

In The Ivory
Matt Ulery (Greenleaf Music)
 by George Kanzler

Back in the middle of the 20th Century, jazz musicians like John Lewis and J.J. Johnson partnered with classical ones like Gunther Schuller to create what they called Third Stream, a hybrid of their musical genres. Jazz artists like Wynton Marsalis and Keith Jarrett have recorded works from the classical repertoire and some, like Mel Powell and André Previn, have worked as jazz pianists and classical composers or conductors. Chicago bassist Matt Ulery seems to be moving toward his own Third Stream. While his group Loom contains a jazz instrumentation, his use of members of the contemporary classical chamber group Eighth Blackbird makes his 2012 album *By A Little Light* and this new one move toward a contemporary classical approach, with serialist, minimalist, Balkan and occasional jazz elements.

Much of *In The Ivory* is dominated by Ulery's writing for strings (a quartet plus his bass) with or without alto flute and clarinet. And 5 of the 14 tracks spread across two CDs feature female vocals in the contemporary art song, rather than pop or jazz, tradition. His lyrics read like imagist or expressionist poems. There is a jazz-like trio (piano, bass, drums)



"Only three musicians, able to silence two thousand people"
 – *Jazzflits about Oliver's Cinema at North Sea Jazz Festival*

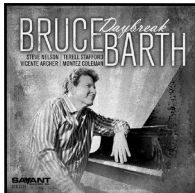
Well, there aren't 2000 seats at the Blue Note, but come be happily enchanted by the trumpet magic of Eric Vloeimans, with accordeonist Tuur Florizoone and cellist Jörg Brinkmann, one night only.

Monday October 20th, 8 and 10:30 pm
www.bluenotejazz.com

The US tour is supported by the Netherland-America Foundation and the Foundation for the Performing Arts, the Hague

embedded in some of the ensemble tracks and pianist Rob Clearfield – who more often works in concert with the strings and winds – has a couple of genuine jazz solo improvisations, although the most purely jazz piece is "Sweet Bitter", featuring the improvisations of violinist Zach Brock with the rhythm trio. But if Ulery continues in the dominant direction of this album, future ones from him should not be filed under Jazz.

For more information, visit greenleafmusic.com. This project is at Littlefield Oct. 14th. See Calendar.



Daybreak
Bruce Barth (Savant)
Somewhere in Paradise
Marianne Matheny-Katz (Jazzway)
Cocktail Hour (feat. Terell Stafford)
Chamberlain Brass (s/r)
 by Donald Elfman

Terell Stafford has made the transition from talented newcomer to brilliant trumpet veteran, whose talents serve both his playing and role as an educator. Here, he works as a perfect sideman in three different settings.

Pianist Bruce Barth and Stafford have worked with each other often. Stafford's incisive and understanding trumpeting complements the expressive and thoughtful approach Barth takes to writing and improvising. The tunes on *Daybreak* are mostly the leader's originals and display why he's a favorite among musicians. "Tuesday's Blues" is a beautifully stretched version of the standard form and switches grooves without losing its primal feeling. Stafford is bold and confidently on the mark, even as he drifts behind the beat and then moves to an outright swagger, concluding with a beautiful 'I've said what I came to say' climax. Vibraphonist Steve Nelson follows with a simpler, yet no less potent statement, then Barth takes a ride in a jazz and blues pocket with technical prowess and some solid gut feeling. The tune ends simply and quietly, a lovely surprise. Barth wails in a kind of combination of AfroCuban and swing on "Vámonos" with Stafford further emboldened by the demanding tempo and harmony. And an absolute quiet delight is Barth and Stafford's duo take on Keith Jarrett's "So Tender", gorgeous and slow, with Stafford lyrically moving.

A much more subdued role for Stafford is on *Somewhere in Paradise* by vocalist Marianne Matheny-Katz. He gracefully works in the horn section and adds special instrumental color. Matheny-Katz is a singer with a fine voice, natural phrasing and fondness for smart new arrangements. In vibraphonist Warren Wolf's chart of Miles Davis' "All Blues", done at a fiery tempo, she glides across and through the Oscar Brown Jr. lyrics, Stafford plays hotly but sweetly and both are propelled by some percussive vibes work. A real find here is the version of Kenny Dorham's "Fair Weather". Matheny-Katz heard a rare recording of the composer singing this gentle, loving ballad; her version is radiantly gorgeous with an impassioned reading of the lyrics and emotionally charged but delicate trumpet work. Matheny-Katz offers an impressive take on the jazz and popular repertoire with a taste for the out-of-the-ordinary and the great tunes of jazz giants. She makes a gentle bossa nova out of Bill Evans' "You Must Believe In Spring"; a heartfelt waltz of Monk's "Ugly Beauty" (here called "Still I Dream" with lyrics by Mike Ferro and beautiful solos by bassist Eric Wheeler and pianist Vince Evans); and a more insistent waltz of McCoy Tyner's "You Taught My Heart to Sing" (lyrics by Sammy Cahn) with trumpet obbligato by Stafford.

Perhaps the most unusual but no less convincing set of Stafford performances in this threesome is his

work with the Chamberlain Brass Quintet on *Cocktail Hour*. This group bills itself as "New York's premier ceremony and cocktail hour brass group" and this recording feels like a sampling of the music they play in a jazz vein. But these folks are top-notch players and, in short tunes, dig into some nicely varied selections. They swing quietly but in the spirit of each tune and, on seven, they get to play with the estimable Stafford. For starters, we get "Four". The tuba plays the intro and quickly establishes a tempo and a bassline. Stafford rhapsodizes a bit before he and the rest of the players play that familiar melody. The quintet pulses out a hip underscoring for an athletic and vibrant trumpet solo. Back to the theme and the whole thing's nicely cooked in just under three minutes. Another trumpet feature follows – Kenny Dorham's "Blue Bossa". The band blows some spirited dance-like fanfares as an introduction for the melody statement and an atmospheric solo that's got passion, shape and, yes, economy. Stafford plays his special part in five more tunes, including music by Stevie Wonder ("Ribbon in the Sky"), Bill Lee ("Mo' Better Blues") and Brazilian masters Luiz Bonfá ("Black Orpheus") and Jobim ("The Girl From Ipanema"). He's out front but ably assisted by these brass players. And listen to the tuba do those famous opening notes of Miles' "So What" – makes it feel like a Gil Evans arrangement. Stafford knows this music intimately and his feature here makes it both old and new.

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com, jazzway6004.org and thechamberlainbrass.com. Terell Stafford is at Dizzy's Club Oct. 1st with David Chesky and Oct. 2nd with Matt Wilson, Saint Peter's Oct. 12th, Blue Note Oct. 21st-26th with Dizzy Gillespie All-Stars and Village Vanguard Mondays with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. See Calendar and Regular Engagements.

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