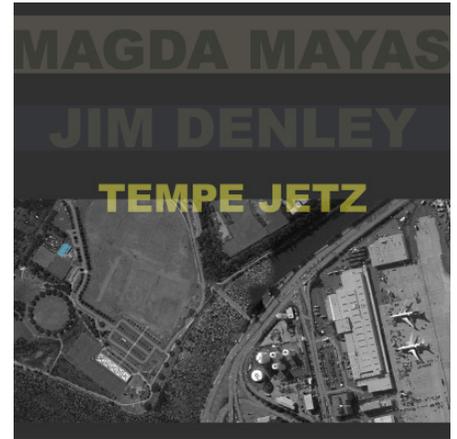


Jazzword - reprint

Magda Mayas/Jim Denley
Tempe Jetz
Relative Pitch Records RPR 1061
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Adroit applications in the ingenious uses of friction, breath and resonance, this CD is as dissonant as any absolute music, but animated with its own rhythm and information. That's because Australian reedist Jim Denley has burrowed far into these abstract-ish sounds for years in large ensembles and in collaborations with everyone from British hurdy-gurdy player Stevie Wishart to Québécois bassist Éric Normand.

On *Tempe Jetz* Denley performs his alchemy with both bass flute and alto saxophone, aided by German Magda Mayas, who usually plays piano in association with Aussie drummer Tony Buck and many others. Her instrument of choice here is described as “a barely functioning 1970s clavinet”. Its five octave span from 60-steel strings and electro-magnetic pickup allow her to dazzlingly create modification on guitar, double bass and keyboard textures the complement Denley's output.

The capabilities of Mayas' instrument add anywhere from one to three extra voices to the one or two Denley creates on this four-track CD, weirdly named for the abandoned Sydney sports club in which it was recorded. Emerging with more atonal textures plus others which have more affiliations with instruments so-called authentic sounds, the atmospheric result of blending blows, yelps, strums and beats is exhibited best on the extended “Customs Declaration” and “Arrival”. The first begins with unaffiliated winds-and-waves-like textures that soon solidify into spetrofluctuation from the alto saxophone and echoing single-string figits from the clavinet. This flat-line regularity is frequently breached by smacks against unyielding material and accompanied by an oscillated drone. Near country-music twangs from Mayas and overblown reed buzzes toughen the harmonies until the underlying clavinet crackle and burbles give way to reed yelps and growls that roll over the distant echoes from the other instrument for an expected rapprochement.

More scope is given to the concentrated cranks and vibrations that arrive with “Arrival”. That way Denley's strident reed bursts and Mayes' electro-bolstered whorls and wiggles galvanize the interface in such a way that it begins to resemble a bottleneck guitar-R&B sax jam with equivalent percussion backing. But these conventional snares are soon turned aside as ghostly whoops from the saxophonist and sul tasto fiddle-like strokes from the keyboardist move the piece back to near atonality. Advancing, the exposition becomes intermittent, with thematic elaborations and the accompanying obbligato constantly shifting between the two. Finally, when corrosive folk guitar-like strums on Mayas' part and needle-thin staccato breaths on Denley's connect, discordance fades to stasis.

Architecturally constructed according to individualized sonic blueprints both these CDs show how expressive programs can be constructed while ignoring conventions. The choice between them is whether a solo or a duo appeals more.

—Ken Waxman

Track Listing: *Tempe*: 1. A Departure 2. Customs Declaration 3. In Transit 4. Arrival
Personnel: *Tempe*: Jim Denley (alto saxophone and bass flute) and Magda Mayas (clavinet)