

belies all the impish fun and games to come. That is confirmed by the repeated sound of the keypad evident throughout "Keystroke" as Shipp adds synthesizer and samples to the sonic stew. "Lightforms" sounds like some astral transmission distorted by atmospheric storms and gravitational forces. "Urban Shadows" evokes the found sounds of audio art above a very funky, drum-heavy groove. The fierce free form dialogue evoked during "Keystroke" ultimately evolves into the passionate outbursts of the free form ballad "Invisible Steps" and the twisted dynamics of "Particle." The ominous suspense of "Reformation" gives way to the atmospheric drift of "Modulate" as the players deconstruct the creative process back to its essential units. "Last Chamber" is a duo performance for piano and drums while the metronome introduces "Mist," a brooding and dense finale that brings this chamber ensemble project full circle. Yet while "Pulsar," "x6," "Particle" and "Mist" are compelling pieces, this project ultimately left me disappointed with a vague sense of unrealized potential.

David Lewis

**1) ALBERTO TACCHINI,  
DROPS,**

**SPLASC(H) 796.**

*Stars / Big Rush / Red Tribe / Velociraptor / Toys Room / The Old Museum / Candle-Light / Shadows / Dreams. 63:00.*

Tacchini, p, el p, org, synth, electronics; Roberto Ceccette, g, electronics; Giovanni Maier, b; V.T. Gandhi, d. 4/22-23/03, Cavallico, Italy.

**2) AGUSTO MANCINELLI,  
RESONANCES,**

**SPLASC(H) 905.**

*Scrambled Eggs / Resonances / She Goes Shopping / Twist Me Love / Round Blue / Blue Goose Blues / When Love Is Over / Monna Lisa / Skippy / The Promise. 51:40.*

Mancinelli, g; Pietro Tonolo, sax; Paolo Ghetti, b; Massimo Manzi, d. 10/17-18/02, Nepezzano, Italy.

Here are a pair of eclectic pieces from the Italian Jazz scene. (1) is so eclectic you wonder if it wasn't meant as a demo tape for record labels instead of a finished album. It starts nicely with the first two tracks working around semi-abstract themes with guitar, piano, bass and drums each doing their own thing, but meshing together in semi-abstract fashion like one of Paul Bley's freer recordings. The electronics-based "Red Tribe" is interesting too with small, dampened sounds and brooding piano and guitar melodies. But, starting with "Velociraptor," something goes sour. The piece starts with more whooshing electronics but eventually resolves into a bland fusion melody. Then we have tepid organ funk on "Toys Room" and the rest of the CD goes irrevocably downhill. Everything else is soulless Jazz-funk or fussy but empty displays of dexterity. The life goes out of this one like air out of a balloon.

(2) is a much better sort of eclecticism. Augustus Mancinelli is a guitarist with a knotty, swift flair in his playing that sounds excellent in front of Pietro Tonolo's honking tenor sax and a grooving rhythm section. You can hear bits of

Metheny and Scofield in Mancinelli's alternately smooth and flinty playing. He is very adept at working around the straight rhythms of the other musicians on "Scrambled Eggs" and "Twist Me Love" while also playing nice strummed chords against Tonolo's urbane ballad work on "Round Blue" and "When Love Is Over." "Blue Goose Blues" is an especially hot line where Tonolo honks himself into a lather and Mancinelli responds with slick Bop licks. The band closes it out with "The Promise," sailing blithely through a hymn-like melody that could be one of Pat Metheny's Midwestern nostalgia turns. This is an excellent set with lovely playing, a lot of style, and a hip sense of adventure.

Jerome Wilson

**1) UWE OBERG,  
DEDICATED,**

**JAZZ'N'ARTS 1603.**

*Elastische Ding (to Anthony Braxton) / Luhsbluhs / NR. 74 (to Morton Feldman) / Quartet Ghost (to John Coltrane incl. After The Rain) / Supreme Loop (to Randy Weston) / Vor Nach 1 / Huhcks / Der aromatische Klangbefeuchter (to Randy Weston) / Kelvin & Sophia / Vor Nach II. 64:19.*

Oberg, p; Matthias Schubert, ts; Jurgen Wuchner, b; Jorg Fischer, d. June 2002, Wiesbaden, Germany.

