



DAVE KANE'S RABBIT PROJECT

THE EYE OF THE DUCK

Biff; The Gorman; Hum; Sad Song; The Eye of the Duck; Shut Up Sit Down; The Only Way; Slip; Loulou's Theme (48.30)

Simon Kaylor (ts); Simon Beddoe (t); Matthew Bourne (elp); Dave Kane (b); Joost Hendricks (d). 31 October 2008.

(Edition EDN1012 CD)

This is Dave Kane's debut as leader, featuring his Leeds-based quintet in a programme entirely of Kane originals. There's tight ensemble playing, shifting time signatures, and the usual Matt Bourne-inspired craziness – Bourne and Kane have already appeared on the same label on the Bourne-Davis-Kane CD "Lost Something". For instance, on the opening *Biff* there's a hilarious Fender Rhodes "break" in which Bourne gives a passable imitation of a tone-row, spiced up with amusing timbres. Rarely has the Rhodes been played so individually, idiosyncratically and creatively.

However, the plangent, Moorish *The Gorman* is a totally serious, indeed moving, piece of work, with excellent counterpoint between Simon Kaylor on tenor and Simon Beddoe on trumpet. *Sad Song* is an eerie duet between Bourne and Kane, while *Shut Up Sit Down* is a complex, churning composition to a heavy rock rhythm, with Aylerish tenor from Kaylor. The album concludes with *Loulou's Theme*, a piece of solo dexterity by the bassist. This group stakes a claim that the most interesting jazz in Britain does not necessarily occur in the capital. This release shows that all members of the quintet are players whose work is worth looking out for, and involves something genuinely new and creative.

Andy Hamilton

NANCY KELLY

WELL, ALRIGHT!

But Not For Me; I Wish You Love; Who Can I Turn To; I Only Have Eyes For You; I Love Being Here With You; Let's Fall In Love; For Once In My Life; Alright, Okay, You Win; Since I Fell For You; Let It Be Me; Fine And Mellow (58.42)

Kelly (v); Houston Person (ts); Randy Halberstadt (p); Jeff Johnson (b); Gary Hobbs (d). Issaquah, Washington, 22-23 November 2008.

(Saying It With Jazz SIWJ 0309)

In my October 2006 review of Kelly's previous CD, "Born To Swing", I remarked on her superiority to the hordes of wannabe jazz singers around today, adding a comment to the effect that the title was a highly appropriate summation. Much the same might be said of this latest offering, the title this time indicating my complete approval. Recorded live at Bake's Place, which is located in Issaquah, a small town about a half-hour's drive east of Seattle, this CD captures this very good singer in fine form. Her core trio this time is different, and just as good, while Person again makes the most of his guest appearance.

Kelly's repertoire here includes some familiar songs from the musical theatre and the 1960s pop scene as well as some standards from the blues. Throughout, Kelly's presentation is electric and she bites into the lyrics with dramatic effect. Everything swings regardless of tempo and thanks to her skilful phrasing even the familiar songs sound fresh. The instrumental backing is excellent and there are some very good solos from Halberstadt and Person. Indeed, the latter's presence is enough to add, as it were, an extra star. The tenor saxophonist digs into his material, whether soloing or backing, with great verve and he and the singer display a special rapport with the blues songs.

Dynamic and exhilarating, this CD shows Kelly to be an exceptionally good singer, mature yet fresh, earthy yet sophisticated. The jazz-singing shelves of your local record store are especially full these days and as suggested above it must be said that many of the artists thereon do

not really merit their presence. Kelly, I am happy to assure you, is the real thing. Very warmly recommended.

Bruce Crowther



WYNTON KELLY

UNDILUTED /IT'S ALL RIGHT!

(3) *Not A Tear; (2) Portrait of Jennie; (1) Swinging 'Til The Girls Come Home; My Ship; Out Front; Never; Blues On Purpose; If You Could See Me Now; Six-Eight; (3) It's All Right; South Seas; Kelly Roll; Moving Up; On The Trail; Escapade; One For Joan; (4) The Fall Of Love; (1) Bobo** (75.39)

(1) Kelly (p); Paul Chambers (b); Jimmy Cobb (d). *Add Rudy Stevenson (f); Willie Bobo (pc). Englewood Cliffs, NJ, February 5, 1965. (2) as (1). NYC, March 1964. (3) as (2) add Kenny Burrell (g) and Candido Camero (cga). (4) as (2) add Tommy Rey Steel Band – Norman Symonds, Tommy Reynolds, Malcolm Evans, Ralph Cowley, Hiram Delgado (steel pc); Donald Usher (maraccas).

(LonehillJazz LHJ 10362)

If, like me, you consider Kelly one of jazz piano's unambiguously major voices (his death when not yet 40 was an enormous loss), then you'll not only hail this reissue but consider it a truly important one. "It's All Right" has appeared on CD, in Verve's Elite (limited) Edition enterprise, but like all its stablemates it sold out years ago. So its reincarnation is welcome enough; even more so is the CD-debut of "Undiluted". I never did understand why Verve didn't reissue this splendid album, especially when it instead recycled some ephemeral pap in its late and unlamented By Request series, and it's a sad indication of the times that it's been left to a Spanish label to effect its reappearance.

One more minor gripe, then onto unalloyed celebration: the somewhat fragmented configuration outlined above seems gratuitous and faintly vandalistic. Sleeve annotator Lawrence Steel explains that

Lonehill wanted to showcase the trio tracks first before moving onto larger personnel; fair enough, but why begin with two tracks from "It's All Right" (one of which is a quintet piece anyway) and then mainline on "Undiluted"? Ah well, never mind: those two tracks are, successively, funkily sprightly and lyrically cogent, and then we hit one of the juiciest peaches on offer, Oscar Pettiford's *Swinging 'Til The Girls Come Home*. Unsurprisingly, that great bassist's composition inspires a wonderful solo from the equally great Paul Chambers, while Kelly's work is the epitome of feline grace and subtle harmonic mastery, and of course the whole thing swings irresistibly. *Blues On Purpose* and the closing *Six-Eight* are similarly satisfying essays in deceptive élan and elegant high-octane power, while elsewhere *My Ship* and *If You Could See Me Now* prompt, amongst other things, the no-doubt heretical thought that Kelly would have been just as (if differently) effective on the five "Kind of Blue" tracks entrusted to Bill Evans as he was on the utterly flawless *Freddie Freeloader*.

"It's All Right" is less of a purist's album, perhaps, but none the worse for that. The steelband on *The Fall Of Love* works a treat, the title track smokes in a way that composer Curtis Mayfield would surely have applauded, and *On The Trail* (a favourite Kelly piece) is as delightful as edifying. *South Seas* and *Not A Tear* are Rudy Stevenson compositions – attractively melodic and punchy – and he gets to display his instrumental skills on *Bobo*, which kicked off the original vinyl issue of "Undiluted". It's a pretty, engaging closer, but I still think it worked better as an aperitif.

I consider this an essential purchase not just for piano buffs but any serious student of post-bop jazz. After Peterson, Kelly is my favourite (or at least most-listened to) pianist, and I don't think that's just a matter of personal taste. The lithe West Indian had everything – just think of his big band work with Dizzy Gillespie as well as all his more renowned combo performances – and had he sur-