

Hush Harbor Mixtape, Vol. 1: Doxology
Angel Bat Dawid (International Anthem)
 by Kyle Oleksiuk

It's good music! Chicago-based composer/instrumentalist/educator Angel Bat Dawid is one of the most original, purposeful and talented artists working today and the release of her second album-length studio recording is a major event. *Hush Harbor Mixtape, Vol. 1: Doxology* is lush, immaculately performed, recorded, produced and mastered, the musical equivalent of watching a movie in IMAX.

The beauty and fidelity of the sound lend a feeling of gravity to the music, which mixes alien-istic synthesizers with trembling reeds, rattling, jingling, shimmering percussion and heartfelt vocals—all performed by Bat Dawid—to create an irresistible atmosphere of wonder and beauty.

For most listeners, even those who regularly gravitate to off-the-beaten-path music, the most unusual aspect of the album will likely be Bat Dawid's vocals on tracks 2, 4-7 and 9—sometimes sung, sometimes half-sung, sometimes spoken—which are reminiscent of a guided meditation or a live concert.

Particularly in this hopefully-soon-ending era in which live music has been as good as dead, it is wonderful to hear an artist approach recorded music as if it were a live performance, to be listened to and concentrated on in full, guided by the performer.

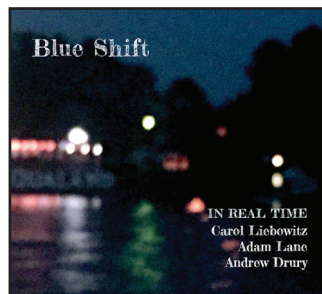
And while there are several songs that can be played out of context and slapped into a playlist (particularly track 3, "Sunday Meeting of Colored People in Chicago", and track 8, "El Quitrin - The Joy of Livin", for any tastemakers reading this review), the majority demand more attention, both because of their serious, otherworldly tone and because of Bat Dawid's concertesque vocals.

This approach is obviously a sacrifice in the terms of the modern musical paradigm, which involves releasing a million singles in the hopes that one will be picked up by the arcade game claw of the Spotify algorithm, but truly the sacrifice is worth it.

Bat Dawid's music shines all the more brightly because it is difficult to cut up and listen to idly. It commands respect. This reviewer suspects that this is one of the most important reasons why, since the release of her debut *The Oracle*, Bat Dawid has been

held in high esteem by thoughtful and sensitive listeners, like you. Now go buy it!

For more information, visit intlanthem.com. *Bat Dawid* is at Merkin Concert Hall Mar. 3rd. See Calendar.



Blue Shift
In Real Time (Line Art)
 by Marc Medwin

What a name for a trio! Freedom, which transcends categorical description, comes at a cost. For pianist Carol Liebowitz, bassist Adam Lane and drummer Andrew Drury, that cost involves the assimilation of various traditions, immersion so complete that all delineations, including the temporal and chronological, are shattered in favor of a consistently vibrant whole. This is the shared vision of *In Real Time*, a trio whose debut disc is rife with the contradictions and resolutions inherent to freedom even as they unravel passing time and historical concern before our ears.

From where, just as a point of reference, does that fresh deep-down bassline opening the title track hail? Lane slides and glides in, through and around that multi-layered thing we call "the blues" as if it combined waystation and watering hole, each tone simultaneously sustenance and point of departure until, with a dyad, Liebowitz expands any notion of modal conception nearly to breaking point. Drury's stunningly focused entrance brings a layer of fractured swing, shards of ghostly reference present only to point the way toward an uncertain but exciting future. Hearing the funk and lope of the music as it contrapuncts its way forward only reinforces the illusion of histories in conflict. This is music that continually stretches both itself and the ears keen to absorb it, gaining intensity and power just before Lane and Drury settle into the deep groove over which Liebowitz weaves implicative harmonic tapestries of gorgeous intricacy. The track doesn't so much end as fade.

