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turn dissonant unexpectedly. Hébert's arrangements of Mingus' "Duke Ellington's Sound of Love" and "Remember Rockefeller at Attica" are affectionate tips of the hat to a pioneer of the small ensemble trickery that this band perpetuates in its own style.

All of this would sound labored if the band wasn't having such a good time and wasn't so at ease with the music's demands. Their interactions are so tight that distinctions between soloist and accompanist blur, composing and improvising blend seamlessly, and there's an infectious sense of fun throughout. Bynum's virtuoso mute work on "Constrictor" sets the album's tone of serious playfulness with boisterous whoops and growls. On "Love What?" Hersch's solo hovers restlessly in the air with ambiguous grace, a string of questions left unanswered. The leader's opening unaccompanied solo, on "Duke Ellington's Sound of Love," features dancing lines and deep-down riffs punctuated by strummed chords. With his sharp lines and piquant tone, saxophonist Berne varies the quirky rhythms of Hébert's puckish "Frivolocity," providing an upbeat ending to a delightfully creative album.

— Ed Hazell

## Júlio Resende

### *Fado Jazz*

(ACT Music & Vision)

Portuguese pianist Júlio Resende intentionally obscures the line between his homeland's deeply rooted *fado* music and jazz on his latest release, the aptly titled *Fado Jazz*. Bleeding into each other across nine tracks of mostly original material, the two genres pulsate and barrel forward, birthing something new in the process.

The bandleader evocatively substitutes the bittersweet, plaintive vocal stylings of *fado* with his multi-faceted instrument, pulling an entire nation's sonic lament out of its fatalistic depths and tending its wounds while

teasing out its tempestuous edges through the pluralistic prism of jazz. Accompanied by André Rosinha on bass, Alexandre Frazão on drums/percussion and Bruno Chaveiro on the pear-shaped, 12-string Portuguese guitar, Resende's malleable keys unfurl in a search for the boundless beauty of that which is undefined. The spritely "Vira Mais Cinco (Para o Zeca)" kicks off the set with piano and opalescent *guitarra portuguesa*, the lute-like instrument that is part of the traditional *fado* lineup, knitting together a pirouetting melody anchored by Frazão's crisp, measured drumming.

Resende isn't bound by *saudade*, the idiosyncratic blend of nostalgia and yearning that permeates traditional *fado*, although subtle undercurrents can be heard in the album's ballads, "Lira," "Este Piano Não Te Esquece" and "All the Things-Alfama-Are." Instead, he uses it as a point of reference, eschewing the all or nothing aesthetic of *fado* for a multi-layered approach that points to a broader palette of human emotions. "Fado Blues (for Deolinda)" brims with a slow burn more reminiscent of the Mississippi Delta than Lisboa, while the samba-tinged backbeat of "Fado Maior Improvisado" conjures images of revelry in Rio as it crescendos in freewheeling improvisation. Resende inches closer to *fado*'s conventional torch song melodrama on "Profecia," albeit through the irreverent voice of Portugal's latest *fado* futurist, Lina Rodrigues. And

while there are traces of longing and melancholy as she sings of the illusion of a lost love re-emerging, the surrender in her voice makes the despair feel decidedly more ephemeral.

— Lissette Corsa

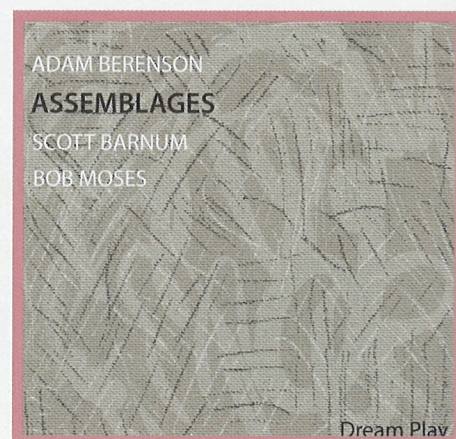
## Adam Berenson

### *Assemblages*

(Dream Play)

If you haven't heard of pianist Adam Berenson, it's not for lack of his trying. Since the mid-'90s, he has released more than 20 albums, three of which feature this trio: bassist Scott Barnum and the veteran drummer Bob Moses, whom Berenson met while studying with Paul Bley at the New England Conservatory of Music. Their last recording arrived more than 20 years ago, but on the double-disc *Assemblages*, the musical bonds remain strong enough to have weathered the hiatus — and also to support the dazzlingly eclectic set of compositions that fill this collection.

