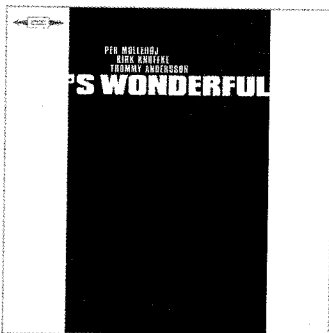


by trumpeter Red Allen, who of course had worked with her father's band, Russell says, 'Red Allen makes me smile. He loves to swing and his vocal is uplifting.' Hers, too, as Kellso opens, the tempo up and swinging, Russell romping vocally, John Allred vibrant on trombone, Shane striding, this track underlining her gift for rhythm singing. She follows with *Million Dollar Smile*, more relaxed, the tempo eased, her vocal warmth and insouciant, relaxed phrasing pleasingly evident.

It's good to hear Russell handling such an intriguing range of songs, none overlong, each studded with cheery solos from her musicians. It remains a mystery why she has yet to appear in Britain.

PETER VACHER



**PER MOLLEHOJ/
KIRK KNUFFKE/
THOMMY
ANDERSSON**

'SWONDERFUL

Stunt STUCD 21102: 40.49

This is an engaging album by three accomplished musicians, no overdubs, no edits, mostly one or two takes. Cornetist Kirk Knuffke and bassist Thommy Andersson, apparently, go back a long way and Stunt Records proposed recording as a trio with acoustic guitarist Per Mollehoj.

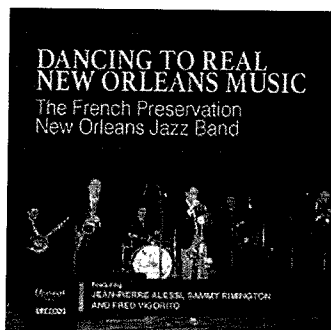
At the outset we have *Beale Street Blues*, Knuffke singing in lazily understated fashion, before following up with *Elisabeth Town*, his own composition about a town in New York, basically a one-chord blues with two interludes. This, in a way, is typical of the album which consists of four songs from the 1930s or earlier; two Knuffke pieces and three by Mollehoj, which tend to employ off-beat features. *Just Squeeze Me* and *'Swonderful* form a delightful pair of tracks, short (six minutes

in total), with all three enjoying themselves. The title track is particularly appealing, light, feisty, with Knuffke in exuberant mood, Mollehoj intersecting neatly with him and Andersson leaving plenty of room.

Mollehoj is, if anything, the star of the trio, unfussy, fleet, full of ideas, always attentive to what Knuffke is doing. Knuffke is similarly uncomplicated, especially impressive in his warmer, more restrained moments. As for Andersson, his occasional solo is fine, but generally he is the anchor for the improvisations of the other two.

First Draft is, to me at any rate, the most enjoyable of the originals, Mollehoj building on the song *I'm Confessin'*. After that Knuffke gives his vocal chops another airing on *St. Louis Blues*, Mollehoj filling in expertly, and another Mollehoj original, *A Brother and A Sister*, rounds off a very pleasing, unpretentious CD.

RON SIMPSON



**THE FRENCH
PRESERVATION
NEW ORLEANS
JAZZ BAND**

DANCING TO REAL NEW ORLEANS MUSIC

Upbeat: URCD320 65:31

Upbeat continues to re-release the back catalogue of Jazz Crusade, the revivalist label which gave a great boost to a largely unknown band from Lyon, bringing out two hot volumes of *New Orleans To Lyon*, in 2005, quickly followed by couple more of *Jumpin' In Irigny*.

This recording, from the same period band, features the inspirational leader, Jean-Pierre Alessi and regular stalwarts, Henry Lemaire, banjo, and Vincent Hurel, at the traps. Alessi's tenor always captures

the Manny Paul bounce and energy that we associate with Kid Thomas bands. A couple of foreign stars of the idiom, our own Sammy Rimington, on clarinet and alto, and the versatile ever-vigorous Fred Vigorito, cornet, complete the line-up.

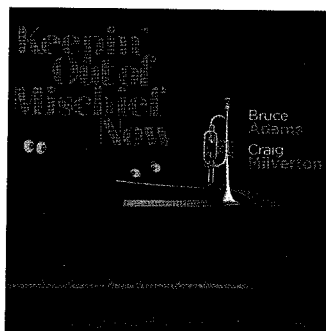
They play familiar New Orleans material, mostly ballads and spirituals, plus a couple from outside the canon. Sammy is in customarily fine form on *Burgundy Street Blues*, calling to mind his original inspiration, George Lewis, whose theme tune it was. On just *A Closer Walk With Thee*, he movingly reprises his solo with Kid Thomas' great December Band.

Calcutta, a beautiful tune now little remembered, though once a number one American hit for Heino Gaze, brings sweet clarinet and pulsing tenor together thrillingly. The gentle Nat King Cole hit *Pretend* is given some Kid Thomas fire and brimstone treatment by Vigorito.

Victory Walk is Joe Avery's Blues minus trombone. This explosive 12-bar set of riffs and chords at the heart of most early Rock-n-Roll recordings seems to be taking us out. But that honour is reserved for *Walking With The King*, Sammy taking a rare vocal.

This band now enjoys an international following and this release will no doubt prove popular.

ANDREW LIDDLE



**BRUCE ADAMS &
CRAIG MILVERTON**

KEEPIN' OUT OF MISCHIEF NOW

Self-produced, 51:08

Better late than never! In their liner-note Bruce and Craig tell us that 'this album should have

been recorded eighteen months earlier but had to be postponed due to the pandemic.' There's no doubt that that eighteen month hiatus (from which we're just starting to recover) was, for many musicians, damaging to inspiration and (especially for trumpet-players) the chops. But it's a tribute to both players here that they seem to have sailed through the Covid crisis calm and fully equipped to carry on. The content of their previous album *Golden Moments* (2016) was neatly summated in the title of its opening track *Pure Imagination* and this second excursion bears all the same hallmarks; exquisite repertorial choices ranging from Tom Delaney's *Jazz Me Blues* to Willard Robison's *Old Folks* (plus a definitive statement of the Heindorf-Cahn chef-d'oeuvre *Pete Kelly's Blues*); unflinching technical command plus the kind of comprehensive knowledge of the classic jazz vocabulary that has so far (however inevitably) escaped the attention of some younger players. On this set the iron-lipped Adams confines himself to his long-model cornet (join the club, old friend!); an instrument which permits him to ramble around in low-register explorations recalling Ruby Braff while occasionally unleashing the odd super-G as a reminder that you are in the presence of a trumpet heavyweight. To these creations Milverton (as you would expect) provides the perfect framework based broadly in the all-music vocabulary of Oscar Peterson; striding out cheerfully on the title track while elsewhere (as on *Little Girl Blue*) straying reflectively into the musical environs of Bill Evans. All in all an album to love and for those who appreciate fine CD design a treat in itself courtesy of Derek Lawton. Don't miss this one.

DIGBY FAIRWEATHER