

What's On Disc

Jazz

TORONTO JAZZ ORCHESTRA

Under A Tree (Indie)

The second CD from this ambitious ensemble led by Josh Grossman, to be released at The Rex on Saturday afternoon, shows it has made great strides over its 5½ years. Recorded live at The Pilot, it features 10 tunes by Canadian composers, some of them TJO bandmen, that have never been heard on disc.

The title cut by Phil Nimmons is a strong example of the skill of these 17 young players — the section work is stirring and strong, the solos by trumpeter Will Loach and alto saxist Gareth Lewis fiery and the confidence sky-high. Almost all the musicians get solo room, with the leader and trumpeter (who wrote and arranged the thrusting "Together At Last") taking a turn up front on "The Far Side." Kirk MacDonald's "Alicante" burns while pianist Laila Biali guests and solos well on her own "From Everlasting To Everlasting." The lengthy ensemble passages never wear out their welcome, though there's an occasional wobble and sometimes charts are too dense. But momentum's maintained by the pulse pair of bass Mike Smith

and drummer Dave McDougall and complemented by pianist Erin Gray. "First X's Free" by bass trombonist Chris Hunt is a smart number with fierce soprano sax wailing by Mark Laver. Geoff Chapman

ANDERSON/SLOSKI

Footwork (Make It Real)

This Hammond B3 blitzkrieg comes courtesy of Lance Anderson, who's teamed with roots drummer Mike Sloski on 14 cuts. They don't stray far from mainstream manoeuvring and their vocal efforts are only workman-like, but the groove's heavy and consistent. Anderson, busy on the pedals, hauls in funk, soul, blues and rock to spice the roadhouse mix of originals and covers of hits by Dr. John ("Right Place Wrong Time"), Stevie Wonder

("Superstition"), Billy Preston ("Will It Go Round In Circles") and two by organ godfather Jimmy McGriff. There are guest singalongs by George Oliver and Steven Ambrose. The band plays the Silver Dollar on April 3 at 8 p.m. GC

DAVE DOUGLAS

Strange Liberation (Bluebird)

The trumpeter usually surfs the experimental margins of jazz but here he's re-examining the Miles Davis era of almost 40 years ago, with Uri Caine worrying Fender Rhodes throughout, Clarence Penn clattering on drums, James Genus walking the bass with an unerring time sense and guitarist Bill Frisell in the role of unlikely guest.

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