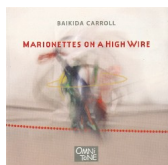


Baikida Carroll - Marionettes On A High Wire (2001)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 18 November 2017 15:04 -

Baikida Carroll - Marionettes On A High Wire (2001)



1 *Ebullient Secrets* 5:00 2 *Griot's Last Dance* 7:29 3 *Marionettes On A High Wire* 8:08 4 *Miss Julie* 9:06 5 *Our Say* 5:32 6 *A Thrill A Minute* 6:36 7 *Velma* 7:21 8 *Flamboye* 5:44 9 *Down Under* 5:04 10 *Cab* 1:54 Bass – Michael Formanek Drums – Pheeroan akLaff Piano – Adegoke Steve Colson Tenor Saxophone – Erica Lindsay Trumpet, Producer, Composed By – Baikida Carroll

Perhaps not as well-known as others who share similar faculties, trumpeter Baikida Carroll has earned respect and accolades for years, while performing with the late, great saxophonist/composer Julius Hemphill, pianist Jay McShann, bassist Charlie Haden and many others of note. However, Carroll's expertise also lies within his multifarious approach to composition amid countless scores for Broadway. With his first outing as a leader in six years, the artist once again demonstrates acute technical skills along with his stature as a gifted composer who here, reaps the benefits of a power house ensemble.

Essentially, *Marionettes On A High Wire* boasts an amalgamation of variable swing vamps, elegantly rendered shifts in meter and memorable melodies, awash with blistering yet finely articulated soloing by the leader, saxophonist Erica Lindsay and veteran jazz pianist Adegoke Steve Colson. Furthermore, the all world rhythm section of bassist Michael Formanek and drummer Pheeroan akLaff subsidize the band's often oscillating movements and brisk pace.

Carroll's "Griot's Last Dance" is all about booming rhythms, free jazz undertones and diminutive themes in accordance with the musicians' sparkling communal dialogue. "Our Say" is a soft ballad, punctuated by Formanek's expressive lines and Colson's delicate frameworks, while "A Thrill A Minute" provides the listener with hard-Bop-ish unison choruses and a profoundly stated melody that is guaranteed to seize your mind's eye! (A testament to Carroll's wondrous compositional pen).

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The excitement continues with "Flamboye" as the band skirts free-jazz territory in conjunction with crisp, tightly organized choruses and circular passages as Carroll's latest release equates to one beautifully fabricated production, that imparts a lasting impression. Now, we can only hope that Baikida Carroll sustains fewer gaps between recordings! Recommended!! ---Glenn Astarita, allaboutjazz.com

With *Marionettes on a High Wire*, veteran avant-garde trumpeter Baikida Carroll joins the roster of OmniTone Records, which since 1999 has fast become synonymous with quality forward-thinking jazz. Joining Carroll are Erica Lindsay on tenor sax, Adegoke Steve Colson on piano, Michael Formanek on bass, and Pheeroan akLaff on drums. There's a beautiful kind of daring in the music -- a rough tenderness in Carroll's trumpet tone, a palpable spiritual commitment from all the players involved. Leading off with "Ebullient Secrets," Carroll and his group unleash a highly adventurous sound while remaining within certain jazz parameters: planned solo rotation, distinct harmony and form, straight swing tempo. This more straightforward aspect of Carroll's writing style comes through as well on the ballad "Miss Julie," on the moody bossa "Down Under," and on two waltzes, "Our Say" and "Velma." But Carroll's concepts of dissonance, which extend well into the rhythmic arena, give several tracks a freshness and multi-dimensionality that is truly rare. Listen to Colson's piano comping behind Lindsay's tenor solo on "Griot's Last Dance" (written in memory of Don Cherry) for a good example of the uncentered yet perfectly coherent logic of Carroll's vision. Other highlights along these lines include the fast-swinging modalism of "A Thrill a Minute," the Julius Hemphill tribute "Flamboye," and the evocative title track, which features Formanek and akLaff in engaging, unpredictable combinations. Carroll composed "Miss Julie" for a staging of the Strindberg play of the same name, and he wrote both "Our Say" and "Cab" for Emily Mann's Tony Award-winning play *Having Our Say*. ---David R. Adler, *AllMusic Review*

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