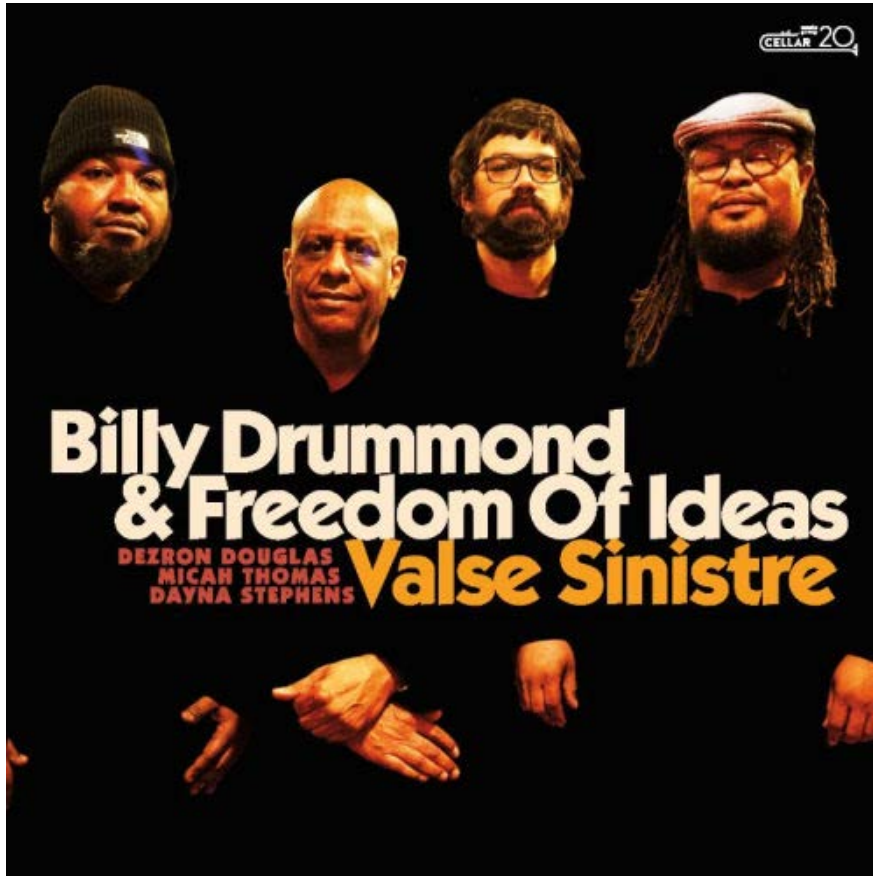


JazzWax

Marc Myers writes daily on jazz legends and legendary jazz recordings



Billy Drummond—*Valse Sinistre* (Cellar Music). Drummer Billy Drummond has long been inspired by the edge and push of alto saxophonist Jackie McLean. So opening his new album with McLean's *Little Melonae* makes perfect sense. The musicians in Billy's group, Freedom of Ideas, are Dayna Stephens on saxophones, Micah Thomas on piano and Dezron Douglas on bass. What I enjoy most about this album is how the musicians go deep and create long shadows with bursts of light. Each artist in the quartet contributes extraordinary musicianship, and the approach on each song is conversational and defies convention. The thread running through all of the songs are Billy's drums, which coax, combat and challenge the other musicians as they let their personalities stand out.