

the WholeNote

VOLUME 20 NO 3
MAY 2023

Valse Sinistre

Billy Drummond and Freedom of Ideas
Cellar Music CM111022 (cellarlive.com)



Elegant, dynamic and innovative jazz drummer Billy Drummond has just released a stunner of a recording that not only embraces his seminal influences but illuminates

his musical path moving ahead – replete with nods to iconic figures in Drummond's musical journey, including the title track, composed by the luminous Carla Bley, with whom Drummond performed. Drummond's accomplished Freedom of Ideas quartet includes Micah Thomas on piano, Dezron Douglas on bass and Dayna Stephens on Saxophones.

The opening salvo is *Little Melonae*, where the incomparable Jackie McLean's bop legacy is elegantly celebrated with a face-melting, rapid fire arrangement. Douglas' commanding solo is rife with pump-tude, and the relentless rhythmic force is propelled by Drummond, who phases us into a new dimension, creating an incendiary background for this incandescent celebration of a much missed grand master.

The title track is an intriguing contribution to the program. Drummond's close musical relationship with Bley is apparent here, invoking images of an exotic Eastern European circus, with madness and excitement in equal portions. Also of note are Grachan Moncur's *Frankenstein* – where Drummond explores musical cognitive Dissonance, while Stephens' rapier-like Soprano breaks through all imagined boundaries – free and exuberant. Drummond's compelling composition, *Changes for Trane & Monk* is an invigorating joy. Other stellar tracks include the diaphanous *Clara's Room*, written by the eminent pianist, Frank Kimbrough. A true standout is Drummond's arrangement of the Tony Williams classic *Laura*, where, although he is clearly channeling Williams' creative spirit, Drummond makes his own mark on an exquisite tune.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

MUSIC
live and
STORIES
profiles
and inte
RECORD
and List

Orchestra

e.com