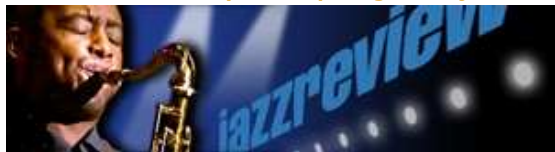


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## Featured Artist: Beat Circus

CD Title: Dreamland

Year: 2008

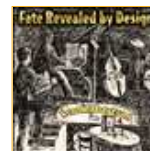
Record Label: Cuneiform Records

Style: Other

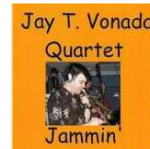
**Musicians:** Brian Carpenter (vocals, harmonica, trumpet, slide trumpet, toy piano, pump organ), Briggan Krauss (vocals, baritone saxophone), Brandon Seabrook (tenor banjo, mandolin, slide trumpet), Alec K. Redfearn (harp, accordion); Kathe Hostetter (violin, viola), Julia Kent (cello), Curtis Hasselbring (trombone), Ron Caswell (tuba), Matt McLaren (drums, washboard, percussion)



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## Review:

Multi-instrumentalist Brian Carpenter formed this delightfully off-center band back in 2002 and enlists progressive jazz luminaries, saxophonist Briggan Krauss and trombonist Curtis Hasselbring to round out the nonet. In effect, these sixteen pieces project an engagingly neurotic cross-genre stylization. Think of early 1900's good-natured musical simplicity coupled with progressive rock type metrics and much more.

The press kit discloses that the unit purveys "weird American Gothic stories." And with horns, strings, harmonica banjo, tuba, keys and a rhythm section et al, the unit takes the listener on a hazy trek through bizarre interpretations of roots music amid eerie vocals, quirky movements and frameworks. It's a strangely appealing retro-modernist program, indeed. With subtle surprises and deviations, the musicians even incorporate a bit of traditional Jewish music into the grand schema.

While the band's presentation might border on a tongue-in-cheek type methodology, there is some *serious* musicianship here. They take the listener on a happy-go-lucky type sojourn and segue from brief chamber motifs to a Strauss waltz or delve into Civil War-based, melancholic etude. The fun-filled trip surge continues via the ensemble's rendering of bawdy cabaret and old time saloon music. Moreover, Carpenter, performing on trumpet, injects a Mexican serenade within the mix. No doubt, the band fuses an off-kilter dreamscape. Essentially, the artists play tricks on your mind while they somewhat outlandishly, sooth your soul.

**Record Label Website:** <http://www.cuneiformrecords.com>

**Artist's Website:** <http://www.beatcircus.net>

**Reviewed by:** Glenn Astarita

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