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Thursday, Apr. 07, 2011



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A bounteous buffet of musical mixtures

This week's column blasts off with drummer Carl Palmer's new video, followed by a breezy jazz/piano concoction from Champion Fulton, a trip through the human mazes behind Wall Street from Epigene, and two weeks' worth of star-studded bowling alley jams from Soulive and friends.

'Drum solos,' Carl Palmer (MVDvisual, HHHH)

This March 8 DVD is superstar drummer Palmer's first educational DVD. It features him performing his most legendary solos, including the "spinning" California Jam solo from 1974. Video clips and MIDI soundtracks of Carl's solos are included at 50 percent, 75 percent and 100 percent speed so drum students can see/hear every note played; and PDF files contain note-for-note transcriptions with sticking. The solos are all amazing, because even as Palmer's drum sets and their size change over the years, his amazing mastery of technique stands out. In fact, the most amazing solo to this viewer is the one without MIDI or PDF: Carl plays an amazingly speedy and varied solo on a snare drum at a drum clinic. Aspiring drummers, even if you aren't into progressive or jazz drumming, get this one. Techniques used by Palmer can be transported into many different musical realms.


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'The Breeze and I,' Champion Fulton (SpectraJazz/MVDAudio, HHHH 1/2)

This March 8 CD by female jazz vocalist/pianist Champion Fulton is a natural for fans of Diana Krall and other performers of that type. The music is lively, and Champion's vocals seem effortlessly natural, only slightly overshadowed by her piano prowess. There's no personnel listing on the CD, so my congratulations for "The Sheik of Araby," which includes a nifty brush-driven drum solo (Fukushi Tainaka, according to her website), will have to reside here along with my admiration for the unnamed bassist.

Other highlights include another tune that spotlights the trio, "Easy to Love," which features both drummer and bassist to advantage; the soulful closer, "If I Had You" and the sultry "Exactly Like You."

Champion is touring at times with the Cab Calloway Orchestra, and her trio would be a good jazz show to see. Till then, snag the CD.

'A Wall Street Odyssey,' Epigene (Ammami Music, HHHH 1/2)

This artsy April 5 two-disc release takes aim at the human costs of our financial markets. Epigene is a husband wife team, writer/producer/multi-

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instrumentalist/vocalist Sean Bigler and keyboardist/vocalist/co-writer of one song Bonnie Lykes, who also did

the nifty crayon drawings for the unique book/CD layout.

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