

JAZZTIMES cd & record reviews

WALT WEISKOPF

Exact Science

Iris Records ICD-1002 (51:07)

Walt Weiskopf, tenor saxophone; Joel Weiskopf, piano; Jay Anderson, bass; Jeff Hirshfield, drums. Telltale; Jay-Walking; About You; Mr. Goldyadkin; Intuition; Indecisive; Sad But True; Exact Science; Scenes from Childhood; Falling In Love With Love.

This release represents the debut of 30-year-old tenor man Walt Weiskopf as a leader and featured artist. It reveals him as both a very talented soloist and composer of nine of the 10 pieces performed here. Moreover, the liner notes indicate that, in collaboration with Nick Prout, he was responsible for the production and mixing of this recording. He is clearly a versatile young man.

Walt Weiskopf grew up in Syracuse, NY, where he started playing clarinet at a tender age, but soon switched to alto. After graduating (in three years) from the Eastman School of Music, he moved to New York City in 1980. There, he soon picked up the tenor and joined Buddy Rich's band. He left Rich late in 1982 and signed on with Toshiko Akiyoshi in the spring of 1983. He came to be a featured soloist in concerts and recordings with the Akiyoshi band and discovered that the tenor was his real "voice".

The present stage in the young musician's evolution began when he joined forces with brother Joel and the others on this recording to form the Walt Weiskopf Quartet. The group has now been playing together in the New York area for about five years in preparation for their premiere here.

The music presented in this collection is rhythmically and harmonically innovative. The original compositions are introspective and sometimes haunting, but always fresh and swinging. I was particularly taken by Intuition; Scenes from Childhood, and the title piece Exact Science. The set concludes with an upbeat treatment of the Rodgers and Hart standard, Falling In Love With Love.

The musicianship is first-rate, Walt's tenor dominates the performance, but Joel's (sometimes Bill Evans-like) piano is heard to fine advantage on most of the cuts. This is definitely a group to watch.

--Tom Jacobsen