

WAYNE HORVITZ
SELECTED REVIEW EXCERPTS

Joe Hill, 16 Actions for Orchestra, Voice and Soloist

"Joe Hill" is, in fact, a ravishingly beautiful work...

Paul de Barros *Seattle Times*

Solos

Somehow, always, they resist the postmodern temptation to be too smart and too cute: they're not trying to impress you with how much they can reference. These 14 pieces - including a few free improvisations, a traditional, a standard, and a Wayne Shorter tune - are mostly contemplative originals; one is particular, Ms. Holcomb's long form piece, "Before the Comet Comes," is staggeringly beautiful.

Ben Ratliff, *New York Times*

One of my favorite discs of 2004, Solos (Songlines), teems with solo piano pieces by Horvitz and Robin Holcomb that breathtakingly fuse the hermetic, astringent squiggles of Schoenberg's piano music with the lonesome sound of Shaker hymns.

Chris DeLaurenti, *The Stranger (Seattle)*

...they play like composers, giving every stroke a clear intent, informed by the tension and release of subtle harmonic and dynamic shifts.

Jazziz

..tunes like "Tired," with its' bittersweet and subtly melancholic feeling, are particularly compelling because one can feel Holcomb's more skewed approach subtly infect Horvitz's playing, while its clearer roots in the blues distinguish it as a Horvitz piece.

John Kelman, *All About Jazz.com*

Wayne Horvitz and Robin Holcomb - the legendary husband-and-wife team that has had such an impact on extemporaneous music since the early '80s - take turns improvising on this hour-long solo piano recording.... The music is generally sparse and contemplative, but not *too* sparse and contemplative. It's a relaxed listen that touches on free jazz, polytonal hymnsong, traditional jazz (there's a nice version of "Stars Fell On Alabama"), and postmodern classicism, without really being any of those.

Carl Lumma, *Keyboard Magazine*

Simplicity of means doesn't mean simple-minded. Married pianists/composers Robin Holcomb and Wayne Horvitz shared a solo-piano album, Solos (Songlines), alternating

tracks, mixing covers and originals, spontaneous improvisations and through-composed pieces, Holcomb favoring ambiguous tonalities and chord-cluster rumblings and Horvitz leaning toward blues and Wayne Shorter. The complementary styles make for overall unity and perfect sequencing.

Jon Garelick, Boston Phoenix, December 24, 2004

Mylab

It's easy to tell how the pieces on Mylab (Terminus) began: as vamps and loops for jamming in the studio. Yet it's impossible to guess where they'll end up. Mylab's core duo, the keyboardist Wayne Horvitz and the drummer Tucker Martine, refuse to settle into their own grooves; they add unlikely overdubs, dissolve the track's foundations and flesh out musical connotations from country fiddle to big-band saxophones. Every free association yields a new treat.

Jon Pareles, New York Times 4/4/04

This is a brilliantly conceived and superbly produced debut album that indicates Martine and Horvitz's musical future will be a major thrill.

PVV, Billboard Magazine 2/7/04

Talk about a sonic experiment gone horribly right, check out this supernatural melding of genres from Mylab. All I know is that their debut album is the most imaginative collage of groove, melody, harmony, and texture I've heard in a long time.

Jude Gold, Guitar Player 2/04

... a dazzling sonic playground full of some wild rides. Mylab stretches the art of sound collage into new frontiers.

Ned Wharton, NPR Weekend Edition Editor's Picks 2/04

My big pick for next week is Seattle's Mylab and their self-titled debut, a fantastic landscape of haunted pop-instrumentals from the duo of pianist Wayne Horvitz and producer Tucker Martine. Like Morphine meets the Latin Playboys side-project of Los Lobos, this Terminus Records release is mastercraft sound architecture and worth searching out.

Positively Yeah Yeah Yeah (Ohio)

Filling a niche nobody (but them) knew existed, Tucker Martine and Wayne Horvitz have made a trippy instrumental album conversant with rock, jazz, bluegrass and the intangible music known as "ambient". Sounds messy, right? It is, but in a wonderful kind of way.

They've done a remarkable job pulling together disparate genres, creating a sound collage that makes sense.

Nick Marino, Atlanta Journal Constitution 2/17/04

They've concocted a thoroughly mind-bending, genre-obliterating disc just about equally emphasizing groove, melody, and pure sound. But Mylab does not sound like a deconstructionist take on old-time music (a la Moby)... it is extremely intoxicating.

Eric Snider, Tampa Weekly Planet 2/04

Sweeter Than the Day

"... a great showcase for Horvitz's beautiful compositions, his really strange angular chord progressions."

Ned Wharton, NPR's Weekend Edition

On piano, Horvitz is economical yet lyrical, never venturing far from the strong melodic hooks which characterize his compositions, but constantly working small surprises. An irresistible antidote to gray days.

The Wire UK

Horvitz' understanding of country, blues, folk and even singer-songwriter-type music is made quite plain on this CD. None of these elements are represented in an obvious way, and that's perhaps the main reason why this disc appeal so strongly. The strength of the music lies in Horvitz' beautifully crafted compositions. Like Monk and Herbie Nichols, Horvitz is able to create memorable and distinctive melody lines from seemingly disparate, even mundane, motifs and phrases.

