



**MARILYN MAZUR / FREDRIK LUNDIN / KASPAR BAI - Maluba Orchestra**

**Stunt Records STUCD19042**

*Fredrik Lundin – mezzo soprano and tenor sax, flutes; Christina von Bülow – alto sax and flute; Pernille Bévort – tenor sax, alto flute, clarinet and bass clarinet; Jesper Løvdal – baritone sax, alto flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, contra alto clarinet, and contrabass clarinet; Tomasz Dabrowski – trumpet and flugelhorn; Maj Berit Guassora – trumpet and flugelhorn; Mia Engsager – trombone; Annette Saxe – bass trombone and tuba; Kaspai Bai – guitar; Makiko Hirabayashi – piano and keyboard; Klavs Hovman – bass; Emil de Waal – drums and electronics; Marilyn Mazur – percussion*

“We three – Marilyn, Fredrik and Kaspar – are not at all alike as composers, or human beings for that matter. Nonetheless each of us longed for a large band - one that could realize our most ambitious compositional ideas.” From this compelling desire comes the 13 piece

Maluba Orchestra - led by the percussionist Marilyn Mazur, saxophonist and flutist Fredrik Lundin, and guitarist Kaspar Bai, with musicians drawn from the contemporary Danish jazz scene. This is the polished, eponymous debut album from an orchestra seeking “a unique but recognisable voice of its own.”

To listen to this album is to take an interesting walk along a cool, north beach, discovering beautiful pebbles and rounded glass on the way – each one unique and surprisingly different from the last. Whatever your preferred style, you’ll likely find something captivating here. The album opens with a homage to Paul Bley and Ornette Coleman - the haunting other-worldly theme of Circling Back builds into a pleasingly boisterous collective free improv. Even if free improv isn’t your thing though, don’t stop listening yet. Next up is the soft mourning of Mazur’s Vibe – capturing the quiet intensity of the loss of a good friend. The tune grows through the grief into an uplifting tribute for a wild woman, accented by Makiko Hirabayashi’s sensitive piano and Pernille Bévort’s bass clarinet. Mazur’s minimalist Maluba Birds brings its own idiosyncratic ornithology through flute, contrabass clarinet, waterphone and piano. Presto Hymn’s beefy funk groove struts a big dynamic sound. There is room even for some Moomins here (isn’t there always room for some Moomins?) – via the quirky, engaging percussion and flutes of Bai’s Hattifnat.

The stand out tracks for me, apart from the brilliant Vibe, are Mazur’s ephemeral Windy Wish – a restless, questioning theme, with the absorbing tenor solo from Lundin a swirling vortex of leaves in empty streets. The spacious, cinematic feel of Lundin’s Night Travel evokes a car journey seen through childlike eyes. It speaks of unknown dark roads and strange night-time cities - featuring the elegant melodic contours of Maj Berit Guassora’s trumpet and Mia Engsager’s trombone. And, of course, the driving Fanfare (because an orchestra of this kind should have a fanfare) which celebrates the depth of sound of all the layers of the full orchestra. Listen out for the strapping Baritone sax solo from Jesper Løvdal.

And by the way, if you listen on vinyl or CD, you will be treated to a fine example of The Endangered Art of the Liner Notes: amusing, useful, educational, contextual, concise. Well worth a read. Streamers: you don’t know what you’re missing.

**Reviewed by Maddy Shaw**