

## Syracuse New Times

\*\*\*\*\* Excellent

\*\*\*\* Very Good

\*\*\* Just OK

\*\* So So

\* Awful

A Wild Reed Ride

Walt Weiskopf, Exact Science (Iris).

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With this impressive debut, Weiskopf will join Tim Berne as one of upstate New York's saxophone iconoclasts. Eschewing the trappings of fusion and pop jazz, tenor player Weiskopf -- like alto specialist Berne -- proceeds in a more cerebral and esoteric direction.

Joined by his brother Joel on piano, Jay Anderson on bass, and Jeff Hirshfield on drums, Weiskopf sets out to extend the traditions of the great bop artists. His 9 original compositions alternately peer dolefully inward (bop musicians lead such uncertain lives) and reel forward on the brink of balance, saved ultimately by their own sense of undeniable gravity.

Over these often eccentric syncopations, Weiskopf's phrasing is terse and composed. Long, notey runs -- the signature of bop -- are foiled by supine figures and precise, surgical strikes at the melody and its infinite possibilities. Nothing is wasted here, and the only things both relevant and necessary are included.

After growing up near Syracuse and studying at Rochester's Eastman School, Weiskopf migrated to New York City in 1980 and hooked up with Buddy Rich's and Toshiko Akiyoshi's big bands. With this hopefully auspicious beginning, the Central New York native has made a strong, clear statement about his future as the leader of a small ensemble.

--J.T. Hall