

## REVIEWS AND PRESS CLIPS - ALON NECHUSHTAN

### Words Beyond

#### JAZZ TIMES

Israeli-born pianist-composer Alon Nechushtan establishes a loose-tight chemistry with drummer Dan Weiss and bassist Francois Mouton on his second trio release. A New York resident since 2003, his potent partnership with Weiss and Mouton places a premium on group interplay at the same time it encourages individual solo expression. From the playful, Monkish opener, Muppet Shock, to the highly interactive Different Kind of Morning, the off-kilter Spinning the Clouds and the swinging Dr. Master Plan, this stellar threesome blends daring instincts and dazzling virtuosity into organic expression. Other highlights include the engaging jazz waltz Spring Soul Song, the epic Secret Short/Short Secret and the gorgeous ballad Heartbreakthrough, which shifts from Bill Evans-esque delicacy to rhapsodic Keith Jarrett terrain. Bill Milkowski.

#### DOWNBEAT

Israeli pianist Alon Nechushtan has recorded on John Zorn's Tzadik label with a klezmer project featuring his originals, nine more of which appear here. The company Nechushtan keeps with Dan Weiss and Francois Moutin, two highly sought-after sidemen, gives advance notice of his standing. "Muppet Shock" searches playfully for a television theme hook with driving energy and acute punctuations. Weiss injects teeter-tot rhythms, and the three dice the beat with tender hooks. Nechushtan scatters gemstones behind Moutin on "A Different Kind Of Morning," the ride is thrilling, everyone is in step and bristling with virtuosity and enthusiasm, the recording hot and loud, Bad Plus-style. The leader's left hand gets funky on "Spinning The Clouds" before a benign middle section, then he stomps out the riff from Sade's "Smooth Operator" before some nice a cappella counterpoint. "Dr Master Plan" contains a Thelonious Monk-like percussive quality (as does "The Traveler"), a hint of "Straight No Chaser" in the chromatic line, before it spills into cantering swing and snatches of the riff from "Take The 'A' Train." Like another expansive pianist, Michiel Braam, Nechushtan revels in boundless eclecticism. "Secret Short/Short Secret" is layered and forceful; "Entranced" is ecstatic rather than bewitched; "Heartbreakthrough" is resolved and confident, and doesn't lack flashes of poignancy despite not playing for sympathy. Though, to my knowledge, this trio are not well journeyed together, they share tremendous simpatico. Nechushtan is a talent to watch, with a surfeit of ideas, an unbridled spirit and bold, twofisted sense of architecture. —Michael Jackson 4/12/2011

#### JAZZ TIMES

Pianist Alon Nechushtan keeps his notes on their toes as he creates tightly-rung arabesques and vivacious pirouettes with his keys. He has an instinct for organizing purely improvised energy that requires the audiences' undivided attention. His new CD, Words Beyond from Buckyball Records features drummer Dan Weiss and bassist Francois Moutin. As a threesome, their triple layers produce flapping motions that form mind-boggling mazes as the instruments bow and flex at different speeds changing the course of the movements in mid-stream and intersecting lines intermittently. Maintaining a springy constitution throughout "Muppet Shock", the extemporaneous intervals are indicative of free thinking musicians. The spontaneous combustion of the cymbal strikes buttressing "Secret Short/Short Secret" bridge the transitions. The cascading droplets shaped by the piano keys through "A Different Kind of Morning" have a crystalline twinkle as the notes traipse softly, and shift to a frolicking canter along "Spinning The Clouds". The brisk tremors of the keys across "Dr. Masterplan" form potmarks along the rippling drumbeats, and cool down to a gentle stroll in "Spring Soul Song" and "The Traveler". Words Beyond is loosely based on Mendelssohn's seminal "Songs Without Words" according to Alon Nechushtan's, who claims that the music for the album came to him after playing Mendelssohn's solo pieces on the piano. Nechushtan's range is modulated to stay

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within the middle register of the piano, and what he achieves in those octaves exhibits his unbridled imagination. Susan Frances, 4/10/11

### NEW YORK JAZZ RECORD

Words beyond, from pianist Alon Nechushtan, is a 'straight ahead trio outing that is decidedly crooked, full of zig-zagging melodies and jagged rhythms that sustain a tense, restless mood. Although his melodies and chord voicings retain traces of blues and gospel, the complex phrases and forms push the music towards the future. Bassist Francois Moutin and Weiss are well bable to maneuver the various twists and turn, acqutting themselves with seeming ease. Moutin, like Charles Mingus, Plays with great speed, flash and funk, delivering dazzling solos on "different kind of morning" and secret short?short secre", also engagin Nechushtan in an exciting dual/duel on the former track. Weiss sometimes sounds like several personalities at once, as on the opening "Muppet SChock", his easy swinging ride cymbal in one hand, an aggressive snare drum in the other. Tom Greenland 3/1/2011