"The Elusive Ground of Reason" nods to Bley and Herbie Nichols. The freely structured "Majestic Desolation" bathes in tone-color interplay of piano and percussion. The vividly programmatic "Can You See Your Puppet Strings" stutters and jerks like a marionette, and in "Demotic Rhythms," Berenson festoons the shuffle-rhythm melody with wry country-western fillips. For all that, a guiding delight of *Assemblages* is the way the 20 pieces (almost all of them under



five and a half minutes) flow from one to the next, or else do a true segue, from lakeside breeze to desert sirocco, for maximum effect.

Berenson's range extends to his titles; these often point the listener toward people and issues he wants to highlight, such as "Rachel Carson" (a subtle reference to climate change), "Fernando Pessoa" (named for the protean early 20th-century Portuguese writer) and "The Ninth Amendment" (alluding to rights not specifically enumerated in the Constitution). When used to flamboyantly shout "Look what I can do," such eclecticism, at either the piano or computer keyboard, can be a crutch. But here the variety reveals a lively curiosity as well as rigorous musicianship, offering a fit vehicle to convey Berenson's intrepid intellect.

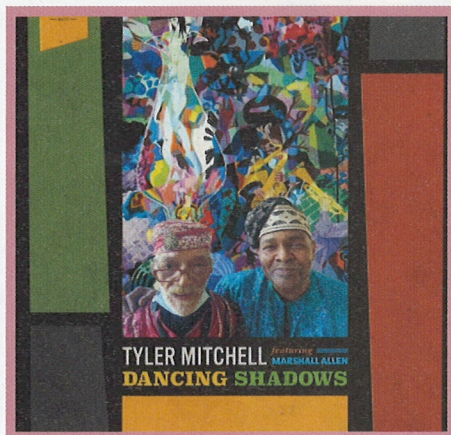
Moses plays an especially vital role. A percussion shaman for more than a half-century, he blends sounds and swing with a deep personal jujū; even when he plays the same notes and rhythm as other drummers, they carry a warming mystery of his own. The opening "Ideology Is Consciousness," a free-floating ramble, ends with drums alone, introducing us to the impact Moses will have on the music to follow.

— Neil Tesser

### Tyler Mitchell featuring Marshall Allen *Dancing Shadows* (Mahakala)

Bassist Tyler Mitchell joined the Sun Ra Arkestra in 1985, touring with the troupe and appearing on two albums. Mitchell left soon after, but the spirit of Sun Ra — who remained committed to jazz tradition while exploring otherworldly realms — never left him. Lucky for us, because the result is this fine album.

Mitchell's partner in this venture is Marshall Allen, a member of the Arkestra since 1958 and keeper of the flame since 1995. Now 97, Mitchell — who plays alto sax and electronic valve instrument, or EVI — still sounds robust enough to travel



the space ways. Tenor saxophonist Chris Hemingway, alto saxophonist Nicoletta Manzini, drummer Wayne Smith and percussionist Elson Nascimento round out the ensemble.

The first six of these dozen tracks are Sun Ra tunes that mostly focus on the bandleader's swinging and mellow sides. It's a wise choice as it allows the band's exuberance and flexibility to shine. Their arrangement of "A Call for All Demons," with its ostinato bass line and Allen's agitated sax solo soaring over a hummable melody, would fit in nicely on a Charles Mingus album. Elsewhere, the simple melody and gliding rhythms of "Interstellar Lowways" suggest a pleasant jaunt through the cosmos. It's only fitting that the lone non-Sun Ra cover is "Skippy" by Thelonious Monk, another singular artist whose sounds were rooted in Black music traditions yet seemed to come from other realms. The group's treatment here is decidedly funky, with Mitchell and Smith locked in a tight groove.

It's the originals that venture more to the outer limits. "Marshalls the Deputy" is a relatively brief burst of collective improvisation. "Spaced Out," with its free interplay and retro sci-fi sound effects — courtesy of Allen's EVI — successfully channels the spirit of Mitchell and Allen's former boss. All told, the combination of tradition and exploration, the swinging with the celestial, is an effective one.

— John Frederick Moore