**2) RO GEBHARDT,  
ON MY MIND,**

**JAZZ'N'ARTS 1703.**

*The Man With The Hat / Indi / Don't Ask Me Like a Stranger (Intro) / Don't Ask Me Like a Stranger / On My Mind / Take Care / The Girl in Pink / Traces / Satin Doll / Dance of the Capricorn / On My Mind (Radio Edit). 61:43.*

Gebhardt, g; Pierre-Alain Goualch, p, pads; Martin Gjakonovski, b; Gernot Kogel, el b; Roland Hoppner, d; Andrea Reichhart, vcl; Jochen Kramer, perc. 12/01, 4/02, Saarbrücken, Germany.

Five of the pieces on (1) carry dedications to other musicians, and the fact that the dedicatees—Bley, Feldman, Coltrane, Braxton, Weston—are such a varied lot, gives clues as to the intriguing nature of the music. There is a fascinating root system at work in these performances, one that gives an impression of tremendous depth, and a striking degree of creativity. A distinctly European tree, its bark contains that indefinable, ironic sense found in much German art. Its branches, however, reference both European and American improvised musics, gnarling them up in ways that set this particular quartet apart from the rest of the herd.

The quietly compelling theme of the Braxton tribute opener casts a wide-intervalled theme, typical of its subject, in an unusually warm harmonic environment. This draws the listener in deeply, even moreso when Oberg's piano spirals around the tense melody in Cecil Taylor-ish pulsations. Saxophonist Schubert, who counts Gunter Hampel, Simon Nabotov, and Mark Feldman among his playmates, digs deep into a robust, Chicagoan tenor tradition for this track, and contorts the "After The Rain" theme in true free-Jazzier fashion on "Quartet Ghost." Drummer Jorg Fischer has an acute ear for texture, and an easy-rolling approach to rhythm that's reminiscent of the casual brilliance of a Jim Black, or a Paul Lovens. The

Morton Feldman dedication is more late 1960's Art Ensemble of Chicago than Feldman to these ears, but is well-done nonetheless.

The Gebhardt disc (2) is considerably less prickly, coming more out of a mainstream bag. Gebhardt is a tasteful guitarist, whose legato lines rise and fall in very pleasing fashion. Roland Hoppner's crisp drum work busily supports him, and pianist Goualch, the two main soloists, as they negotiate unison lines on melodies that carry a whiff of post-1970's fusion, on "Indi" and "The Man With The Hat." "The Girl In Pink" exacts a harder, Mike Stern-ish edge from the leader, while his acoustic work on "Traces" backs a smooth spot from vocalist Reichhart, who perpetuates the fusion feel with her Flora Purim-like sound. Martin Gjakonovski's acoustic bass on this track mixes nicely with the spare, but effective, percussion of Jochen Kramer. With the guitarist back on electric, the same lineup essays a neat, Latin-ized "Satin Doll," with an economical, driving solo from Goualch.

Gebhardt strays a bit from the overall tone in two places, to varying effect. The title track, an apparent bid for airplay due to its reappearance in a radio edit, is a smoky, Latin pop ballad for Reichhart, who, not helped by a weak chorus, comes off as overly generic. Pleasant, well-played, but forgettable. Much better, and more of a venture, is "Take Care," which uses street noise as background (with an interesting percussion part) and, apparently, an orchestral track. Basically a framework for Gebhardt to blow on, it's the most challenging bit on a disc that, for the most part, goes down like velvet.

