

David Smith Quintet - Anticipation (2010)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Anticipation*
02. *Carillon*
03. *All Or Nothing At All*
04. *Bittersweet*
05. *Satellite*
06. *The Question*
07. *Alone*

David Smith - trumpet Kenji Omae - sax Nate Radley - guitar Gary Wang - bass Greg Ritchie - drums

With *Anticipation* by the David Smith Quintet comes another release from the Brooklyn Jazz Underground label, “an independent and artist-run label committed to creative and adventurous contemporary improvised music”. True to the label’s namesake, the present release features a number of conventions that have become synonymous with the Brooklyn jazz scene: odd meters, complex forms, parallel harmonies, inventive originals, modern covers, and superb musicianship.

The disc opens with the title track, a restless straight-eighth tune with each chord anticipating the resolution of the following measure. Smith and saxophonist Kenji Omae navigate the ever-shifting chord changes with ease displaying a perfect balance between technical prowess and melodicism.

As is the tenor for most of the album, “Bittersweet” and “Alone” are both minor tunes with a certain dark quality and poignancy. Smith explains that the impetus for these compositions was his feelings towards fatherhood and from being apart from his wife and daughter. Guitarist Nate

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Radley contributes the beautiful “Carillon,” a simple diatonic melody played by the two horns, which serves as a refreshing contrast to the other material.

Alongside two more Smith originals are covers of the jazz standard “All or Nothing At All” and John Coltrane’s “Satellite”. Rather than altering the repertoire beyond all recognition, which is so often the case with contemporary jazz covers, Smith’s arrangements offer subtle updates on these classic tunes. The Altman/Lawrence melody for example, gets a triadic reharmonization, while the tricky Coltrane tune is made even more challenging (at least for us mortals) in 7/4. No matter the time signature, tempo, or style the ensemble is held together by the outstanding rhythm section led by fellow Canadian ex-pat Greg Ritchie on drums.

The album’s biggest drawback has nothing to do with the music or the playing, but rather with the audio recording itself. Although it is the nature of brass instruments to cut through the ensemble and be featured melodically, the trumpet and sax are mixed well above the rhythm section. At certain points, I had to adjust the volume setting on my speakers just to hear the guitar.

As far as the music on Anticipation is concerned, David Smith and his cohorts deliver a progressive and flawless performance. If the recent string of high quality releases by BJU records is any indication, it would seem that the Brooklyn jazz scene (i.e. current jazz mecca) is thriving. ---Jonathan Goldman, jazztimes.com

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