

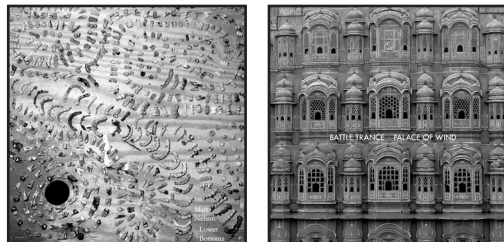
In Gröna Lund 1963
Duke Ellington (Storyville)
 by Ken Dryden

This over-two-hour performance comes from the Dance Inn at Tivoli Gröna Lund in Stockholm, Sweden. The heralded sax section of Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves and Harry Carney had been together for eight years while trumpeter Cootie Williams had returned after a 22-year absence the previous fall. Bassist Ernie Shepard was a new addition, bringing a bop-flavored sound.

The setlist blends old favorites and new compositions. Gonsalves takes a rhapsodic tenor solo in the chestnut "Laura", adding a quote from "Pop Goes the Weasel". Shepard's strong pulse is at the forefront of Ellington's train blues "Main Stem", backing Hodges' masterful alto and Hamilton's effusive clarinet. Billy Strayhorn takes over the piano for an extended workout of his "Take the 'A' Train", with Ray Nance reprising his trumpet solo from the original record. Williams was welcomed back to the fold with Ellington's "New Concerto for Cootie", his matchless, vocal-like muted trumpet engaging the band; Ellington features his muted horn again in "Tootie For Cootie", though much of the spotlight is on bluesy piano.

To begin the second set, Ellington ruminates at the piano for "Intermission Music", Shepard providing a soft background for this seemingly improvised performance. "I Didn't Know About You" was a delightful ballad that should have been yet another Ellington hit, but it wasn't to be; Hodges' emotional solo conveys the message of its unheard lyric. He is prominently featured in the next two pieces: "All of Me" and "Jeep's Blues". Nance (on violin) and Gonsalves share a playful conversation in "Mr. Gentle and Mr. Cool" and there is plenty of banter among the band during Ellington's introduction. While this concert doesn't have the fidelity of commercially recorded performances of the era, it gives the feeling what it was like to experience the band in person.

For more information, visit storyvillerecords.com. Ellington tributes are at Apollo Theater Dec. 13th-14th, Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church Dec. 14th and David Rubenstein Atrium Dec. 30th. See Calendar.



Lower Bottoms
Matt Nelson (Tubapede)
Palace of Wind
Battle Trance (New Amsterdam)
 by Ken Waxman

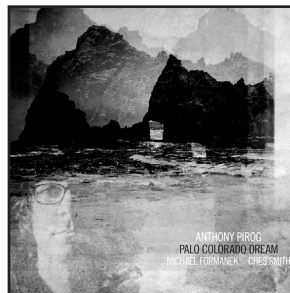
Picking up on the freedom that's available as a fellow traveler in raucous indie-rock bands, Matt Nelson strives to create comparable abstract amplified sounds for his tenor saxophone. *Lower Bottoms* is a solo showcase. *Palace of Wind* outlines how his acoustic approach can be integrated into a group creation.

On *Lower Bottoms*, pedals and amplifier additions mean that unaccented tones can be held for long periods during these improvisations while close-mic'd

recording emphasizes the metal and cork properties of a saxophone. Chalumeau tones appear to bounce through the air as early as "Sunk Cost" while flatterment and smears work up to affiliated sheets of sound. Eventually attaining overall stridency, the narrative includes mellow detours, as the exposition, which pans from one side of the listening space to the other, swells to include bagpipe-like respiration as well as percussive crunches. Other techniques such as circular breathing and bomb-detonation-resembling sonic explosions are part of other tracks. "Sworn Enemies" unites pedal-processing delays with the metal percussion properties of the horn to such an extent that the resulting dissonant tones could be from any blown source, until a reed exposition showcasing key percussion finally confirms the instrument's identity.

There's no question that saxophones are being played by Battle Trance; the question is how many. Travis Laplante wrote the three-part *Palace of Wind* so that all the players—Nelson, Jeremy Viner and Patrick Breiner are the other horns—become interlocking parts of one imaginary giant tenor saxophone. With no single tone predominating, the few solo sequences are usually cocooned within organ-like tremolos from the remaining reeds. All parts of the saxophones are constantly in play, with the narrative switching from barely audible whispers to fortissimo crescendos. Meanwhile, specific passages concentrate on the highest alto-like register while others wallow in guttural, bass saxophone-pitched lowing. With the ever-evolving theme constantly being deconstructed and rebuilt, impressionistic sequences succeed ferocious blowouts and vice-versa, although intricate, overlapping unison playing is more prominent. Eventually the piece reaches a climax in the final minutes of the third and lengthiest section as stentorian drones give way to a wispy reed airiness that deliberately sustains the horns' lockstep harmonies.

