

THE GROVE



The Kate Luxmoore Group Live
Kate Luxmoore (clarinet and bass clarinet), Omar Puentes (violin), Karen Street (accordion), Marco Piccioni (guitars), Colin Peters (bass), Lekan Babalona (percussion)

Oyeke Records

This live recording is the first release under her own name by clarinetist Kate Luxmoore and her elite band of top musicians, including Karen Street on accordion. Originally trained as a classical performer, Kate subsequently expanded her musical horizons into jazz and composition. With folk and world music influences, the majority of the ten tracks are original compositions, the remainder based on folk songs.

The opening number *Per Crucem* is a contemporary take on an old melody, with Kate's clarinet and Omar Puentes's jazz violin appearing as sparring partners above the rhythm section's repeating groove. *Soundwaves* features a simple Klezmer melody over a busy bass, while *Openfield* provides a contrasting reflective clarinet solo, relentless yet poignant. The title track presents the bass clarinet in tuneful, joyful mood, a showcase for Kate Luxmoore's lovely warm tone.

Homage to Hubert sees a perfect accordion solo from Karen Street, followed by a sultry bass clarinet in a rhythmic Tango. *Apple Wassail* and *Minimal F* bring traditional folk tunes into the 21st century with a jazzy flavour, either side of *Mr PL*, an atmospheric tribute to the composer's father, remembered here with fondness. *Tales of Diaspora*, originally composed for the slightly different line-up of Kate's KLLB Band, showcases the clarinet in an up-tempo melody, underpinned by a rhythmic Cuban groove, providing a celebratory closer.

This music has an immediate appeal – rhythmic, full of repetitive figures and simple melodic lines and phrases. The unusual line-up produces a distinctive sound spanning continents and genres, featuring the clarinet and violin as equal frontline partners in a well balanced ensemble. The recording captures the spirit of a live performance, complete with clapping and name checks for the band. Catch them live if you get the opportunity; otherwise this CD is the next best thing.

Alison Owen-Morley

PARTENOPE



Luca Luciano (clarinet)
Rondo contemporaneo; Sequenza #1; Fragment #4; Sequenza #2 in A minor; Fragment #5; Jazz Impromptu

LUC01 CD www.lucaluciano.com

Naples-trained, Leeds and London-based, Luca Luciano has established himself as the friendly face of contemporary clarinet. On this CD you will hear all the multiphonics, growls, flutters, glissandi, quarter tones, jazzy improvisations etc that seem to be inseparable from up-to-the-minute clarinet repertoire, but also passages of Neapolitan folk melody, tarantella rhythms, and even moments that wouldn't be out of place in a Morricone film score. Luciano quotes Mahler in support of this all-embracing mixture. The overall effect is attractive and surprising, and must be very effective when heard live (you can see him in action on YouTube). Luciano has total control of his (full-Boehm) instrument, with a large 'edgeless' sound that in the mellow upper register somewhat recalls Artie Shaw and avoids the full-frontal 'Hymnos' aspect of the clarinet. By comparison with Berio and Donatoni, this is easy listening. I was rather .

disappointed by the *Jazz Impromptu* (homage to Charlie Parker) which didn't seem to me to capture any of that master's magic, and even made me wonder (I know I am on thin ice here) whether the clarinet is really the ideal instrument for bop. This apart, the whole CD is fascinating to listen to and whets my appetite to hear this remarkable musician in the flesh.

John Playfair

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What can be clearly discerned from this archival, strictly chronological presentation of 11 different combos lasting nearly three and a half hours is how triumphantly Charlie, and his close cohort, Dizzy Gillespie, stand apart from the wartime 'swingers' of the previous generation (such stalwarts as Flip Phillips, Teddy Wilson, Red Norvo and Buck Clayton) and how despite how many 'takes' of a tune are laid down how little Charlie repeats any element of his improvisation. Also, gradually, you can feel his recording accomplices start to embrace the new be-bop style.

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