

Bela Szakcsi Lakatos*Climate Change*

(BMC)

Gueorgui Kornazov Horizons Quintet*The Budapest Concert*

(BMC)

Mihaly Borbely Quaret*Hungarian Jazz Rhapsody*

(BMC)

Jazz has been an international music ever since recordings became widely available in the 1920s. Talent has blossomed all over the world even if Americans have a tendency to only focus on the jazz of the U.S. The BMC (Budapest Music Center) label has extensively documented the jazz talent of Hungary, releasing quite a few CDs in recent times.

Pianist Bela Szakcsi Lakatos, who is now 71, should be much better known in the U.S. On *Climate Change*, he not only holds his own with Americans (saxophonist Tim Ries who is mostly on soprano, bassist Robert Hurst and drummer Rudy Royston) but performs six of his own compositions, with the only standard being “Blue In Green” (played as part of a medley). Lakatos displays a modern jazz piano style of his own, not sounding like any of his historical predecessors. His originals inspire Ries to engage in some of his most lyrical and explorative playing. “Fight Over Water – Dodechronatic” is a bit of a departure, adding violinist Lajos Kathy Horvath to the group which gives it a contemporary classical feel during its first third before it becomes a post-bop swinger. “Soul-Bell (We Are All Brothers)” has a mysterious rhythm (almost like an erratic heart beat) and a heartfelt melody while “New Beginning” is a thoughtful ballad. Otherwise the quartet swings hard throughout this stirring set which serves as an excellent introduction to Bela Szakcsi Lakatos.

Trombonist Gueorgui Kornazov leads a very talented post bop quintet through a set of his music on *The Budapest Concert*. “Na Toni” has some passionate soprano playing by Emile Parisien, “Children’s Song” is a memorable ballad and “Veronique” sounds as if it could have been a Charles Mingus Latin piece. Guitarist Manu Codjia and bassist Marc Buronfosse take fine solos on the latter and there is a stretch where the two horns jam together without the rhythm section before Kornazov plays unaccompanied, utilizing some multiphonics. Those three originals (there is no pause between songs) segue right into the six-part “Budapest Suite.” To mention a few of the suite’s highlights, the melody of “Tango De Mars” is charming. “Balkan Spirit” puts Kornazov’s roots in a heated jazz context. The trombonist he engages in a duet with drummer Karl Jannuska during the first part of “Cry,” displaying his impressive technique and a wide range of expressive ideas. Overall, there are no slow moments throughout this consistently stimulating and exciting program.

Tenor-saxophonist Mihaly Borbely (also heard on soprano and tarogato) explores jazz pieces by Hungarians on his *Hungarian Jazz Rhapsody* plus a highly original folk/jazz version of “Gloomy Sunday.” With the inventive pianist Daniel Szabo and assertive playing by bassist Balazs Horvath and drummer Istvan Balo, Borbely creates a fascinating set of fresh, lively and unpredictable music that is both melodic and adventurous. Borbely blows up a storm in a few spots with emotional shrieks worthy of Gato Barbieri but he has a distinctive and huge tone of his own. *Hungarian Jazz Rhapsody* (named after the Attila Zoller piece) will definitely hold one’s interest throughout.

These three worthy sets and dozens more are available from www.bmcrecords.hu.

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