For more information, visit tubapederecords.com and newamrecords.com. *Battle Trance* is at Silent Barn Dec. 11th. See Calendar.



Palo Colorado Dream
Anthony Pirog (Cuneiform)
 by Tom Greenland

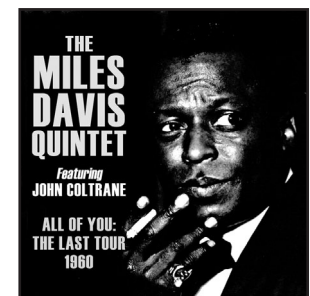
A major mover in the Washington, D.C. music scene, guitarist Anthony Pirog leads a trio on *Palo Colorado Dream* with bassist Michael Formanek and drummer Ches Smith. Using the new group as a platform to reinterpret original compositions he's developed over the years, Pirog brings formidable artistry to the project.

The album begins with the innocuous title track's chiming bell-tone loops, which swell and fade, quickly segueing to "The Great Northern", an anthemic power ballad in the tradition of King Crimson with a fat-toned, slow-climaxing solo rife with exciting runs and unusual bends. "Minimalist" starts with stop-and-go, skipping-disc rhythms, morphing to 4/4 rock with quirky undertones and layered electronica before it cadences. "Song in 5" is just that, with another heavily overdriven, death-grip guitar solo spinning out uncanny melodic lines that develop in both directions simultaneously. "Threshold" is a sort of Goth-metal-funk workout with an amazing array of tonal effects, including a horror movie monster's voice.

A quick glance at the equipment credits is enough to confirm that Pirog takes his sound-processing

seriously (in addition to the expected synthesizers, loopers and effects units, he lists Bleep Labs' Thingamagoop and Nebulophone; 4ms' Nocto Loco and Pedals Noise Swash and the 200 Toy Inc); like Jimi Hendrix' wah-wah pedal, these electronic tools become legitimate instruments in his hands. Indeed, much of the album's overdubbed effect is an illusion created by his adept use of loopers. "The New Electric" boasts a clean, surf-guitar tone over tangy chords, enhanced by jet and rocket engine roars. "Goodnight Geen", a brief acoustic interlude, is followed by "I'm Not Coming Home", another acoustic number in 12/8, which sets up "Motian", a 1-2-3 feature for drums, bass and guitar, respectively. "Heads" is a bit of Thelonious Monk-ish swing, which builds to a collective white-noise climax with robotic noises à la R2D2 and other sounds from the final frontier. The album concludes with "Vicious Cricket", a shred-fest that sounds like turbocharged bebop and features strong solos from Pirog and Smith.

For more information, visit cuneiformrecords.com. This project is at Ibeam Brooklyn Dec. 12th. See Calendar.



All of You: The Last Tour (1960)
Miles Davis Quintet (featuring John Coltrane)
(Acrobat)
 by Ken Dryden

Miles Davis had two major personnel changes by the time work was complete on *Kind of Blue* in 1959. Pianist Bill Evans departed, replaced by Wynton Kelly, while alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley left to pursue a solo career. Before the trumpeter's 1960 European tour, John Coltrane had already gone out on his own, but with Davis insisting he was essential for this tour, the saxophonist agreed to commit to the three-week schedule, even though he was beginning to lead his own groups in clubs and had recorded extensively under his own name, having recently waxed *Giant Steps*. Bassist Paul Chambers and drummer Jimmy Cobb rounded out the quintet.

The performances from this compilation have appeared on various labels over the years, sourced from a combination of broadcasts and soundboard tapes of varying degrees of quality. Several of the songs are repeated night after night, though the band isn't taking any of the music for granted. The loping treatment of "Fran Dance (Put Your Little Foot Right Out)" features Davis, Coltrane, Kelly and Chambers in turn, a relatively quiet performance compared to most of the selections. The quintet had become comfortable with the leader's modal compositions written for *Kind of Blue* thus "So What" benefits from a faster tempo than the original record, with fleet, compelling solos all around. The tempo for "All Blues" is close to the original record, though Davis' piercing solos are full of fire. Coltrane's extended solos outraged some European audiences, likely due to his frequent use of repeated lines, atonal passages and occasionally blurred, rapid-fire attack. The standard "On Green Dolphin Street" is heard on three separate nights, with Coltrane's furious improvisations foreshadowing his later explorations on his own recordings. This historic collection should be considered essential for fans of both Davis and Coltrane.

For more information, visit acrobatmusic.net. Coltrane tributes are at Jazz Standard Dec. 9th-10th and Smoke Dec. 19th-Jan. 1st See Calendar.