

matic in their open sense of harmony. Take "Les Blues Qui Monte" for example, where Ferlet opens with a high childlike melody, reminiscent of nursery rhymes, but counters its prettiness with an astringent Monkish chord sequence in his left hand that gradually turns the whole piece into a Blues. That combination of the open chromaticism with a lyrical bent to the chords and melodies in the right hand is what makes this date distinct.

The recording on (1) is vibrant and fat, with a rich bass sound on the piano and it captures the delicacy too when Ferlet gets inside the piano to pluck the strings a bit on "L'Autre Moitie." All in all this adds to what is an attractive and perpetually interesting solo piano record, easily deserving of extra listens. (There is a hidden twelfth track here, by the way, after a nearly four minute gap of silence after track eleven.)

The song titles of Jean Beaudet's (2) might lead you to think this is another new French pianist, but Beaudet and his trio hail from Montreal. Beaudet has a strong rhythmic touch without any heaviness, more out of Oscar Peterson than he is out of his other stated influence, Paul Bley. (2) presents 8 Beaudet originals and an Ellington rarity "Heaven" (can't really call it a standard), and they blend seamlessly together. They generally are built like the title tune "Les Danseurs" out of tasty block chords in a tightly rhythmic setting, from which melody comes spilling out once the groove is set. In other words, Beaudet's sense of melody line and his improvisations are based on the rhythm. This is true even when the melodies he's composed are lilting, happy Ornette like tunes, as in "Too Many Penguins." The concept works well with a trio as solid as this one is, Lalonde and Bastien both very accomplished. So (2) is a fine mainstream trio record, with a lot to recommend it to Jazz piano aficionados.

Phillip McNally

JAY VILNAI,

VAMPIRE SUIT: Gaze at Your Omphalos, VILNAISMUSIC 8125.

The Visit of the Queen of Sheba / A Great Light / Moonbow / Ophelia / Fana / Lullaby / Campfire Dance / Diana / Baklava.* 66:45.

Vilnai, g; Skye Steele, vln; Gary Pickard, ss, cl; Mike Savino, b; Kevin Garcia, perc; Greta Panettieri, voice*. date and location not provided.

Middle Eastern rhythms initiate this lively recording, powered by Vilnai's guitar fluidity and the complementary string input from violinist Steele. A flowing percussive beat from Garcia permeates the opening tune and continues throughout, giving the music a vibrant undercurrent from which the two string players and saxophonist/clarinetist Pickard spring. Indeed, ethnic rhythms of the region are at the heart of the performance, which progresses as a suite broken by alternating tempo but linked by its strong, vibrant pulse. Vilnai composed the entire score, which has a defined structure but enough open avenues to permit the soloists to design outside the lines.

The combination of guitar and violin works extremely well with this band. Steele makes his instrument sing joyously and Vilnai injects a mellow, bell-toned guitar tone as they negotiate through the movements. Pickard takes charge on "Moonbow" with a dancing clarinet solo while a sustained refrain from bassist Savino and lively comping by Vilnai encroach from the background. A Balkan flavor surfaces on this tune that also includes an exuberant solo by Vilnai. Vocalist Panettieri appears on "Ophelia" using her voice as a high-soaring instrument to state the theme and add extensive color in harmony with the strings. The performance predominantly has an Arabian Nights rhythmic balance reinforced consistently through the solos of Steele, who captures the essence of the area's native sound. Even a touch of klezmer emerges on the closing tune.

The music has enduring beauty that touches on the heart of the Middle East's musical culture while exhibiting a bit of Western flair. Open improvisations and the spirit of the belly dance coexist, encouraging the traditional undulating hip movements as a supplement in responding to the solid instrumentation.

Frank Rubolino

1) GREG OSBY,

PUBLIC,

BLUE NOTE 97683.

Rising Sign / Summertime / Visitation / Bernie's Tune / Equalatogram / Shaw Nuff / Lover Man. 64:55.

Osby, as; Nicholas Payton, tpt (2,4,6,7); Megumi Yonezawa, p; Robert Hurst, b; Rodney Green, d; Joan Osborne, vcl (7). New York, NY, Jan 20-21, 2004.

2) TERI LYNE CARRINGTON,

STRUCTURE,

ACT 9427.

Mindful Intent / Black Halo / Ethiopia / The Invisible / Spiral / Facets Squared / Solace / Fire / Omega / Columbus. Ohio. 59:51.

Carrington, d, perc, vcl; Adam Rogers, g; Jimmy Haslip, b; Greg Osby, as. Nov. 2003, Calabasas, CA.

Two fine releases involving Greg Osby, (1) as a leader and (2) as the featured sideman. I have liked Osby since *Inner Circle* (1/03, p.44) and *Zero*. I have been very impressed by his music and, in speaking with him, his personal philosophy, directness, and intensity. All of that is on display in these two discs. Osby does not overwhelm *Structure*, but it seems to these ears that his aesthetic is central to the project.

(1) Osby prizes spontaneity, and live recordings in the clubs are the best way to get it, as he showed with *Banned In New York*. *Public* was recorded at the Jazz Standard, one of the nicest clubs in NYC, where the sound is good and the sight lines clear with no crowding. Everything really clicked at these sets, and that Osby sound—his lines and his musical conception—is very apparent right away on "Rising Sign." If Jazz is personal expression, then the ability of a performer to become instantly recognizable is a very high achievement, and this Osby has done. The theme is played and its harmonic content laid out.