

## Elliot Galvin Trio

### Dreamland

Chaos Collective (CC003) ★★☆☆

Elliot Galvin (p), Tom McCredie (b) and Simon Roth (d). Rec. October 2013

In the midst of winning awards left right and centre, pianist Elliot Galvin opens up his account with an album titled *Dreamland*. The toy piano he plays vigorously on the first track appears to signal a deceptively childlike approach to music making as well as an intention to avoid the more familiar emotional framework of bands playing post-EST piano trio jazz. Galvin is the brainy-looking recent Trinity College alumni and founding member of London's Chaos Collective, the youthful organisation championing his off-the-wall brand of individualism. Galvin shows his Bad Plus-ish deconstructive tendencies on the cute shuffle of 'Blues' and 'Dance Macabre', while 'A Major' is a sweet melodic reverie with Monk-ish twists suggesting a stripped-down version of Brad Mehldau. Galvin shrewdly binds together a conceptual approach and the indeterminacies associated with contemporary concert music with deceptively simple idiomatic devices from jazz, rock, electronic and other groove music. This means he appears modest about his outstanding technique at the piano. Originals include the cosmic impressionism of 'Apollo 17', the contemporary groove-and-loops of 'J.J.' through to the Hermeto Pascoal-like 'Azaro', and the Gershwin-ish stride piano on 'Lulu', give some idea of the album's widescreen scope if not this promising young pianist's maverick artistic vision. **Selwyn Harris**

## Louise Gibbs and The Septet

### 7 Deadly Sings

33Xtreme 003 ★★☆☆

Louise Gibbs (v), Tony Kofi (as, bs), Tim Whitehead (ts, b cft), Quentin Collins (t, flhn), Tom White (tb), Sam Leak (p), Oli Hayhurst (b) and Sam Gardner (d). Rec. date not stated

Hot on the heels of Soweto



Louise Gibbs

Kinch's *The Legend of Mike Smith*, comes another jazz treatment of the Seven Deadly Sins, this one a 50-minute song suite for voice and septet by vocalist, composer and educator Louise Gibbs. Both in its conception and execution, *7 Deadly Sings* (Gibbs's fifth recording for 33Jazz) is an unqualified triumph. Each movement is inspired by the distinctive 'voice' of one of the instrumentalists, with the voice, naturally enough, featured first in a brief 'Prologue'. Emerging out of an extended cymbal roll, we first hear Gibbs not actually singing at all but in a barely audible, sotto voce scream. It's a hugely impactful opening. In the following seven movements, the listener is swept along by the combination of constantly shifting textures and powerful lyrics, nowhere more so than the expansive, Ellingtonian 'Gluttony' ('Simmer discontentment till it boils/Squeeze the bitter essence of a peasant's bony toil'). From the hard-edged lines of 'Envy' and the stasis of 'Sloth' to the insistent ostinato of 'Anger', *7 Deadly Sings* grips you to the very end. **Peter Quinn**

## Tom Guarna

### Rush

Brooklyn Jazz Underground  
BJUR 040 ★★☆☆

Tom Guarna (g), Joel Frahm (ts, ss), Danny Grissett (p, el p), Orlando Le Fleming (b) and Johnathan Blake (d). Rec. 2012

Fresh, high-energy and inventive, this is postmodern straight-ahead instrumental jazz by a dedicated team of young veterans who work and record with many headliners. UK fans will remember Orlando Le Fleming as the classy London double bassist who slipped across the Atlantic with every chance of success. Saxman Frahm is also familiar with London and pianist Grissett also appeared in London with trumpeter Jeremy Pelt's group. But this is guitarist Guarna's show and genuinely impressive it is. He exhibits fine technique as a player and considerable originality as a composer. He wrote all eight originals here, complex themes with a discernible relation to one another, a genuine suite with a personal concept. His way with chords and scales is particularly distinctive, and his guitar sound

is equally personal – a round, almost ethnic tone articulated with deft technique and a hardnosed metallic edge. Not so, of course, during 'Elegy for Ethan', a tender ballad for guitar and trio. Elsewhere Blake and Le Fleming power along with real commitment while Grissett and Frahm burn like the pros they are. And all the themes are executed faultlessly.

