

New One from Alon Nechushtan!

ALON NECHUSHTAN With DONNY McCASLIN/JOHN ELLIS/CHRIS LIGHTCAP/ADAM CRUZ + DUANE EUBANKS et al - Venture Bound (Enja 9603; Germany) Featuring Alon Nechushtan on piano & compositions, Donny McCaslin & John Ellis on tenor saxes, Chris Lightcap on bass and Adam Cruz on drums plus Duane Eubanks on trumpet (2 tracks), Brahim Brigane on oud and Roggerio Boccato on percussion. This appears to be the sixth disc by Israeli born/New York-based pianist Alon Nechushtan, which includes his Copperhead Trio with guest Bob Moses on Ayler Records Each of his previous discs has featured different personnel and each has been recorded for different labels: Tzadik, Between the Lines and Creative Sources. Mr. Nechushtan always picks the cream of the Downtown scene and here he done it again. The sound of each disc is very different than each of the earlier ones. Each of the two saxists here play on different songs, not together. Mr. Nechushtan is a powerful, often hard swinging pianist who is at the center of each piece and plays with exuberance throughout. He often reminds me of Peter Madsen, who is one of the greatest under-recognized pianists still alive. His writing and arrangements fit the talents of his chosen players just right. The theme to "The Gratitude Suite" has a warm, savory melody with lush harmonies for the horns (tenor & trumpet). Nechushtan likes to writes songs with difficult, quick moving changes which push either saxist the navigate the rapids as they sail quickly with Alon's piano pushing and supporting superbly throughout. One of the unexpected delights here is the playing of an oud (Brahim Brigane from the Go Organic Orchestra) to "Dark Damsel", which adds a sly middle-eastern vibe. There are a few songs here which sound rather sunny yet whenever anyone solos they do a fine job of sailing over the buoyant waters below. The playing here is often exquisite and consistently inspired without any of the usual turbulent tension of most discs from the Downtown Scene. - Bruce Lee Gallanter, DMG

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