All this is in direct contrast to the volatile "Passacaglia", a lush but inexorable barn-burner with pauses to refuel, whose trajectory carves phrases, lines and sonorous swatches from the unity audible just below its metamorphic surface. Drury's hi-hat nearly two-and-a-half minutes in speaks to a kind of rhythmic stasis whose syncopations always threaten to destroy it. No verbiage about interplay prepares for the poignant moments of a sustained chord extended, like the C minor passages with G minor inflections around 8:12 into "Passacaglia" ultimately ushering it out.

There is also the scintillating arco and piano interplay opening "Curve", a feast of dynamics and color fit for any exploring spirit. Liebowitz' pianism knows no boundaries of articulation and sonority. Her musicality guides and cements each moment as signpost and in transition, supplying the music's final freedom.

It is all extremely impressive, especially for a debut, that instantaneous interaction and reaction indicative of real freedom, the freedom to listen, to absorb, to judge and interject and to listen again. The cyclical nature of tradition and innovation again becoming tradition imbues every gesture of a disc whose immediate and visceral recording comprises a contribution as vital as the music.

For more information, visit lineartrecords.com. This project is at Ibeam Brooklyn Mar. 4th. See Calendar.

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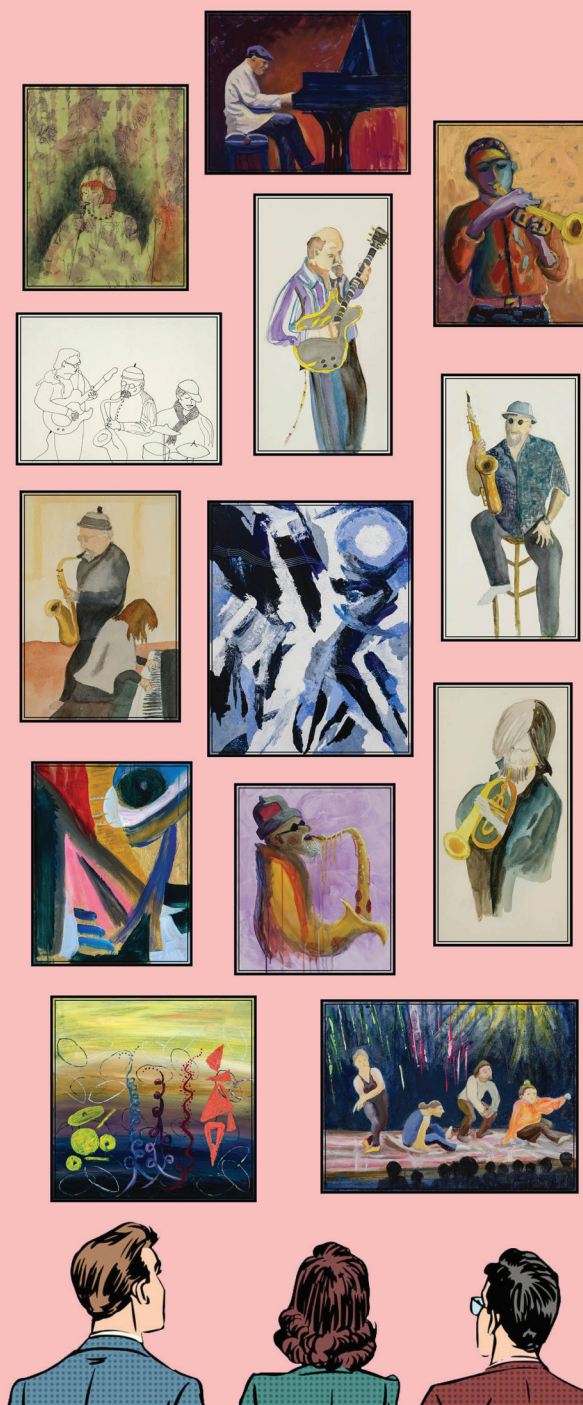
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