

BRAITHEWAITE & KATZ

NEWS RELEASE

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FRESH SOUND RELEASES “TRANSLUCENT SPACE,” DEBUT JAZZ ALBUM BY SAXOPHONIST-COMPOSER JASON RIGBY

“Rigby's got an attractive saxophone tone and plays with melodic suppleness.”
— Harvey Pekar, **Cleveland Free Times**

On the new release ***Translucent Space***, **Jason Rigby** not only showcases his creative prowess on alto, soprano, and tenor saxophones, bass clarinet, and wood flute, but also his considerable talent as a composer. An assured New York-based musician whose jazz mixes conventional and “outside” improvisation in stirring fashion, he is joined on his first feature recording by NYC blue-ribbon players **Mike Holober** (keyboards), **Cameron Brown** (bass), and **Mark Ferber** (drums) with special guests **Rich Johnson** (trumpet), **Lauren Riley** (cello), **Soo-Kyung Park** (flute), **Sam Sadigursky** (clarinet), and **Jason Gillenwater** (clarinet).

The intriguing album title is a tip-off that Rigby has more on his mind than a blowing session. The Cleveland native, who has performed with the Village Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, says, *“The concept of ‘translucent space’ is one of sounds, ideas, and colors mixed with different impressions — traces of dreams, inspirations, desires, chaos, beauty. It suggests feelings and moods, and it influences perspective rather than give clear definitions.”* He states his stellar jazz contains *“elements of free-bop, minimalism, minor modal thrashing, as well as lush harmonic progressions and both chaos and control. There are different personalities that come out, and I enjoy creating different textures with a limited number of instruments.”*

Rigby continues, *“This project is a documentation of original music with the priority of improvisation and group interplay. Aside from the written woodwind and cello parts, most of the songs were just sketches of melody and rhythms — the rest was improvised in the moment... Each of these individual songs is the residue of impressions made from different places and spaces. Some are the resultant impressions of colors and moods. As a whole collection, they are reflective of some of my strongest impressions.”* Not bound to traditional harmony, he bases many of his fresh-sounding original tunes on free-style melodies and repeated rhythmic patterns. As an impressive composer meriting wider recognition, he has developed his compositional style after having listened long and hard to primary influences Wayne Shorter, Philip Glass, Ornette Coleman, and classical greats Mahler, Bartok and Shostakovich. His individuated tone and approach to woodwinds and ensemble sound draw inspiration from such jazz pantheon figures as John Coltrane, Joe Henderson, Joe Lovano, Mel Lewis, the Paul Motian Trio, and the ‘60’s Miles Davis band.

With Rigby and the other players in stellar form, the album tracks challenge the listener’s intellect while warming the heart and rousing the soul. Opener “Proximo” has the woodwind trio very much in the moment, ratcheting up intensity gradually in response to the 7/4 groove and a couple of beatific chords; his compositional ideas reference minimalism in rewarding fashion. “Turquoise Turkish,” which owes something to Ornette Coleman’s compositional approach with a slippery melody and supercharged rhythm setting the stage for group improvisation, thrills as a wild and vibrant “free bop” brimming over with musical intelligence and wit. Introduced with a touch of exotica by Mark Ferber’s splash-cymbals-pressed-against-toms sounds, “Southampton [UK]” features not only Mike Holober’s quietly passionate electric piano solo but also some compelling soprano saxophone and bass clarinet work by the bandleader over a killer bass ostinato. On a personal level, the latter song is Rigby’s musical impression of having spent time in south England.

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High levels of musicianship and creativity are maintained throughout the program. By way of sensitive playing and subtle coloration, Rigby and friends shape “Atmospheric” into a sort of tone poem whose loveliness, brought out in Brown’s melodic bass and Rigby’s intimate tenor saxophone, has a slightly unsettling edge. Based on a tone row and a set of repeated rhythmic patterns, “114” opens up into what Rigby calls “controlled chaos” — Rich Johnson’s rich trumpet fits into the mildly manic vibe of the piece perfectly. With Rigby expertly taking a relaxed melody into a minor swing improvisation section, “Backandforthedness” suggests the modal musical world of John Coltrane without ever slipping into mimicry; there’s wondrous turmoil expressed in the collective effort of bandleader, Brown, Holober, and Ferber that gets supplanted by a sense of inner peace by the end of the piece. Traveling the lush forests and rocky meadows of southern Germany gave Rigby the emotional impetus to compose the gorgeous if mysterious “Green of Greens,” wherein Rigby on soprano and his band mates sweep through the melody and harmonies at varying paces. Rigby plays a long Indian bamboo flute on the short-but-sweet, driving “Mumbai,” named for a colorful spot in southern Asia he visited, and the ace saxophonist delivers gentle poignancy when coddling and probing the melody of his album-closing song titled for his brother, “Christopher.” It’s abundantly clear that Rigby has worked extensively with Holober and Ferber the past few years, and the special rapport present extends to all the others on the remarkable session.

Just 31-years-old, **Rigby** is active on the New York jazz scene. Career highlights so far include working with the Village Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; performing Gunther Schuller arrangements at Duke Ellington’s 100th Birthday Celebration with the prestigious Cleveland (OH) Orchestra; playing in Aretha Franklin’s band at Radio City Music Hall; and participating in a Cameron Brown-helmed project concerning Don Cherry jazz from the mid-‘60s. Rigby’s also a regular sideman with the Scott Dubois Quintet and at times with the Kris Davis Group and Eivind Opsvik’s Overseas, and the list of colleagues with whom he has performed only starts with notables David Leibman and Tony Malaby. His formal music studies were done at Youngstown State University in Ohio, DePaul University in Chicago and the Manhattan School of Music. In Cleveland, before his move to New York, Rigby performed regularly with acclaimed organ player Dan Wall and tenor saxophonist Ernie Krivda. At Manhattan School of Music he studied with Dick Oatts, Mike Abene and Rich Perry. In 1999, at DePaul, he won *DownBeat Magazine*’s prestigious “Best College Jazz Instrumentalist” award.

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