

Reviewers: Tony Augarde, Steve Arloff, Nick Barnard, Pierre Giroux., Glyn Pursglove, George Stacy, Bert Thomson, Sam Webster, Jonathan Woolf

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Andy ADAMSON Quintet

First Light

● **Andros Records AR002** [48:45]

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1. First Light
2. Corner Store
3. Twilight in the making
4. Velvet Sunset
5. Divided we stand
6. Once through the changes
7. High Street Roundabout
8. Transparent dream
9. Sunny Side Up

Andy Adamson (keyboards), Dan Bennett (saxophones), Brennan Andes (bass), Jonathan Taylor (drums), Ross Huff (trumpet)
rec. Brookwood Studio LLC, Plymouth, Michigan, USA no dates given

I find myself with boring regularity writing that this is another band that I had not come across before but there you are; it just shows how healthy jazz is at the present time whatever the constraints are that musicians may experience and that they are driven to make music whatever the difficulties may be. For all I know that may not be the case when it comes to this quartet and on the strength of this disc they should indeed have no problems getting a hearing and making a living playing such repertoire. Andy Adamson has clearly been around a long time since all the songs are by him and the earliest composition dates back 36 years! Listening to *Velvet Sunset* from 1981 as I write its timeless nature strikes me and while two more date from 1981 the 9 tracks span a total of 25 years in total. First out of the blocks comes *First Light* which involves some beautiful pianism from Andy and some blistering saxophone playing from Dan Bennett. I've always held that the measure of a good tune is whether you think you've

heard it before even though you couldn't have and all the tracks hear have that 'déjà entendu' feeling about them and though it is possible I may have heard a cover version of one or more of them I'm pretty sure I haven't.

The uncomplicated nature of the songs is what appeals to me for as a friend often says "those who only play for themselves will end up only playing to themselves" but that cannot be said of Andy and co since these tunes have universal appeal and are of the type that has you wanting to play them again as soon as the disc comes to an end and what better recommendation can you have than that?

It is hard to pick a favourite from the nine tracks as each has its attraction so I won't try. Suffice it to say that if you like your jazz big, bold and resolute then this disc is for you and I don't know about you but I have always preferred the quartet and quintet format which seems to me to be the perfect vessel to showcase the best that jazz has to offer; one in which each musician has their chance to make their contribution and shine and that is certainly what happens here. Everyone involved in this project is a master musician and it shows in each track all of which are full on with a driving and compulsive beat. Andy Adamson shows himself to be a brilliant composer so I must check to see what other discs the band has made before because it is a band to be reckoned with.

Steve Arloff

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