

new release

file under: **JAZZ** RELEASE DATE: March 4, 2014



JANICE BORLA GROUP "Promises to Burn"



Artist: JANICE BORLA GROUP

Title: PROMISES TO BURN

Label: TALL GRASS RECORDS

Catalog Number: TG 8281

UPC Code: 8-88295-03551-4

Release Date: March 4, 2014

Track listing, track times and composer:

Funkallero 6:34 (Bill Evans/Karen Gallinger)

Midnight Voyage 6:55 (Joey Calderazzo/Christine Helferich)

Some Other Time 7:53 (Leonard Bernstein/Betty Comden/Adolph Green)

Lennie's Pennies 6:08 (Lennie Tristano)

Silver Hollow 6:13 (Jack DeJohnette)

You Don't Know What Love Is 6:43 (Don Raye/Gene DePaul)

RunFerYerLife 7:11 (Bob Mintzer)

If You Could See Me Now 5:16 (Tadd Dameron/Carl Sigman)

Total length 52:53

All musical arrangements by Janice Borla

Producer: Janice Borla **Associate producer:** Jack Mouse

Cover Design/Layout: Bill Sosin

Cover Photo: Bill Sosin, from "New Works," used by agreement

Musicians:

Janice Borla-voice, **Scott Robinson**-tenor saxophone/flute

Art Davis-trumpet/flugelhorn, **John McLean**-guitars

Bob Bowman-bass, **Jack Mouse**-drums

Home Market: Chicago

Recorded by: Steve Yates at Tall Grass Studio, Naperville, IL, September 26, 27, & 28, 2013

Mixed & mastered by: Steve Yates at Steve Yates Recording, Morton Grove, IL

There is often a certain element of debate as to what makes someone a jazz singer. But in the case of the outstanding vocalist Janice Borla, that debate will never take place. From the opening bars of her remarkable new album **Promises to Burn** on Tall Grass Records, there is no doubt that this is jazz at its purest. Eschewing the vocalist with accompaniment approach for that of a fully integrated instrumental ensemble, Janice takes on eight challenging compositions, many of which would be unexpected material for a vocalist. To accomplish this successfully, a clear vision of structure is demanded, and Janice's formidable arranging artistry is fully up to the task.

Composers like Lennie Tristano, Jack DeJohnette, Bob Mintzer and Bill Evans are generally not names that show up on vocalists' albums, but they're all represented here alongside Leonard Bernstein, Tadd Dameron and Joey Calderazzo. Janice has also assembled an exceptional ensemble of musicians for the project, all of whom play in the conversational style that is ideal for telling the stories that are told in this extraordinary album. The rapport of all of the musicians is exemplary. Art Davis on trumpet and flugelhorn, bassist Bob Bowman and Janice's husband and drummer Jack Mouse have all performed on Janice's three previous albums. Guitarist John McLean was on one, and Scott Robinson on tenor sax and flute is recording with Janice for the first time here. The arrangements provide a broad palette of textures and contexts for interaction – harmonized, contrapuntal and improvisational, and with plenty of room for blowing.

Janice's beautiful, rounded voice and flawless intonation is often in scat mode here, with her wordless lyrics shaped to sound more like a horn. And like an instrumentalist, when she sings written lyrics, she does so in a manner that states the melodic line to create the framework from which the solo will emerge.

Consummate musicianship, astonishing interplay, and a sense of joyfully unfettered creativity that permeates this entire album make **Promises to Burn** a truly uplifting experience.

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ARTIST WEBSITE: www.janiceborla.com

Jack Mouse plays Yamaha drums, Sabian cymbals, Aquarian drum heads and Vic Firth sticks and mallets exclusively. Scott Robinson plays Vandoren reeds and mouthpieces.



Jazz Promo Services

Jack Mouse & Scott Robinson
"Snakeheads & Ladybugs"
(Tall Grass TG 8282)
Street Date January 6, 2015

Jack Mouse, drums,
Scott Robinson, tenor and c-melody saxophones, cornet and e-flat clarinet

Snakeheads & Ladybugs is a brilliant album of improvised duets by two master musicians – drummer Jack Mouse and multi-instrumentalist Scott Robinson; their first album for Tall Grass Records. At first listen, this might seem like an unexpected departure for these two gentlemen, but it is actually an idea that has been brewing between them since they first began playing together in the 1980s. Their fans and the entire jazz audience will undoubtedly feel that it was worth the wait.

The musical concept of the horn and drums duo in the contemporary jazz environment can best be traced back to the euphoric duets between the magnificent John Coltrane and his alter ego Elvin Jones; and later cemented in jazz history with his landmark album with Rashied Ali, *Interstellar Space*.

