

Cadence about

ULI Lenz
Good-Bye venus
tutu 888218

[...] German pianist Lenz appears to have a pair and the virile sweaty studio date captured [...] is incontrovertible evidence. Schuller and Betsch have made their careers building burly and versatile accompaniment for some of the heaviest hitters in creative Jazz. They accord Lenz the same token, striking hard, but supportively from the opening "Good-Bye Venus" with rapport that runs deep and reliable. Together they tug at the tune's underlying beat and uncover some slinky swing for the effort. Lenz adds some pedal-colored patterns against a strong bass snap and sharply cast downbeat that could seemingly punch holes in concrete. The instruments are miked close and recorded hot. It's a case of almost too close when it comes to Betsch, who has one of the strongest stick strokes around and probably goes through drumheads with regularity. Eight more originals and two standards follow with ensemble energy rarely flagging. "Cosmic Berlin" riffs on a calypso rhythm; Schuller's bass bobbing against Lenz's sharply syncopated block chords before breaking ranks for an athletic solo laced with wordless vocal commentary. "When Sunny Gets Blue" plays like a ballad in overall feel, but in irreverent Jaki Byard style with lots of pronged corners and boisterous asides that shatter any sense of bookish repertory. Schuller's bow work blends poise and plangency on the brief classically-colored solo "Arco Orbit in D Minor." It's an example of odd bedfellows echoed in pizzicato on the pummeling rundown of Monk's "Well, You Needn't" and an unaccompanied preamble to "Planet 7up," a Latin-laced stomper that puts the concert piano through another punishing set of paces. The remainder of the program strides along in similar ruddy, perspiration-heavy fashion, confident and brimming with channeled testosterone starting with the declarative and suggestive standard variation, "Tune Me Up, Baby." One listener's galvanizing brio is another person's abrasive bombast. This trio will almost certainly offend members of the latter camp while bringing those in the former unmitigated pleasure. Wherever one stands on that arbitrary continuum, there's little denying the powder keg force with which these three ply their trade. [...]

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