

Derek Taylor -*All About Jazz* Doppelganger

Session specs on Dave Taylor are conspicuously tough to come by. According to Bob Rusch the bass trombonist gained veteran status through a long string of studio dates, but said gigs seem to fall outside the realm of creative improvised music. Paired with the Spirit Room rhythm team of Duval and Rosen, he proves conclusively that any anxiety caused by his dearth of improvisatory recording dates is ill advised. The man can blow, and blow freely. The fact that he can channel substantial ingenuity through as difficult a vessel as the bass trombone only adds to his credibility. Favoring a dynamic range that employs a complete array of his instrument's dusky tonal properties and a taciturn delivery that mixes melancholy and thinly veiled irascibility Taylor calibrates to the task of album making with an infectious sense of purpose. The over-arching seriousness of the trio's sound is tempered at times by jocular outbursts and a string of titles that uncover a humorous side. Stark muted fireworks on... "I'm Not Cool, Too!" which sound multitracked, but given CIMP's insistence on sound purity, are probably not and the "Gregorian drones of Leisured Enfilade" are two examples of the trio's healthy respect for the value of whimsy.

Duval and Rosen follow their leader with a level of deep listening commensurate to their substantial skills as senior improvisers. Taylor makes mention of an early skepticism regarding the sparseness of the instrumentation, and as to whether the three could muster enough variety to sustain an entire album. It's a legitimate reservation and there are sections on the disc where the energy and interest levels begin to flag. The trio struggle mightily against these forces however, and for the most part wins out. Three tracks, which segment the ensemble down into duo and solo forms further combat the specters of musical monotony. There's an odd Western thematic undercurrent running through the session as well, both musically in the austere desert wide-open spaces conjured by some of the tracks and in the song titles, not to mention the name of Taylor's publishing company "Triple Letter Brand Music." These referents aren't explained in the liners, making them all the more mysterious. Bass trombone trios are to my knowledge, an extremely rare breed in music of any taxonomy. Taylor's decision to blaze new trails across what might otherwise seem inhospitable improvisatory environs deserves accolades for courage alone. The reality that he's found gold in them thar hills almost seems like a bonus.