### ALL ABOUT JAZZ

Playing jazz can be like driving a car. Sometimes you can sit back, rely on cruise control, and simply revel in a straightforward journey, but more precise maneuvering is often required. Lightning quick reflexes, an ability to comfortably navigate hairpin turns, and a strong directional sense are equally important, and pianist Alon Nechushtan exhibits all of these traits from behind the driver's seat on Words Beyond. The left-leaning klezmer jazz that Nechushtan delivered with his Talat band mates on Growl (Tzadik, 2006) is nowhere to be found here. Instead, Nechushtan relies on an aesthetic that leans heavily on shifts in the rhythmic sands of time and complex, two (or three) way conversations. Hearing how drummer extraordinaire Dan Weiss solos over a playful, broken bass presence on "Muppet Shock" or soaking in the piano-bass dialog on "Different Kind Of Morning," demonstrates that this is high-level communication of the highest order. Nechushtan couldn't have asked for more empathetic and appropriate colleagues, in terms of creating a fluid and flexible trio environment that's heavy on rhythmic interaction, than Weiss and bassist Francois Moutin. Weiss' rhythmic mastery, which covers everything from Indian music to modern jazz, and has been at the heart of some of saxophonist David Binney's groundbreaking recordings, is always at the center of these pieces. Moutin can provide walking bass lines on the few, brief occasions that they're called for, but his ability to serve as the go-between for Weiss and Nechushtan is a greater asset. He emphasizes choppy accents with the pianist ("The Traveler") and the drummer ("Muppet Shock"), and cleverly navigates his way through a piece that moves from wonderfully discombobulated soul to sunny environs to menacing, avant-ballroom music and beyond ("Spinning The Clouds"). As a soloist, Moutin is also the standout musician on the album. His blinding speed and supple movements help to create first rate feature spots that enhance every track where he's given room to do his work. As the man pulling the strings, Nechushtan is never short on ideas for his compositions, or in performance. He can comfortably erect a harmonic edifice around a single note ("Different Kind Of Morning"), deliver straightforward soloing over driving swing ("Dr. Master Plan") and go it alone if his band mates drop out mid-track ("Spinning The Clouds"). While he prefers complex angles to straightaways, the music never strays into inaccessible territory, as he clearly prefers taking people along for a ride to driving solo. Alon Nechushtan's Words Beyond is worlds beyond where most jazz musicians are willing and able to travel, making this album a worthwhile listening journey. DAN BILAWSKY, 18th February 2011

### JAZZIS

New album by Israeli (resident in NY) pianist Alon Nechushtan, this time in a trio setting with bassist Francois Moutin and drummer Dan Weiss, which presents nine brilliant compositions by the leader and an exceptional performance by the trio. Nechushtan is of course fondly remembered for his fantastic work with the Talat ("The Growl" on Tzadik Records), which to this

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day is one of my favorite albums of the last decade. This album is completely different from his work with Talat, which combined Jazz and Klezmer / Hasidic music, and presents superb modern Jazz unrelated to any particular ethnic references. Nechushtan again shines both as a composer, with his tunes sounding like instant classics, which could have been composed by the likes of Chick Corea or Herbie Hancock and as player, displaying dazzling technique and sensitivity. His supporting team is also brilliant all the way, with Moutin doing some incredible stuff with his bass (don't try this at home) and Weiss beating the hell out of the drum kit, but always right on the beat. Overall this is a great album, immensely enjoyable and deeply moving emotionally. I can't imagine any true Jazz fan not falling in love with this album instantly, and therefore I recommend it wholeheartedly. A true must! Adam Baruch 2/5/2011

### JAZZ REVIEW

"New York-based pianist Alon Nechushtan has worked as a sideman with the likes of Frank London and Baya Kouyate and is the founder of the quintet TALAT, a critically acclaimed jazz-meets-klezmer ensemble. Nechushtan makes a bold statement with Words Beyond, his first release as leader of a progressive trio featuring bassist Francois Moutin and drummer Dan Weiss. The music is a hard swinging, soulful collection of nine of the pianist's original compositions. Nechushtan has the ability to reshape a small morsel of melody into imaginative configurations. His ideas flow freely, utilizing both hands to emphasize a punchy, aggressive attack. Right from the opening blues of "Muppet Shock," one can sense influences as diverse as Thelonious Monk, Oscar Peterson and Keith Jarrett. An unrelenting drive to swing as hard as he can is heard on tunes such as "Dr. Masterplan," with a twisted reference to "Take the A-Train," and the closing McCoy Tynerish "The Traveler." Weiss and Moutin work well in support of Nechushtan, playing on top of the beat and reacting in accord to the pianist's highly syncopated style. Moutin's rapid-fire, thumb position soloing matches Nechushtan in both technique and intensity. Weiss keeps the grooves crackling with an enticing looseness, especially on the funkiness of "Entranced" and the glistening "Different Kind of Morning." Exceptional camaraderie and engaging performances make Words Beyond a trio recording worthy of the most discerning listener." John Vincent Barron 1/2/2011

