

rhythm in 9/4, "Meditation On Two Chords" does indeed alternate between two chords (while being in 6/4), "Suheir" is a one-chord vamp and "Information Kiss" features a particularly complex but infectious rhythm. Tenor-saxophonist Jimmy Greene is a very strong asset to this set, hinting in spots at the ideas of John Coltrane and the sounds of Ernie Watts and Pharoah Sanders while basically being in his own post-Bop style. He also contributes some flute to "The Five Elements & The Natural Trinity" and a little bit of soprano on "Suheir." Bassist Omer Avital and drummer Marlon Brownen follow Lindner closely and never seem to miss a cue. The closing number, "Take It To Church," is similar to "Please Send Me Someone To Love" and must have sent the audience home in a happy mood. *Live UK* will grow on you.

Scott Yanow

1) DON BRADEN, THE NEW HANG, HIGHNOTE 7117.

Through the Fire / Without a Song / When I Fall in Love / The Traveler / No Complaints / Wish List / Release / Mother's Wish / Code Blue / The New Hang. 64:42.

Braden, ts; Conrad Herwig, tbn (1,2,4,5,7,9,10); Kyle Koehler, org; Cecil Brooks III, d. 11/7/03, Paramus, NJ.

2) VINSON VALEGA, CONSILIENCE, CONSILIENCE 1101.

Jiminy Cricket Goes to the Go-Go Dance / The Best Thing for You Would Be Me / You're Nearer / Stumble Monk / Tide Pools / Long & Wrong / Blood Count / Black Fire / New Haven / Fuggedaboutit / Jiminy Cricket Goes to the Go-Go Dance (reprise) / You Must Believe in Spring / Secret Love. 68:51.

Valega, d; Anton Denner, as, ss, flt; Gary Wang, b. 8/21-22/02, NYC, NY.

3) MATTHEW FRIES/GREGORY RYAN/ VINSON VALEGA, LIVE@147, JUSTJAZZ 121.

The Sermon / Poinciana / I Just Wanted to See What You Look Like / Hatteras Reflection / Dance Cadaverous / Without a Song / Send One Your Love / Polkadots and Moonbeams. 65:01.

Fries, p; Ryan, b; Valega, d. 1998-1999, NYC, NY.

(1) Despite having a solid recording legacy to his credit, Don Braden has a lower profile than his younger saxophone compatriots Joshua Redman and Javon Jackson. Like them, the 40-year-old Braden has a compact timbre that resonates with overtones of the Bop tenor legacy. On *The New Hang* he tips his bell to the tradition of soul Jazz. Yet he does it in a distinctive, sophisticated way. Rather than simply riff on the obvious clichés, he employs the sound as a starting point for a thoroughly contemporary Bop outing. Even his most direct reference, the "Moanin'" tribute "No Complaints," is delivered with a twist. He opens with a loping melodic original "Through the Fire" that introduces the elements at play. The tune swings out easily with drummer Cecil Brooks III reveling in the joyous groove. Brooks and Braden dominate the ensemble with trombonist Conrad Herwig coloring the melody with a harmony line

and organist Kyle Koehler filling in the harmonic space between the drums and front line. Often it sounds as if Braden and Brooks are engaging in tenor-drum duets with the organ as an afterthought. Brooks plays aggressively throughout. Liner annotator Laurence Donohue-Greene compares his work to Art Blakey's. That, I think, misses the point. Yes, both employ firm foot on the hi-hat pedal to kick the ensemble along. For Blakey everything else he plays amplifies that groove. Brooks, however, uses that ground beat as a launching pad, to fly into flurries of cross rhythms. This exuberance propels the date. It pushes Herwig to the edge of even his formidable technique on the steaming "Without a Song."

Braden does provide relief early with an organ-tenor duet on "When I Fall in Love" that showcases his own deep strain of romanticism and gives organist Koehler a chance to shine. The climax of the set comes on the title tune when Herwig and Braden, urged on by Brooks, lock into a series of tradeoffs. It radiates the kind of heat that separates this session from so many other similar mainstream efforts.

(2) The drummer is also in the forefront on *Consilience*, not surprisingly given drummer Vinson Valega leads the date. With the drummer calling the shots, the focus stays on the music's rhythmic underpinnings. Like Brooks, Valega knows how to decorate a beat. In his own lower-key way Valega finds quirky ways of laying down the groove, coloring it with subtle polyrhythms and syncopation. The trio seems at ease with the book of originals by Valega and saxophonist Anton Denner and some well-chosen covers, both from the Jazz and American song repertoires. Their familiarity with the material breeds free-flowing interplay especially between the saxophonist and drummer. Bassist Gary Wang provides complementary solos and a dark thrumming line that helps bind the session. The trio identifies the distinctive qualities of each song, whether original or cover, and explores them in a manner that keeps the song's contours intact. That applies equally to Strayhorn's heart-wrenching ballad "Blood Count," and Valega's playful "Jiminy Cricket Goes to the Go-Go Dance." Valega is even selfless enough to step aside and let Denner and Wang deliver "You Must Believe in Spring" as a flute and arco bass duet. This is a session more about celebration than deconstruction, and Denner's straightforward approach, which includes echoes of both Phil Woods and Lee Konitz, is perfectly suited to task.

(3) Valega joins pianist Matthew Fries and bassist Gregory Ryan for *Live@147*. Well, he joins his fellow musicians and apparently a full house of diners with little if any interest in the music. The trio competes throughout with the dull roar of the fattening crowd. On those tracks where the tunes' endings aren't tightly edited, the applause that greets the trio is minimal. The customers' conversations are so loud I could probably, if I wanted to make the effort, eavesdrop on the conversations. Now this may remind some of those Charlie Parker recordings made from a back table. That is not the