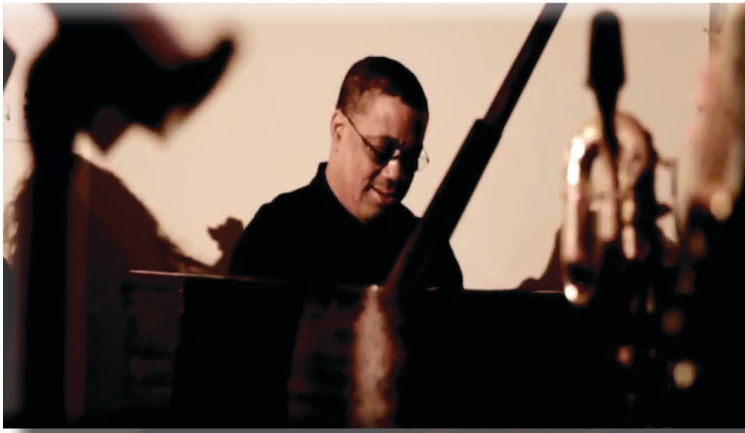


The Stephen McQuarry Trio



Pianist/composer Steve McQuarry describes himself as a perpetual student, but his music offers an advanced education in gracefully melding disparate musical traditions. Focusing on his original compositions and arrangements, McQuarry's melodious octet Resonance combines jazz's improvisational imperative with the finely calibrated acoustic dynamics of chamber music and the frisson of contemporary classical experimentation.

Always looking for new information, McQuarry has gleaned ideas from some of the 20th century's most influential artists, from bebop trumpet legends Dizzy Gillespie and Red Rodney to composer/arranger Clare Fischer and fearless sonic explorers John Cage and Laurie Anderson. Since settling in the Bay Area in the mid-90s, he's led at least half a dozen different bands, including the jazz combos Pangaea and Zazen, the electronica group Synsor, and the meditation-enhancing ensemble Agharta. But lately he's channeled many of his musical passions into Resonance, turning the singular ensemble into a vehicle for his ambitious stylistic fusion.

"While no group could encompass every twist and turn on McQuarry's musical journey, Resonance reflects his wide-ranging curiosity. In a career stretching over three decades, he is that rarest of creative animals, a hybrid fox and hedgehog. Like the animals in Isaiah Berlin's famous dictum, he's foxlike in gathering knowledge from many musical fields, while his hedgehog aesthetic is shaped by knowing one big thing, that all sounds are fair game for a musician whose ears are open to the universe. For McQuarry, that quest has taken him far and wide, and over the years he's studied at the Eastman School of Music, the University of Colorado at Denver, Berklee College of Music, University of California San Diego, and Alexander University.

"I kept studying with different people, with professors on and off over the years," McQuarry says. "I'd hear about something going on and I kept studying to keep learning and building up compositional tools. I still do that today."

Born August 17, 1959 in Denver, Colorado, he grew up in the Mile High City surrounded by music. His mother was a pianist (as were various aunts and uncles) and he watched her play hymns in the Methodist Church and classical music at home. He started piano lessons at six, and by 10 he was learning piano

and music theory from Dr. Janice Buckner. Before long he was making his first forays into composing. Like many young musicians at the time, Miles Davis captured his imagination. "My mother bought me a copy of Bitches Brew when it came out in 1970, and that turned me on my head," McQuarry says.

In junior high his interest in the orchestra led him to the cello, and he played through the end of high school. At the same time, McQuarry was getting swept up in the popular music of the day, playing R&B and jazz with friends. Always interested in electronics, he requisitioned his high school's underutilized synthesizer and taught himself to play and program it. He's been deeply involved in electronics ever since, including working as an audio engineer.

"That synthesizer really changed my life," McQuarry says. "It put me into another type of music and hooked me into bands like Tangerine Dream. I started studying who was making synthesizer music and following the latest technologies introduced by Dr. Moog. I got a bunch of albums by Herbie Hancock and Joe Zawinul with Weather Report."

Already gigging around Denver with pop bands, McQuarry found that his facility on the synthesizer led to recording gigs with professional musicians eager to explore the new technology. Recruited to the University of Colorado by a professor eager to have a synthesizer student, he found himself collaborating with John Cage and electronic music pioneer Morton Subotnick. But the artists who made the biggest impact were trumpeters Red Rodney and Dizzy Gillespie.

"Rodney really helped give me a focus, getting me to think about what is my style, and the importance to keep trying to achieve that," McQuarry says. "And watching Dizzy play was an amazing experience. He was really connected with the drummer. He had the clearest tone I've ever heard."

McQuarry spent a decade in San Diego, where he focused on Latin jazz and connected with the great swing/blues trombonist, bandleader, and arranger Jimmy Cheatham (who co-led a superb little big band with his wife, Jeannie Cheatham). By the time McQuarry moved to the Bay Area in 1996 to work in the high tech industry, electronic music had become his primary focus. Inspired by acts like UnderWorld, Roni Size, and Massive Attack, he honed the intoxicating sound of Synsor, developing a potent mix of electronica, techno, trance, ambient, house, and drum 'n' bass. Synsor's 2004 album Protocol, the first release on McQuarry's label Mandala Records, earned international attention, but his focus was already starting to turn toward the orchestral investigations that led to Resonance.

Today, Stephen is composing and recording on his indie label, Mandala Records and working on orchestration projects in the film community, but someday you might find him on a pink sand beach with Sherre eating a conch salad.



Following in the piano Jazz trio traditions of Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea and Ray Bryant, the Stephen McQuarry Trio brings the next continuum. With swing, bebop, contemporary, bossa and blues, this music brings the feel of straight ahead Jazz into the 21st century. With the flowing bass lines of Ted Burik and swinging drum beats from Greg German, this trio interprets the original compositions of Stephen McQuarry, who completes this trio from the piano chair.

Stephen McQuarry : Piano

Ted Burik : Bass

Greg German : Drums

Stephen McQuarry Trio

Azure

1. Blues For Jack 4:54
2. Azure 5:36
3. Lunar 4:17
4. Little Brown House 4:06
5. Sunday Afternoon 5:04
6. Azadeh 6:38
7. A View From My Heart 6:59
8. You Never Know 3:21
9. Miles Away 4:53
10. Lydia 4:11

Artist: Stephen McQuarry Trio

CD Title: Aure

Label: Mandala Records

Add Date:

Street Date: September 3, 2013

Website: www.mcquarry.org

Available at all fine retailers



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