

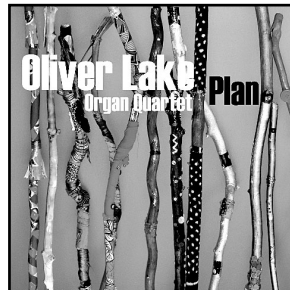
**Dr. Au (feat. Agnes Heginger)
Plasmic (Ein Klang)**
by Elliott Simon

Vocalist Agnes Heginger, in the persona of "Dr. Au", clumsily sets up her cookery with drummer Fredi Pröll's clinks and clanks and her own vocal stutter steps to prepare this Plasmic feast. "Get me a gallon of percussive piano notes," she demands of Elisabeth Harnik and commands Pröll to set the percussive fire on low simmer so she can increasingly add her own brand of vocal drippings. "I need to make grandma's 'Kreplach' soup and it begins at low boil." She then turns to Uli Winter and says, "I also need some of your cello scrapings for this," while adding a few ounces of semi-cantorial vocalese to give it a hint of Eastern European flavoring.

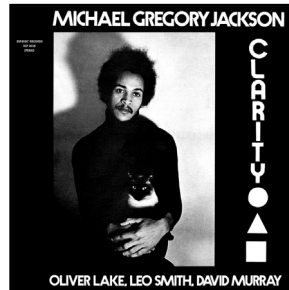
Au downs a bowl of soup and happily drifts off into a somewhat frenetic dreamland. She reaches the "Brahmaputra" river on sheets of kreplach-induced clucking that is soon joined by a pound of piano and cello noodle-ing. Her clucking reaches seizure-like intensity as she casts a long piano noodle into the river. To her surprise, she catches a fish. "I will wake up and make my entrée. What better to follow my 'kreplach' soup than a wonderfully dreamy beer flavored 'Steamed Salmon' with onions."

Au carefully opens a container of slightly discordant bass piano chords and lovingly seasons the fish with pear-shaped dolorous notes of her own. A few cello creaks are added to the mixture before she decides to go "Irish Pub" and substitute a pint of squeaky cello Guinness for the lager for which her recipe calls. Au pants with anticipation and quietly adds a pound of prepared piano "Horny Onions" as garnish. The salmon, onions and notes dreamily "Bubble and Squeak" for about 11 minutes and remembering that not everyone likes salmon, Au delicately mixes up a pot of "Chicken Tikka Massala". "I will use my own spellbinding vocal yogurt as the base and add in arco cello spices, that makes for an especially tantalizing taste." Following this superb feast all munch on "After Dinner Mints" filled with piano/cello tension for desert.

For more information, visit einklangrecords.com. Plasmic's Elisabeth Harnik is at Roulette Aug. 9th. See Calendar.



Plan
Oliver Lake Organ
Quartet (Passin' Thru)



Clarity
Michael Gregory Jackson
(ESP-Disk)

by John Sharpe

Although on the scene since the early '70s, reedman Oliver Lake continues to find new vehicles for his bittersweet alto saxophone. While best known as one quarter of the World Saxophone Quartet, he has also composed and performed in a multitude of settings ranging from string trios to big bands.

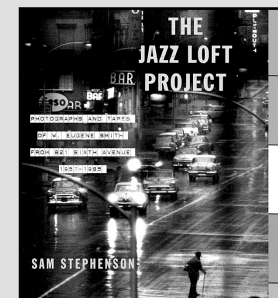
Plan is Lake's second recording after 2008's *Makin' It* to feature Hammond B3 man Jared Gold. Lake's mission this time out was to explore new territory with the B3, with more of an emphasis on bebop and funk, alongside his natural avant leanings. Gold brings a bonus in that his foot-pedal basslines operate seemingly independently from his surging keyboard swells and spiky careening lines. Trumpeter Freddie Hendrix adds contrast to the frontline with waspish fanfares and incisive runs while Johnathan Blake ably provides the backbeat when it's needed and the timbral coloration when it's not. Whether it's the uncompromisingly edgy title track, the short dissonant jostling phrases of "Ta Ta Ta" or the cut-up ensemble play of "Spring-ing", the overriding impression is of a spirited give and take blossoming from Lake's quirky themes. As for the leader himself, he mixes lyrical fragments with audacious squawks and gritty vocalizations, as well now as he did when new on the scene.

Which is not too far from where he was when guitarist Michael Gregory Jackson's *Clarity* was first released during the heyday of loft jazz in 1976. Reissued on CD, the program straddles boundaries that are more apparent now than they were at the time, touching as it does on jazz, folk and chamber sensibilities. At this point the 23-year-old Jackson (now known simply as Michael Gregory) was a fresh and distinctive voice in Lake's cutting edge quartet and trio, featuring on classics such as *Holding Together* (Black Saint, 1976) and *Zaki* (hatART, 1979) before going on to search for crossover success. For his debut release he assembled what in retrospect seems a bevy of free jazz superstars with trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith and reedman David Murray alongside Lake. There is a pleasantly melancholic tinge to many of the tunes, accentuated by Jackson's folksy acoustic guitar,

such as the gentle title track where the horns billow around an airy unison line before a light vocal from Jackson, the solo "Preleuionti" or the pretty through-composed "Ballad". It's not until "Clarity (4)" that Jackson makes full use of the firepower available with flurries of horn activity in short conversational bursts. Once again the inescapable conclusion is that the Loft Era birthed a more nuanced and varied music than for which it is given credit.

For more information, visit oliverlake.net and espdisk.com. Lake is at Birdland Aug. 17th-21st with Trio 3 and Jazz Standard Aug. 24th-25th with his organ quartet. Jackson is at Cornelia Street Café Aug. 3rd. See Calendar.

IN PRINT



The Jazz Loft Project
Sam Stephenson (Knopf)
by Clifford Allen

The early to mid '60s are a period not too well documented in jazz, at least as far as what was really going on. Followers and fans of creative music are lucky, considering that nearly everything that's recorded today finds its way to at least a small market and the amount of reissues appearing certainly helps give a clearer picture of history. Of course, very little in terms of artifacts can really capture what it was like to be there, but *The Jazz Loft Project* comes quite close. This book documents the photographs, recordings and transcripts made at W. Eugene Smith's building at 821 6th Avenue between 1957-65. Smith was a wartime photographer for *Life* magazine, among others, and became one of the century's preeminent documentary photographers.

Other occupants of the building included painter and graphic artist David X. Young, composer-arranger Hall Overton and drummer Ronnie Free. In addition to using a portion of the building as a studio, constant after-hours sessions occurred, most of which were recorded in documentary fashion, as Smith wired many of the lofts. Regular participants included Zoot Sims, Freddie Redd, Sonny Clark, Jimmy Giuffre, Don Cherry, bassists Jimmy Stevenson and Bill Takas, pianist Jane Getz, Patty Waters and Albert Ayler. Hall Overton and Thelonious Monk rehearsed an orchestra there as well. Smith was meticulous about documentation and copious notes and recordings survive. One can also see the influence the music had on Smith's photography, painterly textures emerging in views of the street below and line, color and shape mingling naturally and architecturally in response to pervasive sound and activity.

Rarely has such an archive been made available in such an extraordinary and, frankly, quite simple format. One is given a window into the lives of musicians and artists through photos and transcripts of conversations; audio, however, is only represented through reproductions of tape boxes and their annotations. Hopefully someday a bit of the music recorded will become available to further illuminate this revolutionary period. For now, our eyes and minds will have to do.

For more information, visit knopf.knopfdoubleday.com

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