



NEW JAZZ AND AUDIOPHILE RELEASE

Wayne Horvitz

The Royal Room Collective Music Ensemble

US/Canada release: October 14, 2014

At the Reception

Al Keith, Samantha Boshnack, Steve O'Brien, trumpets; Naomi Siegel, Jacob Herring, Willem de Koch, trombones; Beth Fleenor, clarinet; Kate Olson, soprano saxophone; Ivan Arteaga, alto saxophone; Skerik, tenor saxophone; Greg Sinibaldi, baritone saxophone; Ryan Burns, piano; Geoff Harper, bass; Eric Eagle, drums
Wayne Horvitz, composer, conductor

Genre: modern/creative big band jazz

SGL 1609-2 (CD + high-res downloads at HD Tracks, Qobuz, Highresaudio etc.)

"Horvitz...is using his own themes and pre-existing pieces, some riff-based and directly out of the jazz tradition, but blowing them apart, making them judder and flash and fold in on themselves...Horvitz kept his attention on the [excellent] band with microscopic focus, quick-cutting between contrasts, putting something free or rippling against a fixity." – Ben Ratliff, New York Times

Wayne Horvitz's newest regular ensemble was formed in spring 2012, and toured to New York for his May 2013 residency at The Stone – this is their first record. The RRCME started off as a fairly loose collective of Wayne's favorite Seattle improvisers playing his music at Seattle's Royal Room, the club he co-owns and books. As Wayne relates, "All the music was originally for smaller groups and then expanded. Actually RRCME is in many ways like Zony Mash. Both bands were originally set up as weekly, local gigs at the same venue as a way for me to a) explore something that was new to me and b) play some music on an 'off night'. And in both cases, over time, they became significant projects."

The essential ingredient is Wayne's adaptation of Butch Morris's Conduction system for free improvisers into a language for spontaneously arranging and reconstructing his music on the fly, using numbers for a piece's written motifs, and other hand signals (to individuals or shifting groupings) to indicate how to treat their material. While maintaining the spontaneity of small group performance, he uses it to structure complexities only possible with a larger ensemble: "It was exciting to me in that it could be very free and malleable at some points but at other times could also work up a riff-based music similar to the music of Charles Mingus or even Count Basie. Harmonically it was very gratifying to constantly be re-inventing the arrangements. Even when the players misinterpreted hand signals things would happen that could be taken advantage of and developed."

Wayne of course knew Butch Morris well in New York in the 80s and considers him an important mentor (and incidentally they made some beautiful recordings as a trio with Bobby Previte). "Butch was using the improvisers' language set to create totally new music, it was really a fairly radical approach, although not without some precedent. Not so with what I am doing. In some ways I am doing now what Butch started doing and then abandoned for his more 'pure conduction' approach. In the 80s David Murray had a big band that Butch would conduct, and he would work with David's charts, and break things up with those charts as a starting point. Later we made a CD for New World records that took his own tunes and used a similar approach. And the fact that I was involved in many if not most of Zorn's game pieces at the same time that I was first working with Butch certainly helped me develop an alternative approach to creating structure live." On this record the two Redux pieces are

closest to pure conduction, “except I asked the musicians to have the score with the motifs from a specific tune available, but we did not play the arrangement per se.”

As for the arrangements, one might occasionally flash on Ellington, Gil Evans or Gerry Mulligan in terms of voicings, and the way the elements are played off against each plus the marshaled energies of the performance could bring to mind Anthony Braxton, George Lewis, or Misha Mengelberg: “All of those are artists whose music I love. Only after I started putting this band together did I really start to hear a similarity to someone else – Mingus. I love Mingus’s music but I never considered him an ‘essential’ influence the way I do say Cecil Taylor or The Art Ensemble of Chicago, but it kind of makes sense. Mingus’s up-tempo tunes often took fairly simple riffs and ‘re-purposed’ them in all kinds of ways. And then he loved ballads, as do I.”

What about the actual experience of creating this music together? “Even in a music as ‘open’ as jazz it is amazing how excited players are that the music *really* can change at any moment, and how hard it is to get them to drop assumptions about ‘soloing’ or ‘comping’. Sometimes I find it almost discouraging. I mean early jazz was a very collective music, and a lot of that was re-discovered in the 60s, but the forces of conformity and personal virtuosity keep prevailing. But mostly I just find it inspiring, and I always leave the bandstand feeling better than I did when I got on it.”

For bios of the band members please visit <http://www.wayehorvitz.net>. The complete interview can be accessed at the new Songlines website.

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