Jazz Junction Albums of The Month-January 2013

By Rick Erben

BILL WARFIELD and the NEW YORK JAZZ OCTET
A WINDOW THAT SHOWS ME THE MOON – Planet Arts

Another thrilling example of jazz in the now is this new release from trumpeter, composer and arranger Bill Warfield. A graduate of the Manhattan School of Music where he won the Maynard Ferguson Scholarship, Warfield has been a member of the New York jazz scene for several decades and is Associate Professor of Music at Lehigh University. He’s worked in diverse musical settings, from Ornette Coleman to Mel Torme, has been involved with arranging and orchestrations for Lester Bowie and Eddie Palmieri among others, and his big band has recorded with Dave Stryker and Gene Ludwig as well. Warfield's latest features arranged intros and solos from varied members of the octet with plenty of blowing room for the eminently seasoned musicians comprising the New York Jazz Octet.

The enigmatically titled “Your Reputation Is None of Your Business” features an angular shuffle as starting point for statements from the tenorist Don Braden, Warfield's trumpet, guitarist Vic Juris and pianist Kenny Werner (I said it was a seasoned group). Especially nice upon this recording is the opportunity to hear Don Braden, whose warm-toned tenor notes are a pleasure. Alto and soprano saxist Dave Rieckenberg gets his licks in on “Subconscious Lee”; and the title track is a pensive melody that breaks into an easy gait and upon which Sam Burtis's trombone joins the other horn soloists.

“Triple Threat” has a nicely voiced intro and broiling drum beat from Scott Neumann with fine statements from Burtis, Warfield, Braden and Werner. Then “The Revs” brings us to the corner of Bluesy and Funk in Laid Back city. Warfield's “Aubade” is a breezy line with brisk soloing; and his “The Bumpkin Grows A Pumpkin” is reminiscent of “Bye Bye Blackbird” in a casually swinging mode.

The album closes with the entrancing “Kill Flo”, with Juris's guitar, Gene Perla's bass and Neumann's beat setting up a relaxed groove amidst which the horns state the finely arranged theme and the soloists go out upon this exotic rhythm to tell their tales with cascading notes and compelling statements. All in all the octet affords the listener a remarkable combination of arrangements and extensive soloing that again offers clear evidence that jazz music is evolving with unabashed virility, offering compelling rewards for the listener.

Bill Warfield, trumpet, flugelhorn, arranger; Don Braden, tenor saxophone; Dave Riekenberg, alto and soprano saxophones; Sam Burtis, trombone; Kenny Werner, piano; Vic Juris, guitar; Gene Perla, bass; Scott Neumann, drums

Your Reputation Is None of Your Business; Subconscious Lee; A Window That Shows Me The Moon; Triple Threat; The Revs; Aubade; The Bumpkin Grows A Pumpkin; Kill Flo