



FULVIO SIGURTÀ
SPL

Fulvio Sigurtà, trumpet, flugelhorn, laptop, postproduction; Andrea Lombardini, basses, live signal processing; Alessandro Paternesì, drums; with Ross Stanley, Hammond B-3; Michele Rabbia, percussion, electronics, laptop
CamJazz CAMJ 7861-2 (CD). 2013. Ermanno Basso, prod.; Stefano Amerio, eng. DDD. TT: 48:33

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
SONICS ★★★★★

The strongest jazz scene outside the US is Italy, and the single best place to discover that scene is CamJazz. The label's sound, often by the great engineer Stefano Amerio, is exceptional. Their CD booklets are beautiful. They record breakthrough artists like Fulvio Sigurtà. *SPL* pursues a common goal—the blending of jazz and rock and electronics—with uncommon creativity and attention to detail.

Sigurtà is a trumpet player with a pure, brilliant tone whose long lines move off their melodic centers carefully, almost reluctantly, in response to the moment's emotion. Then they erupt in flames. Even with all the laptops and processors here, musical space is not crowded. The electronic washes and decays do not intrude on Sigurtà's instrument, but rather place it within sonic landscapes that extend to distant horizons. "Polly Come Home," by Gene Clark of the Byrds, is the only cover. It undergoes a typical Sigurtà arc, opening in a dark, solemn whisper, exploding in a crescendo powered by Alessandro Paternesì's drums, subsiding back into the achingly slow call of the melody. "Like a Bird, Like Your Cage" is a vast six-minute trumpet design of exhilarating free lyricism.

Sigurtà's boldness with electronics and his huge dynamic swings are reminiscent of another great European trumpet player, Nils Petter Molvær. But Sigurtà is more patient, more willing to let gestures recur into mantras. "Floating Mosfet" is essentially three trumpet notes, burned into the electronic mist. —Thomas Conrad



THIEFS
Thiefs

Guillermo E. Brown, drums, vocals, electronics; Christophe Panzani, saxophone, electronics; Keith Witty, bass, electronics; with Shoko Nagai, keyboards; Vincent Peirani, accordion
Melanine Harmonique MH004 (CD). 2013. Thiefs, prods., engs., mix; Jake Aron, mix. DDD. TT: 47:19

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
SONICS ★★★★★

Bassist Keith Witty and drummer Guillermo Brown, the American members of this boundary-breaking trio, have proven authoritative in the world of acoustic avant-jazz (with David S. Ware, Jonathan Finlayson, more). Joining Paris-based saxophonist Christophe Panzani and recording as Thiefs, they use electronics and samples in a grooving, song-oriented way, laying down six instrumentals and four impossibly haunting vocal numbers.

Panzani swims in deep jazz waters as a soloist—Mark Turner's influence is apparent, especially in the closing, dub-influenced "Play Me At Night." But he also employs heavy distorting effects and layering, a sonic signature of this grainy, improvisation-fueled pop.

Opening with the fat electronic dance beat of "Doute/s," the album later arrives at something more acoustic and jazz-like with "Sans Titre (Huile Sur Toile)," featuring guest Vincent Peirani on accordion and Panzani on both tenor and soprano. The patchwork of drum set and electronic percussion makes one want to learn more about Brown's approach. However it's made, the music sounds great: full of dirt, but also of clarity and rhythmic assurance, and very much a world of its own.

The instrumentals, including "All Day" and "The Actual Neef," have a strong appeal, but it's the vocal tracks—"Daybaby," "Olive Island," "The World Without Us," and "TWWU (postlude)"—that seep into the brain. Brown's singing, calm but full of yearning, shores up some of the eeriest melodies to come along in a while. —David R. Adler

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