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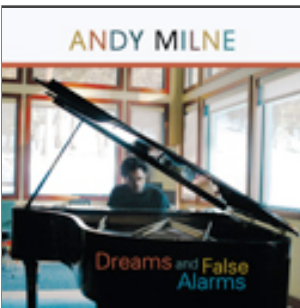
Andy Milne: M-Base & Dapp Theory Radical Unplugged

Andy Milne | Songlines Recordings | ObliqSound | Published June 29, 2007

By [Mark Corroto](#)

Pianist Andy Milne first caught the attention of jazz listeners with his work in Steve Coleman's Five Elements, with whom he recorded a dozen albums. There were gigs and partnerships too with M-Base collaborators singer Cassandra Wilson and saxophonists Ravi Coltrane and Greg Osby. Milne's immersion into M-Base theory and all things Brooklyn occupied him until 1997. In 1998 he formed Dapp Theory, a true fusion band combining contemporary funk, groove and hip-hop with jazz.

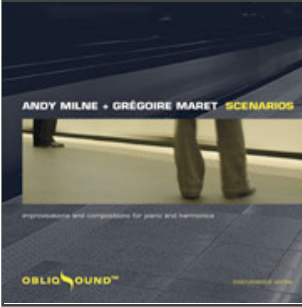
Like many jazz artists working today, Milne chooses not to ignore the influence of popular culture in his music making. He also has the ability to move in many musical circles, as is evident from these two albums, *Dreams And False Alarms*, recorded solo, and *Scenarios*, made with harmonica player Grégoire Maret and guests.



Andy Milne
Dreams And False Alarms
Songlines
2007

To “unplug” Milne is to hear a new dimension in his playing. These 12 tracks explore his connections to jazz's solo piano tradition, especially as it relates to interpretation. There are three compositions penned by Milne, but it's the covers of popular and traditional music which define the listening experience. First he crawls through a paced rendition of Sting's "Message In A Bottle" eschewing the reggae for a more melancholic (and truer) interpretation of the lyric. He also picks up on Bob Marley, Bob Dylan and fellow Canadians Neil Young and Joni Mitchell.

Milne packs full sentiment into Young's "Don't Let It Bring You Down" paying respect to the melody, but flushing out both the fear and hope of the era in which it was written. His original "Sensei-tions" feels like both a Herbie Nichols composition (written for the pianist) and an abstraction. By the time he gets to the traditional "Danny Boy" Milne has delivered a very satisfying set of music.



Andy Milne & Grégoire Maret

Scenarios

ObliqSound

2007

Paired with Swiss-born harmonica player Maret, Milne explores a series of improvisations, popular tunes and original music. The 32 year old Maret draws breathtaking references to revered harmonica elder Toots Thielemans. You can almost hear the Thielemans and Jaco Pastorius duet of "Blackbird" when the pair take up Dizzy Gillespie's "Con Alma".

This recording is, as they say, "easy on the ears". Milne and Maret have a working relationship that is supportive and constructive. The opener finds Milne tapping an insistent left hand rhythm to introduce the flutter of Maret's breath. Together they keep things simple, playing the familiar melody "Moon River" with the added accompaniment of vocalist Gretchen Parlato. The echoey take on the Henry Mancini/Johnny Mercer classic is both sentimental and eerie.

Milne and Maret's simplicity masks the thoughtfulness and depth of this recording. Even their improvised pieces, held close to the chest, are compelling. Neither artist hesitates to go "beyond" his instrument, with Milne working the strings inside or Maret tapping the switch of his harmonica to accompany. In duo, they make some very beautiful music together.

Tracks and Personnel

Dreams And False Alarms

Tracks: Amelia; Geewa; Message In A Bottle; I Shot The Sheriff; After The Goldrush; The Times They Are A-Changin'; The Metamorph; Don't Let It Bring You Down; Sensei-tions; The Circle Game; Danny Boy.

Personnel: Andy Milne: piano.

Scenarios

Tracks: Headache In Residence; Pharos Of Alexandria; As Far As We Know; Con Alma; Follow Me; House Of Fisher; Couch Talk; Steps From Body To Soul; Intersections; Crystal Labyrinth; Moon River.

Personnel: Andy Milne: piano; Grégoire Maret: harmonica; Anne Drummond: alto flute; Gretchen Parlato: vocal