter Terell Stafford appears just once, on the straight-eighth ballad "In Places"; alto saxophonist Chris Hemingway joins Les Paul-slinging guitarist Ilan Bar-Lavi on "Song 6" and "From Grace to Grass", lending a more amped-up, rock-tinged feel at the beginning and end ("Song 6", the first full-band track, comes back in a beautiful, laid-back trio version without drums for the finale).

There is a prevailing hardbop intensity as well as an inward lyricism in Burton's writing and narrative cohesion: "First Opinion", an electronically tweaked 90-second sketch for soprano sax, Rhodes and glitchy drums, segues to the somewhat McCoy Tyner-esque quartet waltz feel of "Second Opinion". Palmer and Warfield pair up with devastating force on the difficult form of "Stuck in the Crack" and are similarly relentless on "Bernie's Tune" (an old Gerry Mulligan-Chet Baker vehicle given way more horsepower). On "Ecidnac" they stretch some more, on a relaxed 5/4 vamp with an extra beat every eighth bar: just a blip in the tune's gravitational pull, turning a simple, open-ended cycle into something less common.

Burton has that Philadelphia drive, that tendency to prioritize swing momentum over perfect technical polish. He has a hurtling, carefree touch on acoustic, an imaginative and slinky feel on Rhodes. His album title refers to a statement once made by Charles Mingus and so it's Mingus' solo piano work one may recall when listening to Burton's three solo-piano vignettes, each one with its oddball twist: children's voices in the background of the three-minute opener "Brown"; broken-piano sonic manipulation on the minute-long "Bern...ies" (a prelude of sorts to "Bernie's Tune"); and a raw, live-recorded cadenza imported in for "Ecidnac Intro". It makes sense that *The Truth of What I Am* would include moments as pleasingly imperfect as these.

For more information, visit innercirclemusic.net. This band is at Zinc Bar Jan. 7th as part of Winter Jazzfest. See Calendar.







The Declaration Of Musical Independence
Andrew Cyrille (ECM)
Streams
Jakob Bro (ECM)
Continuum
Nik Bärtsch's Mobile (ECM)
by Clifford Allen

The German label ECM has remained on one leading edge of new jazz or another for the last 47 years. While holding fast to an aesthetic, from their minimalist

cover art and terse liner notes to an airy, sharp sonic imprint, their 1,500-titles-strong catalog remains diverse. ECM's latest documents include new work by septuagenarian drummer Andrew Cyrille, Danish guitarist Jakob Bro and Swiss pianist Nik Bärtsch.

Cyrille first appeared as a sideman on ECM, via saxophonist Marion Brown's Afternoon of a Georgia Faun in 1970. The Declaration of Musical Independence is Cyrille's first album as a leader for ECM and joins him with synthesizer artist Richard Teitelbaum, guitarist Bill Frisell and bassist Ben Street on nine tunes, originals except for the Coltrane-penned opener "Coltrane Time". Not to be confused with anything on the 1958 United Artists record assembled for pianist Cecil Taylor, this was a piece given to drummer Rashied Ali and passed on to Cyrille as a snare exercise, onto which Frisell grafts incisive peals, harmonic inquisitions and grungy whirs, abetted by Teitelbaum's wispy accents and Street's muscular nods. On the bassist's "Say", Teitelbaum switches to piano and stakes out chordal territory apposite a landscape of strummed progressions and backward twists. The music often volleys between suspended jitters and fleshier impulsions and Cyrille, whose crispness recalls Max Roach and fluidity echoes Kenny Clarke, excels at giving weight and elegant direction to rather sparse interplay.

