

some streamlined, "perfect" society of the future as described by a George Orwell or a Ray Bradbury.

My rating is based on the sincerity, competence, and intelligence of this music. Emotionally, it's two stars, though.

(M.Z.)

Denny Zeitlin

LIVE AT THE TRIDENT—Columbia 2463: *St. Thomas; Carole's Waltz; Spur of the Moment; Where Does It Lead?; Lonely Woman; My Shining Hour; Quiet Now; At Sixes and Sevens; What Is This Thing Called Love?*

Personnel: Zeitlin, piano; Charlie Haden, bass; Jerry Granelli, drums.

Rating: ★★★★★

This is a beautiful album. Each time I play it I seem to enjoy it more, hearing fresh nuances with every listening, for the music is by turns joyful (as in the title tune), introspective (*Lonely Woman*), tranquil, sad, exciting, and stimulating.

It's very satisfying to hear three musicians play together with the warmth and empathy that these men do. They really have themselves together and seem to be unusually sympathetic and sensitive to one another. Not every group can carry off spur-of-the-moment performances (as this trio does on at least three tracks) with such brilliance and aplomb.

Zeitlin has fine technique and a beautiful touch, using both to good advantage. Everything he plays has meaning—it sounds as if he knows where he's going every minute and is enjoying the trip. Tempos and moods ebb and flow, volume fluctuates from a crescendo to a whisper, and through it all pulsates a throbbing, charging emotion that communicates itself im-

mediately to the listener.

Hour is simple, short, swinging.

The beautifully paced exploration of *Love* ranges through many colors and sounds, finally meshing into an exciting exposition of the tune. It takes on new life in Zeitlin's hands as little fragments of the melody flash quickly in and out like silken threads being drawn together into a collective embroidery. Like a stimulating conversation, everyone has his say (yet with the awareness and consideration not to interrupt one another) till, after a medium-tempo go-around, comes one last stunning series of runs, followed by the whirl of up-tempo choruses enhanced by dramatic chord changes and ideas that are sparkling freshets of sound.

Quiet Now is a tender ballad, and tranquility flows through it, gently evoking dreams and memories.

Sixes seems comfortable and swinging, as it continually switches from one odd time-signature to another—without any geometric "look, we're in 7/4" approach. Granelli's drum solo is sparkling and inventive. He can explore authoritatively whenever the occasion demands, and his definition on the cymbal is a joy to hear. The piece is taken apart delicately but firmly and put back together again, to end with a six-note comment by Haden.

Carole's Waltz is a thoughtful melody, at times almost not a waltz, so subtly does the feeling of it change—an imperceptible movement here and there, a slight shift of the tender lyrical line and a musical portrait of Zeitlin's wife, Carole, takes

shape as she emerges as a warm, vibrant person, creative and charming. The piece is light and airy, yet profound.

Moment is a blues stated in swinging terms, with Haden charging exuberantly into a solid walking line, deep and sonorous, never booming. It's good to hear the natural sound of the bass, the gutty sound that is so much a part of the instrument and is so often lost. Haden and Granelli lay down a strong foundation for the piano to build layer upon layer of single-note figures and little thrusting chords, with the bass again having the last word.

On *Woman* Granelli's furious up-tempo accompaniment scintillates against the freely moving and haunting melody. Granelli is reminiscent of his friend and mentor, Joe Morello, with his light yet incisive touch on the cymbals. (I think I know why I never cared much for this up-tempo effect against a slow melody until now: the drums were always too loud, so much so that one missed the subtleties of the other instruments. Since that does not happen here, the piece is stunningly effective.)

There's much freedom on this record, but the group obviously knows the difference between freedom and license. The balance and presence of the instruments is as nearly perfect as anything I have heard . . . and so is the music. The whole endeavor is carried out with taste, originality, care, and love. (And the engineer who recorded the date should certainly be congratulated too. His name isn't listed but it should be.)

Don't miss this album. (M.McP.)