

more welcome variety to the trio's shared aesthetic. Dufresne shapes a staggered rhythm with suffused syncopations and has a chance to really move on a series of closing drum breaks. "L'Up" achieves a similar success mixing electronic and acoustic elements in the meshing of Gfeller's keys and the propulsive patter of Dufresne's sticks on cymbals. "La 11 E Croche" trades in quieter less anchored interplay as Gfeller sets up a circular pattern of notes against Sevilla's sparse pizzicato and a gently tumbling backdrop of malleted toms that soon coalesces into a more propulsive cast. The concluding minimalistic "Premices" arrives unexpectedly, a sign once again of the players' forte at creating an enveloping aural environment that masks extramusical distractions. The urge at set's conclusion is to begin the trip anew.

Details on reed player Reto Suhner are few and far between on (2), though an eponymous website address promises some clues to his credentials. The tray card lists only the basic session info along with a collage of in-the-studio photos, but background on the band and the project remains mostly a mystery. One shot shows Suhner standing on a street corner, a digital thundercloud inserted above his head releasing bolts of blue lightning and rain. The hard luck connotations of the picture funnel into his bluesy approach to his horns. On soprano his tone is piquant and dry with a method of phrasing that moves easily from contemplative to aggressive. He adopts a similar range on alto and it's sometimes difficult to tell which reed he is using. His rhythm section, fronted by the economically-minded Menezes, makes for an attentive and mutually-enhancing match. Gisler's beautifully captured bass lines are often as important a facet of the action as the other players' contributions, his supple thrumming ostinato on "Faisal al-Kasim" early illustration of his sensitive ears and fingers. Suhner's soprano hands off to Menezes for the tune's second half and the pianist creates a solo forwarded on the agile dance of right hand digits. The short, mostly solo, "Comment" pieces are interspersed throughout and serve as atmospheric interludes between the longer tracks. Seams between are often difficult to discern and the overarching effect is of a single hour plus suite.

Minor keys and darker modal structures are the common building components, but the music rarely turns sour or overly somber. Suhner's turn, taken on alto, is the lengthiest and eventually picks up the support of the rest of the band. The switch to "Tobi" comes almost imperceptibly, but suddenly Suhner's back, guiding the band on an expedition through the deceptively simple revolving theme. Burkhalter's turn comes with the preceding "Keeping Up With the Jones," his choppy beats stirring up voluble enthusiasm in the leader's serpentine soprano. Menezes follows with another brightly articulated statement that fits with the arching momentum of the piece. There are also odd shifts within the certain pieces that take some getting used to. On "Remembrance," a reflective duet preface between Suhner and Menezes morphs into a driving backbeat driven dirge, sig-

naling a change in the band from sedate to almost bombastic. "Enough Said!" suffers from awkward editing as Suhner's soprano abruptly enters atop Burkhalter's march cadence. Subtle Latin strains enter the mix on "Age" as Menezes and the drummer set up a sliding rhythm for Suhner's soprano to skate across. Contrasting once again, the preceding "Comment" is an ill-fitting free style blowout that quickly dissolves into another uptempo burner in "Drew." The long title track closes shop on the disc, another winding trip through circular melody and rhythm replete with incisive solos from all save Burkhalter. While there are occasional missteps, Suhner and crew still come up with a strong set of music.

Derek Taylor

NED GOOLD, THE FLOWS, SMALLS 43.

Feeding Off the Host Part 2 / Susie / Fell Harvest / Edsol / Rosalie / Did I Remember / Spoiled Rotten / Heigh Ho, the Gang's All Here / Goold / Quasimodo / The Flows / In the Still of the Night / Whattness of Allhorse / Michael vs. Mikal / All the Things You Are/Prince Albert / Salient. 70:24.

Goold, ts; Ben Wolfe, b; Ron Steen, d. Jun.-Aug. 1999, USA.

Without a piano, Ned Goold's Straight-Ahead trio emphasizes the kind of freedom in Jazz that comes with having enough space to interpret good music. Horizontal space between notes and phrases, as well as ample vertical harmonic space, gives the ensemble an adhesive quality: it holds the listener in tow, as the threesome makes every note count. Recorded in performance at various indoor and outdoor locations while on tour, the album includes nine originals and vivid interpretations of seven classic tunes. Goold's dry tenor saxophone tone and fast-paced technique mark his performance with indelible Bebop honors. Walking bass and a distant drummer give the leader solid support. Both take frequent solos, but it's Goold who makes this session sing with verve.

In much the same manner that Charlie Parker would invert a melody or reassemble it in disguise, Ned Goold likes to re-create pieces that appeal to the intellect of the listener (and performers). The sessions do not swing much. Nor does the saxophonist indulge in pyrotechnical displays. Rather, Goold prefers to keep his Straight-Ahead sessions moving forward, with a three-man interaction that creates foot-tapping frenzy among his listeners. The saxophonist prefers clusters of notes, strung together linearly, that maintain a horizontal direction. His range lacks variety, staying mainly in the middle register.

Several of the tracks end abruptly with awkward disjunction. Throughout the album, I was distracted by squeals and conversation from the audience. Neither of these annoyances, however, is strong enough to outweigh the unique character of Goold's performance and the fresh ground in Straight-Ahead Jazz that his music represents.

Jim Santella