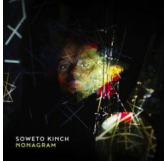


Soweto Kinch – Nonagram (2016)

Written by bluelover (Bogdan Marszałkowski)
Monday, 12 April 2021 13:06 -

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1-01 Centricity 1-02 Crosswinds 1-03 Waved 1-04 Triangle 1-05 Soul Bearings 1-06 The Engine Drivers 1-07 Four Caste 1-08 Stems and Petals 1-09 Nostalgia 2-10 King David's Lyre 2-11 In Plain Sight 2-12 Sevenly 2-13 Mass Deseption 2-14 Mitosis 2-15 Montpellier 2-16 The Sum Of All Parts 2-17 At Peace 2-18 Convergence to a Singularity
Soweto Kinch – Alto/tenor sax, Vocals, Keys, /programming Gregory Hutchinson – Drums Nick Jurd- Bass Reuben James – Piano

Soweto Kinch is acknowledged as a versatile and diversely capable musician. He received two MOBO awards in 2003 and 2007 for Best Jazz Act and two UMA awards (Urban Music Awards).

He straddles different worlds in his roles as musician, producer and MC and has supported acts including, KRS ONE, Dwele and Ty as well as written scores for Jonzi D's hop hop theatre Production 'Markus The Sadist' and Sampad's 'In The Further Soil'. He has featured in BBC documentaries, along with Goldie and Ms Dynamite and has his own projects, 'The Flyover Show' which is a day of music and arts taking place under a flyover in Birmingham and 'The Live Box' – a series of jam sessions run across Birmingham. He has appeared at many festivals, released numerous albums and has a degree in Modern History from Oxford University as well as presenting jazz on BBC radio 3. He grew up in London and Birmingham, influenced by seeing great players, both new and older in London and the hip-hop musicians he met in both locations. Now his music combines African-American influenced music with urban and hip-hop rhythms and a touch of essential 'Britishness'.

His music ranges from his 2010 release 'The New Emancipation' which garnered inspiration from 19th century work songs and early blues, centering around the development of music since slavery and 'The Legend Of Mike Smith' in 2013, which explores emotive issues and

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crosses the hip-hop/jazz divide. He is energetic and makes jazz an accessible medium to both experienced listeners and new ones more accustomed to urban rhythms, amplifying the similarities that exist. In his music, there are plenty of references to jazz traditions yet also many that reach out to more modern tastes and ears.

His new album 'Nonagram' is based on the concept of a nine-sided wheel. And sticks with that word 'concept'. This album is conceptual with each piece a development of mathematical notations and ideas, enforcing the relationship many feel between mathematics and music. In the album notes it is stated that, "the album concept revolves around a nine-sided wheel or nonagon. Each musical point along the wheel explores features of different numbers or shapes. For instance, the track exploring '3' uses frequencies such as 60Hz and relates it to 180 Hz (the internal and total angles of an equilateral triangle). Through shifting time signatures, harmony and tonality the music explores how sound can describe incorporeal ideas of mathematics, traveling through each point along a digital system; how music gives form to ideas that can't be seen in nature or sacred geometry ."

What can I hear? I can hear Sun Ra somewhere, grinning possibly at the fact that conceptual sounds are emanating from the younger members of the jazz scene. I can also hear improvisation and layer upon layer of sound development, which all combines to create an eccentric flow of ideas, overlacing and entwining, yet never losing the jazz. I can hear Courtney Pine with his linkage of jazz to modernity and I can hear something else; a heart! What Soweto does like no other is engage and there is something in this CD for every listener, whether familiar with hip-hop, soul or music so firmly grounded in jazz , it never loses sight of it even when it tries. Every track deserves more to be said about it as there is so much development but a review is not a thesis. I would recommend finding this album for yourself.

The concept of the album is to link maths, music and healing and much is made in narratives surrounding it about the conceptualising of hidden worlds, numbers and harmonic theories but actually, for me, forget all of that, just open your ears and listen. This is music created by a man who knows, enjoys and feels the rhythms and detail, which makes music – whether mathematically related, or not, it feels and sounds good to the listener. Repeated riffs, themes never lost in conversion and a steadfast grasp of the underlying truth. That is what matters and in that respect, Soweto just solved an equation. I admit, I have not listened to much Soweto Kinch before. I have heard, 'People With No Past' and 'Never Ending' and 'Banlieus Blues' where Soweto plays with his quartet and none of these tracks allow him to soar on sax like these examples but perhaps that is the point in that music and maths are related not so much by an expression of 'continuous self' but combinations of many intricacies and so musicians playing together create a singular whole.

