CD HotList

New Releases for Libraries

December 2018

Wayne Horvitz
Those Who Remain
National Sawdust Tracks
NS-024

Wayne Horvitz
The Snowghost Sessions
Songlines
SGL1627-2
Rick's Pick

Keyboardist/composer Wayne Horvitz has been a mover and shaker for decades now, moving freely across the (admittedly porous) border that separate the jazz,

experimental, classical, and avant-garde communities. His two most recent releases find him dancing blithely back and forth between them.

Those Who Remain is a modern-classical recording with a twist: the title composition is a two-movement concerto for "orchestra and improvising soloist" (in this case the brilliant modern jazz guitarist Bill Frisell), and the second piece is *These Hills of Glory*, written for string quartet and improvising soloist (in this case clarinetist Beth Fleenor). Both pieces are big and at times aggressive, but also frequently lyrical, and make little explicit reference to jazz tradition. *The Snowghost Sessions*, however, marks Horvitz's return to the jazz trio format after several decades working in other modes. But if you're expecting a swinging set of standards or even of explicitly jazz-oriented originals, think again: in addition to piano, Horvitz uses a laptop to trigger samples, and the result is sometimes gloriously chaotic: "IMB" had me running to Wikipedia to refresh my memory as to whether Horvitz had been part of John Zorn's original Naked City band (he was–as, of course, was Frisell). This isn't to say that he and his trio never swing–they do on several tracks–nor that the proceedings are generally skronky and forbidding. On the contrary, the overall mood is contemplative, and some of these pieces (notably the gorgeous "Northampton") are conventionally beautiful and soulful. It's just to say that these albums are Wayne Horvitz joints, and Wayne Horvitz doesn't do genre constraint. Both of them are excellent; the *Snowghost* set is essential.