Although the context has been in place since the earliest days of jazz, its modern incarnation has been most prevalently associated with the avant-garde or free jazz movements. While avant-garde is a questionable term for a style that has been in full bloom for more than half a century, the concept of *free* playing demands some clarification. Duke Ellington stated "*Jazz is Freedom; the freedom to play something that's never been played.*" And Sam Rivers, one of the monumental giants who is often heavily associated with free jazz echoed the sentiments of many of the music's greatest creators when he often said "*The only way to be truly free is to have complete mastery of your instrument so you are free to play anything you want to play.*"

That brings us directly to the heart of the matter with Jack and Scott, and perfectly captures the essence of this extraordinary recording.

This is not simply a "play the head, improvise, take the head out" recording. In fact, there are no written compositions, but rather a virtually non-stop flow of improvisational communication through twelve distinct phases of mutual exploration - all spontaneously conceived by the two musicians, calling upon their clear and focused knowledge of each other, combined with their consummate mastery and fluency in musical expression.

Captivating, powerful, compelling, visceral and inspired are all adjectives that are fully on point to describe this music. And while the format and instrumentation might initially seem limiting, the scope and depth of their imaginations, combined with their radiant musicality produce a limitless and unbound, even cinematic landscape that would not be contained even if there were twice as many pieces on the album.

Jack's drums, tuned for a full palette of musical tones – much in the way Max Roach, Joe Chambers and Shelly Manne prepared their instruments – enables him to approach the drums like a pianist or vibraphonist. On *Bolero Incognito*, his floor tom produces a bass counterpoint to his traps that perfectly envelops Scott's feinting and jabbing tenor. Sometimes Jack produces a hand drum patter, as on the opening of *Orcan*, dramatically setting up a stirring

environment for Scott's audacious use of dynamics that simply explodes from the speakers and grabs the listener by the hair as it builds to its vigorous climax.

In the manner of the aforementioned Trane duos, Jack is not an accompanist, but an equal partner in the creative canvas, in the same manner as a violin/flute duo would be, or in the amazing collaborations between Art Tatum and Lionel Hampton. On *Backward Glance*, the remarkable Benny Goodman/Gene Krupa duets on the iconic *Sing, Sing, Sing* were a point of inspiration. This equality of position is really made clear from the opening track *Flutter* as the tenor and drums literally flutter around each other like two muscular butterflies in a virile pas de deux.

Sometimes the drums take the lead, as in the highly evocative *Two Minute March*. Scott's tenor puts the punctuation on Jack's rolls, following his lead, coloring and emphasizing. Further proving that length does not necessarily dictate content, the aptly-titled *Scorch*, with rapid-fire tenor blazing alongside sizzling drums squeezes at least six minutes of riveting ideas into its two-minute duration. *Dual Duel* should not be thought of as a boxing match between the two musicians, but rather as two individuals standing back to back ready to take on all comers. Here, the entire history of the modern tenor – Rollins, Shorter, Henderson, Rivers, and even Gonsalves – is evoked in Robinson's deliciously angular swing passages with Mouse driving alongside, underneath and sometimes through the mix.

While the full breadth of sonics is drawn from the tenor on all the above tracks, Scott brings other instruments to the music for their own unique aural qualities. His Eb clarinet playing on *Fandango*, fueled by Jack's fractured rhumba beat, is an evolving flow of long tones – luminous and deeply beautiful – with a haunting quality that calls to mind Ornette's exquisite ballad classic, *Sadness*.

Cornet adds a special flavor to *Funk Infestation* – stoked by a nicely grooved repeated rhythmic pattern setting the tone for Scott's soaring sound; smearing, punching and tearing through in the Don Cherry/Lester Bowie vernacular. The cornet is again at play on *Shapeshifter*, but this time in a splendid call-and-response with his C-melody sax – lyrical, full-bodied and warm – both unaccompanied and braced by Jack's rolling tom-toms and highly original brushwork.

The C-melody combines the body of the tenor with the lustrous dexterity of the alto – and should be a more popular instrument in the jazz idiom. Scott demonstrates why in *Snakeheads & Ladybugs*, starting with his vivid coloring on Mouse's steady march before melding into longer statements firmly rooted in the harmonic and melodic tradition of jazz, but freely inventive in the inspired interplay with Jack's highly musical drumming. The extraordinary album closes with *FreeBop*, a very contemporary take on the hard bop tradition. Sizzling cymbals in drive time fuel the surging sax, swinging freely in that ethereal atmosphere that Sam Rivers owned, exploring that special zone of unrestricted creativity without ever losing the essence of the Ellington mantra *it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing* - which could be the subtitle of this incandescent album.

This duo concept had a brief manifestation as the closing track on *Range of Motion*, Jack's excellent 2013 album on Origin Records. But *Snakeheads & Ladybugs* is the stunning full-blown realization of an adventurous journey staked out 30 years ago, and produced in exemplary fashion - with the assistance of the enchanting vocalist Janice Borla (whose earlier Tall Grass album *Promises to Burn* was graced by both men) – as both a culmination and a launching point for wondrous music to come.

For more information visit www.jackmouse.com

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