Larry Nai

**PAT O'KEEFE/JASON STANYEK/  
SCOTT WALTON/GLEN WHITEHEAD,  
TUNNEL,  
CIRCUMVENTION 38.**

*threshold / trace / boundaries / graft / sliver / measure / time, not tide. 64:08.*

**O'Keefe, cl, b, c; Stanyek, g; Walton, p, b; Whitehead, tpt.**  
July 22, August 12, 1999, Encinitas, CA.

Amplified feedback opens "threshold" and sets the tone for over an hour of intense ensemble minimalism. The aleatoric drift of "trace" is a meditative study of timbral textures and sonic suspension. The mood darkens around the 11:20 mark with the entry of piano and bass clarinet. In "boundaries," "graft" and "time, not tide" the ensemble establishes an intensifying wave of sound. In "graft" such intensifications are balanced by corresponding sections of delicacy and lyrical space. The energetic "sliver" amplifies microscopic sonic events and brings them to the foreground. In "measure" there is a building back from electronic saturation to a minimalist acoustic finale of intensifying communal drift. There is a creative intensity about this process that amply rewards the concentrated mode of listening that it requires. At times it is possible to suspect that not much is happening, while in fact everything is going on.

David Lewis

**CARL ORRJE,  
SKYLIGHT,  
DRAGON 387.**

*What Must I Do? / The Hyacinth / Sprightly Steps / Remembering Kurt / October 23rd / Flight / Skylight / Svartrnäs / Hungarian Dream I / Hungarian Dream II. 62:56.*

**Orrje, p; Filip Augustson, b; Ali Djeridi, d. Stockholm, Sweden, April 29-30, 2003.**

Pianist Carl Orrje, originally from Sweden and now a resident of NYC, made his recording debut at age 17, playing in his father's band. Now, 18 years later, Orrje has recorded several records after many playing and learning experiences (he studied with Jaki Byard and Kenny Barron). *Skylight* is Orrje's first release with his "Swedish trio," in collaboration with his old friend, drummer Ali Djeridi, and newcomer, bassist Filip Augustson. The trio certainly has that Scandinavian detachment at work here on some level, yet the most significant influence seems to be several American pianists and their trio work (perhaps significantly, Keith Jarrett's standards trio). Taking their cue from these sources, Orrje and his trio mix a keen lyricism, a sense of swing and a suspended sense of time for a program of mostly tranquil introspection. In fact, the beauty takes a hold of the listener right away on "What Must I Do?," a swelling waltz that demonstrates the group's closely interactive principles, spearheaded by Orrje's richly-textured tones. Such melodicism is also present on the nine-minute "The Hyacinth," with its rolling piano waves and its meditative qualities. Carefree joy and happy-go-lucky swing also appear in the form of "Sprightly Steps," an apt title that also shows off the taste of drummer Djeridi. Also in a similar—yet perhaps more complex—mode is "Flight," a playful Classical motif that presents several tempo changes and steady swing. Finally, worth noting is the rustic ballad, "Svartrnäs," a fine feature for Augustson's sound arco work.

While there are an abundance of piano trio discs on the market, Carl Orrje's Swedish Trio disc is one that certainly should be at the top of the list for fans of piano trio Jazz.

Jay Collins

**ESBJORN SVENSSON,  
E.S.T. LIVE '95,  
ACT 9295.**

*Say Hello to Mr. D (to Mr. S) / The Rube Thing / Happy Heads and Crazy Feds / The Day After (leaving) / Like Wash It Or Something / Breadbasket / What Did You Buy Today / Hymn of the River Brown / Same as Before / Mr. & Mrs. Handkerchief / Dodge the Dodo\*. 71:05.*

**Svensson, p; Dan Berglund, b; Magnus Ostrom, d. 3/11-20/95, 7/15/95, 7/15/99\*, no location, \*Montreux, Switzerland.**

"not what Jazz was, but a vision of what Jazz can be" "the future of Jazz..." The piano trio's continuing upswing in Consensus Reality visibility has left no shortage of hype in its wake, thanks to practitioners such as Jacky Terrasson, Brad Mehldau, The Bad Plus, and E.S.T., the latter of which trios inspired the quotes above. The curmudgeonally among us, holding tightly to our Bill Evans or Paul Bley or Cecil Taylor discs, might be tempted to spit