Dave Wayne, Jazz Weekly

(Four stars) **** ... this set probably subverts most UK-audience assumptions about Horvitz ... its' offbeat lyricism and trancelike guitar-blues atmosphere. A real surprise.
John Fordham, The Guardian (London)

Elegant and subtle, these lovely compositions uncoil slowly enough that they'll likely repay a lifetime of listening.

Alex Varty, The Georgia Straight (Vancouver BC)

FOUR PLUS ONE ENSEMBLE

There's as much chamber music (whatever that means) as jazz (whatever that means) here, and some very strong compositions and playing. Horvitz plays acoustic and electric piano on this CD, often feeding his playing into Tucker Martine's box of tricks. Eyvind Kang and Julian Priester play superbly throughout, with Priester's solo on "Cotton Club" a highlight. It's rewarding to listen to what's going on behind the soloist-beneath Priester's "Cotton Club" solo, there's a contrastingly delicate violin and keyboard commentary.

John Whitten, *Earshot Jazz*

Between the bucolic pianism of "Take Me Home" and the closing Electro-folk stew of Calder/Snake Eyes, 4 + 1 Ensemble covers a lot of ground. There's very little grandstanding amid the attentiveness and considered contextualisation. Horvitz evinces a very individual appreciation of rhythm, particularly the ability to govern dynamic tension via its manipulation.

Tim Owen. *The Wire UK*

ZONY MASH

.....a smarter, more harmonically involved band that never stays locked in a single groove. Its Meters meets Miles approach, though certainly tailored for the crossover, jam band set, was of the type that would be equally attractive to more discriminating listeners.

Bill Kohlhaase, *L.A. Times*

You've got to be ultra tight to convince listeners of your funkateer prowess, and for the most part, the fingers of Zony Mash Form a fist. On the nimble intro to "Smiles" they have the accuracy of a string quartet....Here's to their inspired if unholy alliances. May they continue to offer such seductive blends

Jim Macnie, *Down Beat*

Original tunes incorporate delightfully strange twists of harmony or rhythm, but the essential appeal is to the urge to dance.

Josef Woodard, *Jazziz*

"JACKPOT"...Judging by the response this release has gotten on the jazz charts , many of you already know this, for the rest, however, it's time to get with it.

Ted Hendrickson, *CMJ*

MONOLOGUE

The delightful mix of tones and textures is almost a sufficient reward in itself, but Horvitz is also a damn fine musician with an ear for a groove. This disc is way more happenin' than most of the techno on the racks right now.

Bill Tilland, *Alternative Press*

THE PRESIDENT

The President has evolved into a truly funky instrumental rock & roll band; Horvitz himself describes it as a blues band with some twist. However you label it, it's brash and bold, with hard-edged, deep-hued primary colors slashing jagged lines across temporal and generic boundaries...it's also about as far from the fuzak of GRP and Zebra as you can run.

Gene Santoro, *Down Beat*

This wasn't country music, but an abstracted elliptical version of it that tied into an understanding of a mutual Americanness - gospel chords, country melodies, blues ideas - most people in the audience would understand.

Peter Watrous, *The New York Times*

The President, an exciting, cerebrally funky sextet of avant-funkers...recalls what fusion used to be - music that not only combines disparate elements but does so with keen intelligence, high definition and incendiary suspense.

Gene Kalbacher, *CMJ Music Report*

Sonny Boy Williamson in a Zen Temple.

Richard Williams, *Times (London)*

HORVITZ, MORRIS, PREVITE TRIO

However one categorizes it, this trio makes quite remarkable music. It is virtuosic, varied in texture and mood, clever in sonorous combinations and far removed from the rave-up frenzy that can afflict the less talented of these improvisation ensembles.

John Rockwell, *The New York Times*

A delicate, masterful record.

Jazz Short Takes, *Musician Magazine*

When you think about it, though, there's an astonishing variety of ideas on this record. Play it loud, or you'll miss half of them.

Jonathan Coe, *Wire Magazine*

THE NEW YORK COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA

This is important music, skillfully constructed and marvelously executed. Not incidentally, it also swings mightily. The NYCO makes clear that there are composers creating modern music that is serious and creative, yet accessible and enjoyable.

Tom Krehbial, *CD Review*

The ensemble voicings are deceptively conventional, but this is like no big band music that you've heard before. Horvitz's "House That Brings a Smile," dedicated to the late Richard Manuel of the Band, suggests the depth and breadth of his influences. A truly splendid collection.

Bill Tillian, *Option*

That these extravagantly gifted improvisers and composers remain stranded on the fringe is a crime. A truly contemporary big band that crafts an original ensemble voice from unfashionable postbop jazz devices and multistylistic influences, the NYCO points directions out of the musical prison that surround too much current jazz. And like all truly great big bands, it swings its tail off.

Steve Futterman, *Rolling Stone*

PIGPEN

Pigpen is one of the most beautifully unaccountable bands out there doin' it. Cryptic, comic, in-your -face, and off-the-map, they sound like an erudite bar band from another planet, or from another era in a cultural world parallel to our own.

Jazziz

Pigpen is a thinking-person's bar band, paradoxical and good-humored, urban but not so badass. They like to think small to make a big bang.

John Payne *L.A. Weekly*

If I had to guess what this was, without looking at the press kit, I would probably say something like, four guys locked into a studio with all this gear, lots of food, LSD, some pot, and a madman with something new to prove. This one's a keeper!

Jeff Daniel *Pandemonium*