

ous lack of bottom to curtail the group's sound. The album could be most easily compared to seminal World-Music-Fusion explorers Oregon with a slightly tougher edge. The nascent New Age-isms are generally kept in check and the album does contain its share of sonic surprises.

An interesting document, fans of similarly minded contemporary guitarists will find much to like in (1), but those who prefer their guitar based Jazz a tad more on the raw side may want to audition the album before committing to it.

Saxophonist Norbert Stein delivers another



Norbert Stein

installment in his multi-cultural explorations combining Jazz with the folk music of indigenous cultures. A previous trip to Indonesia exposed Stein to the region's bountiful Gamelan tradition and plans were made to record a cross-cultural collaboration. (2) documents this recording session with Djaduk Ferianto and his Kua Etnika Gamelan ensemble. Combining Gamelan with Western Jazz concepts is not an entirely new idea as artists such as Henry Threadgill, James Newton, Roscoe Mitchell, George Lewis and others have all made trips to the exotic East to collaborate with the masters of ancient musical traditions.

An adherent to the musical theory of Pata Music, Stein and his collaborators make a strong case for the theory's adaptability. Pata Music is "the science of imaginary solutions (which) defines the way to gain knowledge avoiding the rigorous rules of reason and tradition, without disrespecting them." Thus, Stein is able to incorporate genres as alien to Jazz as Gamelan into the tradition without disrupting the core genre's principal function: creative improvisation of harmonic and rhythmic invention.

Stein's electro-acoustic quintet pairs up with the Gamelan ensemble for pieces both rhythmically dense and melodically spartan. There are a few moments of respite, featuring delicate flute and percussion work, primarily during the introductory phases of some of the longer tracks. For the most

part however, this is an exploration of continuous and dense rhythm. One would expect the repetitive rhythmic patterns of traditional Gamelan music to make for a tedious listen over an hour's duration, but Stein and company contribute a distinctly Western rhythmic element to the mix as well: Funk.

A plethora of percussive effects are utilized by the Gamelan orchestra and everything from chanting to Jews Harp makes an appearance. As leader, Stein plays with a muscular tenor tone that stays just ahead of the massive ensemble. The sound is good considering the obvious difficulty of capturing such a diverse ensemble, and the pieces never seem to overstay their welcome. For an interesting merger of Eastern and Western traditions, (2) may be just the sonic vacation intrepid listeners need.

(3) is a live album documenting Claudio Puntin's free form chamber Jazz trio recording from different spots around the globe. The clarinet, gu zheng, and percussion ensemble dabbles in a sort of multi-ethnic stew of open improvisation. Considering the heavy involvement of the gu zheng, there is a strong Asiatic cast to the timbre of these improvisations. Adherents of this genre will admire the pacing and textural restraint that these three masters bring to the album.

A series of short improvisations book-ended around a 25 minute centerpiece, the album blends pastoral clarinet passages with exotic strummed gu zheng lines and sparse percussion workouts. Dynamically the trio favors a less is more approach, with a steady rubato pulse to guide them along. The ensemble occasionally builds to more acerbic peaks to break the free floating tension embodied in their almost ethereal aesthetic. There are moments, like the end of the album's centerpiece, "Opera Meditativa" where they lock into what actually resembles a groove. On "Between Two Islands" Puntin's swirling clarinet line is backed by harp-like plucking on the gu zheng and waves of percussion undulate below to conjure a roiling seascape before the trio takes it down a notch into more pointillistic call and response. Comparatively, on "Another Language" the trio plus one delves into some of their most aggressive playing with squalling bass clarinet, bluesy violin and punchy drum rolls before the crowd enthusiastically receives them. For the most part, the trio is content to ply texture and ambience over rhythm.

Troy Collins

**ENRICO PIERANUNZI,  
CHARLIE HADEN, PAUL MOTIAN,  
SPECIAL ENCOUNTER,  
C.A.M. JAZZ 5006.**

*My Old Flame / You've Changed / Earlier Soa / Nightfall / Secret Nights / Loveward / Waltz for Ruth / Miracles / Hello My Lovely / Why Did I Choose You? / Mo-Ti, 56:59.*

Pieranunzi, p; Haden, b; Motian, d. Mar. 6-8, 2003, Rome, Italy.

Recorded just a few days after *Fellini Jazz* (3/05, p.132), this trio encounter from the Italian Creazioni Artistiche Musicali label evokes the same kind of sultry movie theme moods that Fellini