

THE MUFFS
Whoop De Doo

Burger BR700 (CD). 2014. Kim Shattuck, prod., eng.; Steve Holroyd, eng. AAD? TT: 37:13

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

SONICS ★★★★★

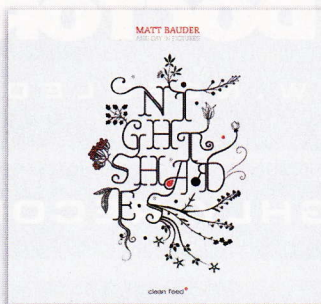
Among band names that are semi-salacious plays on words, The Muffs ranks up there with punk legends the Sex Pistols and the Vibrators and maybe even—for those of you with really long memories of really bad hard rock—Mom's Apple Pie. That the veteran (since 1991) L.A. combo makes a righteously loud racket and is fronted by feisty Kim Shattuck only makes the sonics/sex double entendre all the better—it's pretty hard to accuse a group of sexism when there's a gal running the show. (Last year, Shattuck also briefly replaced bassist Kim Deal in the Pixies.) And for their first proper studio album in ten years, the three Muffs have served up a dozen hook-filled nuggets with the same kind of vim'n'vigor that marked their teenaged selves' efforts.

The tropes are endearingly familiar, as befits an old musical friend: hi-nrg buzz-saw pop ("Weird Boy Next Door" and "Take a Take a Me," wherein Shattuck snarls and howls in her best two-packs-a-day rasp to out-Love Courtney Love); sassy, thrashy, anthemic punk ("Where Did I Go Wrong," "Because You're Sad"); British-Invasion-meets-Nuggets garage ("Paint by Numbers" and album standout "Like You Don't See Me," à la the Who and Kinks). Sonics-wise, *Whoop De Doo* probably won't impress audiophiles: its dynamic range is decidedly limited, with emphasis on the mids and Shattuck's voice placed well in the foreground. Still, the energy on display is infectious, giving this trio a larger-than-life oomph.

To quote a great philosopher, there's a whole lotta shakin' goin' on here.

—Fred Mills

JAZZ



MATT BAUDER AND DAY IN PICTURES
Nightshades

Matt Bauder, tenor saxophone; Nate Wooley, trumpet; Kris Davis, piano; Jason Ajemian, double bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums
Clean Feed CF289 (CD). 2014. Matt Bauder, prod.; John Davis, eng. DDD. TT: 56:09

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

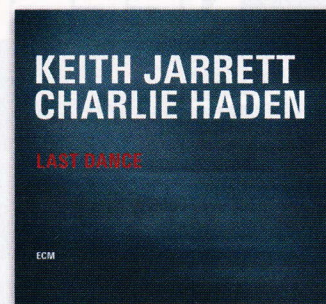
SONICS ★★★★★

Saxophonist Matt Bauder, a former student of Anthony Braxton, is known for his experimental trio work with Memorize the Sky and his sideman appearances with Harris Eisenstadt, Taylor Ho Bynum, and others. In 2010 he turned to an angular and swinging species of acoustic jazz for *Day in Pictures*, and the album's title became his band's name. The follow-up, *Nightshades*, features Bauder exclusively on tenor (he doubled on clarinet on the first disc), and pianist Kris Davis in place of Angelica Sanchez.

Bauder has a husky, inviting tenor sound and a penchant for startling, exaggerated growls in the midst of fluid improvising. His opening cadenza on the gorgeous ballad "Starr Wykoff" is stirring and full of surprise. He and trumpeter Nate Wooley reveal an effortless hookup, not least in the title track, which omits piano and delves deep into a New Orleans second-line rhythm. Bassist Jason Ajemian and drummer Tomas Fujiwara are also brilliantly paired, locking in on the spooky, Horace Silver-ish "Octavia Minor," the quasi-boogaloo avant-garde invention "Rule of Thirds," and the soaring rubato odyssey "August and Counting."

If there's a secret weapon here, it's Kris Davis, who shines in this markedly tonal setting—not her usual bag. Her richly colored chords and formidable solo chops bring it all together, although she could be more present in the mix. Otherwise, the sound is crisp and full: Fujiwara's drums and Wooley's idiosyncratic brass timbres are particularly well served.

—David R. Adler



KEITH JARRETT/CHARLIE HADEN
Last Dance

Keith Jarrett, piano; Charlie Haden, bass
ECM 2399 (CD). 2014. Manfred Eicher, prod.; Martin Pearson, eng. DDD. TT: 76:01

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

SONICS ★★★★★

In 2010, Keith Jarrett and Charlie Haden released *Jasmine*, recorded in Jarrett's home studio in March 2007. It was Jarrett's first project in 30 years that was neither solo nor trio. *Last Dance* contains additional music from those sessions. It sustains the rapt atmosphere, the inspiration within quietude, that made *Jasmine* addictive.

Though Jarrett uses standard ballads as starting points, his interpretations are definitive. They are the last word. His revelation of a given song's emotional essence is typically the deepest available anywhere. "It Might As Well Be Spring" is marked out with profound care, uncovering unsuspected relationships among poignance, wistfulness, and yearning. "Goodbye" is darker. It is one of the saddest songs ever written. Jarrett's timing is exact, as he modulates between the existential abyss of final farewell and resignation.

Haden's sense of the moment is also trustworthy. He is reductive and extraordinarily patient. He will select the defining note of a chord, then hang it in the air like a prophesy.

Jarrett takes no bold liberties with these songs, but he lingers over them. "It Might As Well Be Spring" is almost 12 minutes. "My Old Flame," "Round Midnight," and "Where Can I Go Without You" are about 10 each. Jarrett ponders them, spilling into adjacent corollaries, flowing into digressions close at hand. Each return to the melody is a new shade of meaning, a fresh nuance of feeling. "My Ship" is unusually slow as it clings to its hope.

The sound would be less dry and sterile if Jarrett had recorded in a world-class studio. But he probably needed to stay home to make a record this serene. —Thomas Conrad