### MIDWEST RECORDS

This expressive/progressive jazz pianist like to let it hang in left leaning fashion as you can hear echoes of Monk and progressive Jarrett (without the humming) running through this engaging set that doesn't really like to acknowledge boundaries. Airy, bright and a lot more fun that you would normally associate with cerebral jazz, I guess eggheads need to crack a smile once in a while too. Fun stuff from places you would least expect it and a friendly listen to boot. Check it out ! CHRIS SPECTOR January 18th 2011

### ALL ABOUT JAZZ

Pianist Alon Nechushtan is in the thick of things, amid a vibrant New York City jazz culture that often spawns deviating tangents and inventive ideologies. Indeed, the pianist reveals astounding technical faculties and a far-reaching approach to composition. Nechushtan's jazz-klezmer band TALAT, amid numerous forays into modern jazz and unconventional settings, intermittently gels to the beat of a markedly different drummer The program conveys Nechushtan's unbounded vision, as he overhauls the tried and true. With the musicians' pristine mode of execution abetted by precision-oriented passages, emotive dialogues and demanding time signatures, they impart a passionate stance and occasionally surge the sinuous flows into the upper stratosphere. They temper the proceedings on "Spring Soul Song," which is fabricated on ballad-based overtones and a subtle jazz-waltz motif. Here, Nechushtan emits a glistening effect atop the venerable rhythm section's crisp and fluid accompaniment. Moreover, the pianist summons a cheery panorama via a few sharp U-turns and undulating chord clusters. His uplifting storyline, effortless phraseology and acute penchant for suspense are enhanced by zinging harmonics. Words Beyond is, to a large extent, miles beyond customary piano trio fare, when viewed from a consortium of divergent

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perspectives. Personnel: Alon Nechushtan: piano; Francois Moutin: bass; Dan Weiss: drums.  
By GLENN ASTARITA, Published: May 20, 2011 Track review of "Spring Soul Song"

Talat

### JEWISH FORWARD

TALAT is a Dynamic new ensemble based in New York that plays original music crossing the borders of Jazz, Middle Eastern Groove and Klezmer. Featuring a quintet of some of the most talented players out of the new generation, this is a brilliant debut CD that will delight fans of Masada, Rashanim, Satlah and the Hasidic New Wave. Loping melodies, catchy hooks and improvisational fireworks from a new generation bringing Jewish music to exciting new places..."

### ALL ABOUT JAZZ

Alon Nechushtan's TALAT brings something unexpected to every track, playing blues, funk and even mellower tunes has compelling chemistry in abundance. This kind of fluidity cannot be accomplished unless solid relationships are both encouraged and formed between musicians."

### WORDS RHYTHMS MAGAZINE

Alon Nechushtan's band TALAT is a group based out of New York City. Their meshing of Klezmer music with other musical disciplines is what makes up their sound. Using Klezmer as the backbone of the sound allows Talat to use Israel as not only a physical but musical melting pot homeland and thus other styles come into play: North African modes and Middle Eastern rhythms conduct themselves as if in a lively conversation in a busy market. Just about all the composition on the recording clock in at over 5 minutes allowing the band to stretch out with many fine improvisational passages. The Jazz aspects (as well as the textured, spacey grooves that serve as interludes) seem reflect the musicians New York City experiences as part of their melting pot sound. If you like challenging yet engaging improvisational instrumental music then Talat is for your ears !

### BEYOND RACE MAGAZINE

Alon Nechushtan's TALAT produces an unclassifiable sound with the release of their recent album, The Growl. With brasses blowing and cascading piano keys, the sextet fuses traditional cultural sounds with new grooves and jives of the modern jazz age. "The Growl" appropriately commences the album, boasting a diverse collection of sounds and audio experiences. Teasing the listening audience with a taste of their versatility, Talat utilizes 9 minutes and 29 seconds to relax the listener, have them dancing in their seats, and then entrancing them, in the final moments, with mystical jazzy compositions. Talat's wide array of musical mastering and expertise coalesce in The Growl, a masterpiece guaranteed to leave a multicultural purring in your ears.

### TIME OUT NEW YORK

Alon Nechushtan's TALAT's sly klez-jazz hybrid sounds right at home at John Zorn's Tzadik Label, which has recently released the quintet's debut: The Growl

### JAZZIS

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Alon Nechushtan's TALAT is a NY based quintet with exceptional abilities and technique-hearing this album really knocked me out completely. Never before have I heard such a harmonious and clever interchange of Klezmer and jazz, almost painfully brilliant. The music cleverly moves between the Klezmer-like melodies and the jazz-like improvisations with such ease and elegance that the transition seems to be perfectly natural and smooth. The arrangements are devilishly clever and intricate, but easy on the ear, so this wonderful music should please even the less experienced listeners who had little experience with contemporary improvised music. This is a rare gem and an essential example of music transcending the limitations of what is considered humanly possible. A must!

