

New Issues



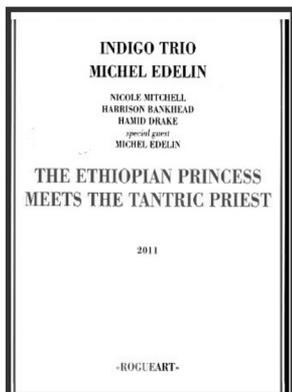
**KARI IKONEN &
KARIKKO
THE HELSINKI SUITE**
ECLIPSE MUSIC 201109

HARMAJA / TOO MANY TIMES
/ CIRCULAR / KAFÉ MOSKVA
/ PRELUDE TO A KISS / BOSSA
NOVAYA ZEMLYA / SEGUNDO
TANGO ALEGRE. 64:05

Ikonen, p, Fender Rhodes,
Moog synthesizer; Sonny
Heinilä, flt, alto flt, ts;
Laurent Blondiau, tpt;
Vincent Courtois, cel; Ulf
Krokkfors, b; Mike Kallio,
d. 12/2010, Gothenburg,
Sweden.

The third album for his group Karikko, *The Helsinki Suite* presents pianist/composer Kari Ikonen's unconventional investigations of various musical forms like jazz, tango and bossa nova. The involvement of "Helsinki" in his suite is one of unique experiences and state of mind. Ikonen's sonic profile involves controlled volume, steady and non-dramatic, as melody floats above drummer Mike Kallio's undercurrents of rumbles, clatters and textural embellishments. The instrumentation of Karikko lends itself to surprises of unaccustomed combinations as flute lines complement those of Laurent Blondiau's extended trumpet improvisation on "Kafé Moskva." Ikonen himself switches between piano, Fender Rhodes and synthesizer to accomplish the atmosphere he seeks for a composition. When bassist Ulf Krokkfors introduces "Prelude to a Kiss" with a vibrant, scampering solo and then Vincent Courtois mournfully presents its melody, we find that instead Ikonen has written an arrangement that requires the members of Karikko to trade off the successive elongated fragments of the melody, separated by pauses. The melody itself ends with Ikonen on his synthesizer's tremolos of fifths and animated improvisation borrowing from tango rhythms...until it breaks apart into rubato parts again, followed by a dramatic, and slightly comical, ending. Speaking of tango, "Segundo Tango Alegre" maintains a delicate balance between a poignant ballad on Fender Rhodes and the romantic forcefulness of tango initiated by Courtois's cello and Sonny Heinilä's flute. Without the lunges and extremes of dynamics offered by Argentine tangos, "Segundo Tango Alegre" unfolds as a song, propelled by the bass-line accents. The track's high point, no doubt, features the accelerating pulse of the exciting rhythmless dialogue between cello and flute before the, strangely enough, gentle, and ironically enough, logical, minor-key conclusion. As for bossa nova, "Bossa Novaya Zemlya" incorporates more offbeat humor than "Segundo Tango Alegre" as Ikonen's bossa nova comping opposes and complements the free improvisation of Blondiau's wah-wah-ing and bleating and effects-driven atmospheric solo.

New Issues



INDIGO TRIO & MICHEL EDELIN THE ETHIOPIAN PRINCESS MEETS THE TANTRIC PRIEST ROGUEART ROG-0034

TOP SECRET / INSIDE THE
EARTH / DÉRIVES / WIND
CURRENT / CALL BACK / THE
ETHIOPIAN PRINCESS MEETS
THE TANTRIC PRIEST / AMBRE
SUNSET / RETURN OF THE
SUN. 56:22

Nicole Mitchell, flt, alto
flt, pic; Edelin, flt, alto flt;
Harrison Bankhead, b, p;
Hamid Drake, d. 1/29- 30/11,
Strasbourg, France

“Too Many Times,” with Ikonen on piano, showcases the aggressiveness of his jazz improvisation, this time apparently Chick Corea-derived. He and Kallio, with empathetic spirit and precision of articulation, create growing force and swelling and recession of volume, combining swirling vortexes and tidal undulation. With The Helsinki Suite, Ikonen has created once again his own perspectives of, or reactions to, or elaborations upon, various genres. At the same time, he has set up opportunities for the members of Karikko to personalize his music through exceptional individual performances as well.

Bill Donaldson

At a time when jazz recordings and performances feature, it seems, almost every instrument but the flute, it's refreshing—nay, exhilarating—that The Indigo Trio's lead instrument is none other than the humble flute in its various forms, including wooden flute, alto flute and piccolo. What's exhilarating about the trio isn't merely its use of the instrument, but the effortless articulation and fervid communication of ideas when flutist Nicole Mitchell joins fellow Chicagoans Harrison Bankhead on bass and Hamid Drake on drums in explorations of concepts, cultural, imaginative and visual. Surprisingly, the three musicians, though long familiar with each other's styles, never performed as a trio until it received an invitation to appear at a festival in Montreal in 2005. They discovered that they should continue developing their own identity and repertoire, as they have on successive albums. The Ethiopian Princess Meets the Tantric Priest documents a collaboration in Strasbourg with French flutist Michel Edelin. Proving the universality of jazz as they respond instantaneously to each other's ideas during an eight-track recording, the album includes compositions written and improvised by all four of them. Though one would expect borrowings from African or Indian influences—even as the title composition does reflect them with trills and call-and-response and sonic imitations of nature—the musicians' interests are broader than that. “Dérives's” surging, fluttering flute colloquy contrasts with Bankhead's long bowed bass lines