**Jack Massarik**

## Taylor Haskins

### Fuzzy Logic

Sunnyside SSC 1296 ★★☆☆

Taylor Haskins (t, melodica, drone fl), Ben Monder (g), Kermit Driscoll (b), Jeff Hirshfield (d), Joyce Hammann (vln), Lois Martin (via) and Jody Redhage (clo). Rec. November 2011 and June 2013



I'm not quite sure what inspired trumpeter/composer Taylor Haskins to call this beautifully crafted set of chamber ballads *Fuzzy Logic*. Every note is etched with razor-sharp precision, and if anything, the generally downbeat emotions and whiff of Americana remind me of Bill Frisell at his melancholic best. Haskins is an experienced commercial film composer, and like Frisell, steeps his compositions with a strong sense of time and place. The CD opens with 'Somewhere I Never Traveled' and the bucolic sound of Native American drone flute and closes with a haunting melodica delivering the melody of Tom Waits' 'Take It With Me'. Haskins plays both, but elsewhere takes lead with a precise, classically-toned trumpet on pithy originals with names like 'Comfortable Disease', 'Conviction' and 'Too Far'. The rhythm section takes a backseat for the most part, and it's the sound of Ben Holders' richly voiced guitar and the bittersweet, lyrical and rhythmic strings that haunts most and adds a sedate beauty and note of optimism to the only other cover, Thomas Dolby's 'Airwaves'.

**Mike Hobart**

## Alexander Hawkins Ensemble

### Step Wide, Step Deep

Babel BDV13124 ★★☆☆

Alexander Hawkins (p), Shabaka Hutchings (cft, b cft), Dylan Bates (vln), Neil Charles (b), Otto Fischer (g) and Tom Skinner (d, perc). Rec. April 2013

If you've been keeping an ear to the ground (as well as to jazz on the radio) in the past year or two, you're likely to have come across the name of Alexander Hawkins at some point. The London-based pianist-composer is the brightest young thing on the leftfield London scene, and his work doesn't lack

ambition. He has fully embraced acoustic solo piano as well as trio, and transatlantic collaboration as co-leader of the Convergence Quartet. He also plays Hammond organ in the band Decoy as well as impressing as sideman for legendary South African drummer Louis Moholo-Moholo. Hawkins employs a different line up here to that of his previous sextet, aside from the guitarist Otto Fischer, that released the 2012 CD *All There Ever Out* also on Babel. He is joined by a group with a close rapport that includes Sons of Kemet's Shabaka Hutchings and Tom Skinner, the double bassist Neil Charles, who along with Hawkins, are members of the celebrated ethio-jazz leader Mulatu Astatke's ensemble. On *Step Wide, Step Deep* his acoustic ensemble demonstrate a firm grasp of the more progressive idiomatic languages of jazz as well as the world of abstract European free improv while continuing to negotiate its boundaries. Hawkins directs with his sly use of compositional devices as well as themes. On the opener the leader's harmonically skewed Charlie Parker-like head dissolves into an *In a Silent Way*-type collective dreamscape before Charles and Skinner pick things up with a hustling jazz-rock groove. Otherwise the set shifts from a more abstract floating avant jazz context to free jazz scrums fired up by Hawkins' exciting, densely charged Matthew Shipp-like percussive improv. The mood shifts again as violinist Dylan Bates' solos on top of Hawkins' calmly lilting country-blues piano vamp. On perhaps his best release so far, Alexander Hawkins' new ensemble will have you on the edge of your seat. **Selwyn Harris**

## Tim Hegarty

### Tribute

Miles High Records MHR 8623 ★★☆☆

Tim Hegarty (ts, ss), Mark Sherman (vib), Kenny Barron (p), Rufus Reid (b) and Carl Allen (d). Rec. August 2013



Hegarty has been on the New York scene for some 25 years now, with regular gigs in Gil Evans bands probably his best publicised. Actually, he's an excellent tenor player and this CD, along with recently reviewed records by Tim Warfield and the Steve Fishwick/Osian Roberts band making early 2014 a bumper year for hard bop fans. Hegarty's tutors included Frank Foster, George Coleman, Frank Wess and Jimmy Heath – all masters of the genre. This is Hegarty's



Alexander Hawkins