### ALL ABOUT JAZZ

Alon Nechushtan's TALAT's inaugural recording, *The Growl*, while paying its considerable dues to klezmer, covers more bases, including African and Middle Eastern music, plus spiritual themes, all processed through improvised contexts that plays on all the familiar shticks of klezmer, but stresses the quintet's tight interplay and fluidity.

### THE JEWISH FORWARD

Alon Nechushtan's TALAT inclines toward Ashkenaz, Sephardic and modern Jazz all at once, and gets most of its juice from trumpeter Matt Shulman, reveals an unsuspected affinity for Jewish music and a startling ability to combine it with free jazz, improvisation and multiphonic trumpet playing, which make it seem like singing and sometimes screaming – through the instruments while playing ...

### WASHINGTON POST

Composed of five accomplished musicians, TALAT plays original interpretations of klezmer, Middle Eastern grooves and African themes and spirituals, roaming between the borders of jazz, groove and improvisation. With piano, trumpet, saxophone, bass and percussion, TALAT offers improvised interludes, riveting solos and spontaneous team play. Combined with familiar riffs and lively rhythms, they create music that is as challenging as it is appealing. Bandleader and pianist Alon Nechushtan is a graduate of the New England Conservatory and the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, and the recipient of numerous awards and grants. The band's debut recording on the prestigious Tzadik label earned accolades from music critics around the world. TALAT has toured in the US, Europe and the Middle East, and this is their DC debut.

### JAMBASE

Alon Nechushtan's TALAT plays a lively, horn-heavy brand of jazz. Their roots are firmly and fundamentally planted in bebop, but their deep Jewish influences push them into unique territory :classy jazz with an adventurous spirit and not a shred of pretension, has a real creation on their hands, and they deserve to be heard :alluring, cerebral, technically impressive.

### JAZZ IMPROV

Alon Nechushtan's TALAT, an exciting quintet joins the ranks of groups like new Klezmer Trio and Masada with their release of *The Growl*, Has the ability to add a strong underlying harmonic foundation or simply mix the obvious amounts of klezmer and jazz, free or otherwise, with classical music influence and up to date harmonic sense that leans toward jazz from the past decade. This album has something for everybody and Talat is a group worthy of a lot more attention.

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### EJAZZ NEWS

Alon Nechushtan's TALAT seamlessly merges Jewish Klezmer stylizations with Middle Eastern modalities into a largely, persuasive modern jazz vibe. With sonorous flows, prophetic themes and propulsive shifts in momentum, the musicians indulge in tension/release episodes, topped off with melodic storylines, where the artists fuse explorative frameworks with a dancehall type sensibility. Overall, this is a radiantly produced session, firmed-up by the group's conveyance of good cheer and excellence in execution."

### Compositions

### THE NEW YORKER

The sound of paper is as much part of the score as is the live accordion playing of the composer, Alon Nechushtan. by Emily Macel.

### NEW YORK TIMES

In "Fold", which features live music by the Israeli composer Alon Nechushtan, Ms. Pulvermacher explores the potential transformations of the acts of folding and unfolding with wild imagination. By Gia Kourlas

### BACK STAGE

In "Fold," Pulvermacher's unearthing of the meanings and consequences of folding and unfolding is aided tremendously by Alon Nechushtan's cleverly amalgamated score. A simple folk song (with a lyric by Pulvermacher), Middle Eastern-flavored accordion music, hip-pop sounds, famous classical recordings, affecting text, and exuberant vocalizations impel the dancers' intense interactions with elaborate origami creations. By Lisa Jo Sagolla.

### NEW YORK TIMES

In "Iodine", set to shards of sound in accompaniment composed by Alon Nechushtan, black flag is repeatedly hoisted. By Jennifer Dunning.

### BACK STAGE

"The Score composed by Alon Nechushtan was varied with each vignette, rhythmic, tightly mimic the quick beat of the dance." By Emily Macel.

### NEW YORK SUN

"Drifting about to Alon Nechushtan's whale song, proved a restful examination of choral movement." By Helen Shaw.

### THE VILLAGE VOICE

"The ominous noises and echoing voices of Alon Nechushtan's music, they're sometimes tender, sometimes fiercely manipulative with each other." Deborah Jowitt.

### BACK STAGE

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"Delicious score by composer Alon Nechushtan, following the sophisticated sensuality of the music." Lisa Jo Sagolla.

### DANCE INSIDER

"An original score by Alon Nechusthan of the Talat Trio lent a buoyant rhythm to the dance."  
Darrah Carr.