On Bro's second ECM outing, he continues in the trio format with bassist Thomas Morgan and drummer Joey Baron across seven originals shifting effortlessly between folkish lope and triangulated, open drift. Given Morgan's robust, thick precision and Baron's churning detail, enough of a rhythmic environment is stoked for Bro to chase ideas with their germs in appealing melodies, spreading out through stippled fields and thorny tessellations as on the neighboring tunes "Heroines" and "PM Dream". The delicate transmission of mood here is something quite remarkable in Bro's playing-not always subtle, he builds from diffuse areas into arresting tonal shifts and toys with explorations of metallic classicism and smudged dissonance. But "Shell Pink" brings the three together in a cohesive meld, romantic and cloudy overlays in gentle, brief minor runs floating atop brushy elbows and massive, resonant bass tugs. Sculpting and dissipating sonic values out of partlyamplified ether is this trio's primary focus and they do it with taste and dramatic flair. Streams is a fine slice of contemporary guitar-fronted improvisation.

Though Nik Bärtsch has been working as an ECM artist for a decade, Continuum is his first record for the label featuring the ensemble Mobile, which blends strategies of continuous music (or "minimal" music) with staged environments for an immersive experience. An acoustic quartet with a range of expanded approaches, Mobile joins Bärtsch with drummers Kaspar Rast and Nicolas Stocker and one-named bass clarinetist/contrabass clarinetist Sha. The third disc of Mobile music to be released since Bärtsch's leader debut in 2001, Continuum finds the quartet engaging in eight pieces, or "modules", with the occasional added flesh of a string quintet (two violins, two cellos and viola). Though the pianist is known for imbuing his music with an infectious, charged funk and that current remains, there's an obsessive attention to isolated elements, which frequently congeal with ensemble heft into pointillist drama and pedal-pointed vistas. In part, this work echoes the later compositions of Michael Nyman or pianist Bernardo Sassetti's filmic encounters, as on "Modul 60", and like those figures Bärtsch's music holds its own, being nebulously evocative without visual attachments.

For more information, visit ecmrecords.com. Cyrille is at New School Tishman Auditorium Jan. 6th, New School 12th Street Auditorium Jan. 7th, Littlefield Jan. 8th and Le Poisson Rouge Jan. 9th, all as part of Winter Jazzfest. Bro and Bärtsch's projects are at New School Tishman Auditorium Jan. 7th as part of Winter Jazzfest. See Calendar.

The STONE

artistic director John Zorn
-at the corner of ave C and 2nd st-

2017 THE STONE RESIDENCIES

JERRY GRANELLI

Mr Jerry Granelli celebrates 76 years on the planet and 60 years of performance of improvised music. JANUARY 3–8, 2017

Jan 3 - Tuesday (\$20)

9 pm

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the CD Sound Songs

Jerry Granelli (drums) Jay Clayton (voice)
Briggan Krauss (saxophone)
J Anthony Granelli (piccolo bass)
Jerry Granelli (drums, slide guitar, piano)

Ø

Jan 4 - Wednesday (\$20)

9 pm

Double Trouble

Jerry Granelli (drums) & Billy Hart (drums)

Ø

Jan 5 - Thursday (\$20)

9 pm

What I Hear Now Jerry Granelli (drums)

Jane Ira Bloom (soprano saxophone)

Dave Douglas (trumpet) Mark Dresser (bass)

Ø

Jan 6 - Friday (\$20)

9 pm

TRIO - Songs From My Life Jerry Granelli (Drums) Jamie Saft (keyboards/piano) Brad Jones (bass)

Ø

Jan 7 - Saturday (\$20)

9 pm

BADLANDS

Jerry Granelli (drums)

Peter Epstein (soprano sax)

Chris Speed (tenor sax, clarinet)

Jamie Saft (piano, fender rhodes)

J. Anthony Granelli (bass)

Briggan Krauss (alto sax, baritone sax)

Ø

Jan 8 - Sunday (\$20)

9 pm

SANDHILLS REUNION - TEXT By Rinde Eckert

Rinde Eckert (voice)

Jerry Granelli (drums)

Ben Goldberg (clarinet)

Ned Rothenberg (bass clarinet)

Andy Laster (baritone saxophone)

Jeff Zeigler (cello)

Christian Kogel (guitar)

J Anthony Granelli (bass)