

Jazzwise Review of THE COMMITTEE

September 2005

Basho Three Stars

Artists include Pink Floyd, The Crazy World of Arthur Brown, Paul Jones (DVD); Tim Whitehead and the Homemade Orchestra (CD). Rec. 1968

Thought to have been lost for the past 35 years this 1968 arthouse movie, written by Max Steuer and directed by Peter Sykes, is a surreal, slightly chilling exploration of the individual, society and alienation, that's loosely based around the thoughts of radical sixties psychiatrist RD Laing. Atmospherically shot in black and white, there's more than a whiff of Antonioni's early sixties films as the central character — ex-Manfred Mann singer and former Jazz FM presenter Paul Jones — haunted presence is framed by long lingering camera pans and tracked by an eerie improvised Pink Floyd soundtrack, that's among their most obscure and sought after unreleased recordings. Featuring early outlines of 'Careful With That Axe Eugene' and the final part of 'Saucerful of Secrets', among other random sonic sketches, it was recorded weeks after guitarist David Gilmour replaced Syd Barrett and still exhibits their early fascination with the work of AMM and John Cage. The movie also features underground compatriots The Crazy World of Arthur Brown performing the jazzy, jarring 'Nightmare' and a Jimmy Smith-like Hammond organ groover filmed at a party scene in the LSE, while a bonus CD features a recent arrangement of the song 'The Committee' by saxophonist Tim Whitehead, with vocals by Paul Jones, plus two tracks from Whitehead's Homemade Orchestra. Brilliant to some and bonkers to others, it's a brave move for Basho and one of their most intriguing projects to date.

Jon Newey