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Soweto's playing is chameleon-like. He comes across as many personas; the bop style jazz player, the deeply observant urban voice, the traditional jazz rooted player and the musician who can combine it all together. The fact is Soweto manages to combine what is in his bones; the jazz, with what is in his culture, heart and observations; the rhythms of people, their ideas and ideology, thoughts and relationships. Largely he does this with this album. His music is interesting, encompassing, and at times sweet but always there is the theme, the return to the theme and something else, which is also in his psyche so strong, is it tangible – the jazz. There is a good deal of old fashioned, easy on the ears, simultaneous playing on this CD but coupled with the innovative use of the notation on occasion and the counter rhythms often going on in the parts it becomes something else. Sometimes, like ' Sum Of All Parts' you could be in a jazz club mid-US in the 1960s yet at other times it is bang up to date with intricate, free playing and the urban music songs add to the contemporary feel. It combines good old-fashioned jazz music, superb playing and the embracing of modern technology to further explore the music. Whether you understand maths or not, whether you understand music or not, this is definitely worth many listens. ---Sammy Stein, jazzineurope.mfmmedia.nl

Cześć. Słuchacie audycji Jazz Now w radiu BBC 3. Ja nazywam się Soweto Kinch i dziś opowiem Wam kilka słów... o sobie samym. Będzie też o roli hip-hopu i jazzu w mojej muzyce, inspiracjach, a także najbliższych planach koncertowych. Zostańcie przy odbiornikach.

Od zawsze obijałem się pomiędzy dwoma światami: hip-hop i jazz otaczały mnie w naturalny sposób. W tym samym czasie, kiedy dorastałem kultura hip-hopu mocno rosła w siłę. Łatwo więc było się nią inspirować: Onyx, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul - tymi zespołami interesowałem się kiedy byłem nastolatkiem. Mój Ojciec był scenarzystą teatralnym i mniej więcej w tym samym czasie, pojechałem z nim na Edinburgh Fringe Festival (największy artystyczny festiwal na świecie). W aucie oprócz nas siedzieli dwaj muzycy jazzowi. Już wtedy, przysłuchując się ich rozmowom poczułem jazzowego bakcyła. Moją zajawkę wzmocniły dwie osoby: Wynton Marsalis, z którym pewnego razu udało mi się porozmawiać po jednym z jego koncertów w Birmingham, a także tancerz Will Gaines – który mieszkał u mojego ojca, przez jakieś dwa miesiące. Kiedy wyjeżdżał, w mieszkaniu zostawił mnóstwo kaset i nagrań jazzowych, które potem z dziką przyjemnością „zajeżdżałem”.

Blendowanie jazzu i hip-hopu, w moim przypadku ma miejsce już od pierwszego albumu, który nagrałem w 2003 roku - „Conversations with the Unseen”. Na tym krążku, na przemian gram na saksofonie altowym i rapuję. Groove miesza się tu z walkingiem, improwizacja instrumentalistów ze śpiewanymi refrenami. Warstwa muzyczna jest więc bardzo bogata. Moje

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następne albumy to konsekwentnie ta sama stylistyka, ale za każdym razem skupiona na innym elemencie i poszerzona o nowe muzyczne elementy. Na swoim konczie mam też albumy koncepcyjne: „A Life in the Day of B19: Tales of the Tower Block”, a także „Legend Of Mike Smith”, którego treść opiera się na Boskiej Komedii Dantego, odwołując się do problemów współczesnego człowieka. Płyta ta prezentowana była jako performance z elementami tanecznymi w teatrach i zbierała, nieskromnie mówiąc – świetne recenzje.

Oprócz muzyki i performance'u ostatnio bardzo dobrze czuję się też za mikrofonem... radiowym. Prowadzę audycję Jazz Now w BBC 3 Radio, podczas której prezentuję świetnych muzyków jazzowych. Ostatnio miałem przyjemność rozmawiać z Andy'm Sheppardem i Ravi'm Coltrane'm. Bardzo dużo koncertuję. Publiczność daje mi niesamowitą energię i nakręca do dalszego działania. Jestem wdzięczny, że mogę występować na całym świecie. Niebawem odwiedzę też Polskę. Wraz z moim triem zagramy podczas tegorocznego festiwalu Warsaw Summer Jazz Days. To świetna okazja, by przypomnieć polskiej publiczności jak wiele wspólnego ma jazz i hip-hop.

Na tej informacji zakończymy, dzisiejsze specjalne wydanie Jazz Now w BBC 3. Kłaniam się nisko i dziękuję za wspólny czas spędzony przy odbiornikach. Do zobaczenia całkiem niebawem, Soweto Kinch. ---Marta Jundziłł, jazzarium.pl

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