



Ungrund
Gábor Gadó Quartet (with Dave Liebman)
(Budapest Music Center)
by Ken Dryden

In 2013 Dave Liebman became the youngest individual ever to be honored as an NEA Jazz Master. There are several reasons: his brilliant work on soprano and tenor saxophones and wood flute; formidable skills as a composer and arranger; plus an incredible drive and diverse musical interests.

Hungarian guitarist Gábor Gadó added Liebman as a guest with only a single afternoon of rehearsal prior to recording *Ungrund*, full of the leader's tricky compositions. This live session is more avant garde in nature with numerous twists, Liebman playing both soprano and tenor saxophone, along with tenor saxophonist Matthieu Donarier, bassist Sébastien Boisseau and drummer Joe Quitzke. Liebman dominates the opening track, "Friends Play", with his furious, darting soprano, though Donarier does his best to keep pace with his hard-charging tenor. Gadó's reworking of impressionist composer Maurice Ravel's "Pavane pour une infante défunte" (Pavane For a Dead Princess) opens with his extended, abstract solo before Liebman joins on soprano with Donarier's superb harmonic backing. "Sanctus" has an ominous air with angular interaction between guitar and saxophones. "Weltraum" has the flavor of a Baroque piece transformed into 21st Century jazz, though Gadó soon incorporates flamenco and postbop into his modern vision of this centuries-old style in his dazzling solo.