

Pat Metheny - Unity Band (2012)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 07 August 2012 16:34 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 March 2015 11:58

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1. *New Year* 2. *Roofdogs* 3. *Come and See* 4. *This Belongs to You* 5. *Leaving Town*
6. *Interval Waltz* 7. *Signals (Orchestrion Sketch)* 8. *Then and Now* 9. *Breakdealer*
Personnel Pat Metheny - electric and acoustic guitars, guitar synth, orchestrionics Chris
Potter - tenor sax, bass clarinet, soprano sax Ben Williams - acoustic bass Antonio
Sánchez – drums

On Unity Band, Pat Metheny reveals that he can look in two directions at once. The group he's assembled here is an all-star ensemble. Drummer Antonio Sanchez has been with him for a decade, while double bassist Ben Williams makes his first appearance with the guitarist, as does tenor saxophonist Chris Potter (whose soprano and bass clarinet playing are on display, too). Metheny makes full use of this ensemble's possibilities. That said, he looks back through his catalog and composes for this band from some of the information gleaned there. One can recall the swirling melodic euphoria of the Pat Metheny Group in the guitar and guitar-synth interplay in "Roofdogs." On the ingenious "Come and See," Metheny's many-stringed Picasso guitar meets Potter's bass clarinet to create a tonal inquiry before Williams and Sanchez establish a deep blue groove. When Potter adds his tenor and Metheny his electric, we get a Latinized swinging pulse that is ever so slightly reminiscent of the 80/81 band with Michael Brecker and Dewey Redman (this isn't the only place that happens here). Fans of Metheny's more abundantly lyrical side will appreciate the breezy sway of "Leaving Town," though its melody -- twinned by his guitar and Potter -- is full of compelling tight turns, before the rhythm section evokes a deep, swinging blues and the guitarist gets refreshingly funky in his solo. On "Signals" Metheny uses his Orchestrion and guitar with live loops; the band employs live loops throughout the intro on top. Potter's tenor solo is emotive, grainy, and reaching, while the atmosphere recalls -- only generally -- the album the guitarist cut with Steve Reich. The nocturnal, smoky "Then and Now" has a torch ballad quality due to Potter's utterly songlike solo. Set closer "Breakdealer" begins at the boiling point and gets hotter. The title hints at what Sanchez does throughout the tune while pushing forward, but Williams not only keeps up, he adds propulsive shades of his own and rocks the arpeggiated changes fluidly. Metheny and Potter are free to sprint and they do; both dazzle with their lyric invention and knotty, imaginative, nearly boppish solos. The two front-line players are surely at their best in one

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another's company on the date; you expect them to be. Yet it's the rhythm section that astonishes thoroughly. Their interplay is not only intuitive, it's informative; it points to new corners for Metheny and Potter to explore. Given the guitarist's more compositional solo experiments of the last few years -- all of which have been very satisfying -- Unity Band is a return to what he does best: composing for, and playing with, a band of top-shelf players. --- Thom Jurek, Rovi

Pat Metheny znów zaskakuje. Legenda jazzu po raz pierwszy od ponad 30 lat powróciła do nagrywania utworów mniej tradycyjnych, przewidywalnych, z saksofonem obecnym na całej płycie! Na albumie "Unity Band" Pat prezentuje też swój nowy zespół. Saksofonista tenorowy i sopranowy oraz klarncista basowy Chris Potter, perkusista Antonio Sanchez oraz basista Ben Williams - to trójka muzyków, którzy towarzyszyli Metheny'emu w studiu podczas nagrywania dziewięciu kompozycji na album "Unity Band". Wszystkie napisał Pat. W jednym z utworów, "Signals", lider zespołu zagrał na orkestronie.

"Z wielu punktów widzenia patrząc, moje zespoły stanowiły alternatywę dla bardziej konwencjonalnego podejścia do jazzu, które prezentowałem" - mówi Metheny, nawiązując do formacji, w których grali niezapomniani Dewey Redman czy Michael Brecker. "To, że kolejny zespół zebrałem po ponad 30 latach, dowodzi jedynie tego, jak bardzo mocno to alternatywne myślenie tkwiło we mnie". Pat sądził, że odkąd nie ma już wśród nas Deweya i Michaela nie uda mu się zebrać równie doskonałych muzyków. Z błędu wyprowadził go najpierw Chris Potter. Potem obaj panowie zegrali na albumie Antonia Sancheza i wtedy coś zaskoczyło. "Dostrzegłem niemal natychmiast, że mamy ten naturalny sposób grania i frazowania oraz sugerowania sobie rozwiązań. Zacząłem myśleć o zbudowaniu wokół tych ludzi zespołu". Ostatnim elementem układanki został Ben Williams. Pat poznał go dzięki Christianowi McBride'owi na jednym z organizowanych przez niego eventów w słynnej nowojorskiej szkole Julliard. "Jego gra od razu do mnie przemówiła" - wspomina.

Dziewięć doskonałych kompozycji na "Unity Band" nagrano w Avatar Studios w Nowym Jorku. Produkcją zajął się Pat Metheny, wspomagany przez Steve'a Rodby'ego. Za nagrania odpowiadał James Farber. --- merlin.pl

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