



Joshua Redman/Ron Miles/Scott Colley/Brian Blade

Still Dreaming

Nonesuch ★★ ★

Joshua Redman (ts), Ron Miles (c), Scott Colley (b) and Brian Blade (d).
Rec. 2017

To my great chagrin I missed the band's much-lauded performance at Gateshead last year, but this is one of Joshua Redman's most interesting projects thus far in his career. He was actually in his father Dewey's group for a while when he was younger and his affinity to the music of Old and New Dreams, the beloved band Redman senior co-led with Don Cherry, Charlie Haden and Ed Blackwell, is clear throughout this tribute (and extension thereof). Perhaps the most difficult thing to capture in any interpretation of somebody else's music is the spirit, and in this case that translates as a melodic zest, a rhythmic bounce and singing character in warm, visceral themes that then fan out into more complex, extremely conversational narratives. Of the six originals on offer 'Unanimity' is a fine example of agitated, nervy yet controlled playing that retains an ageless funkiness and populist immediacy amid its contemporary sophistry. Indeed, the whole album is the 'old bottle, new wine' theory put into good practice.

Jazzwise talks to Joshua Redman about the album

How did the project come about?

I always wanted to do something that kind of engaged with Old and New Dreams and Ornette more explicitly, and do something that referenced my father a little more obviously. There was a memorial for Charlie Haden in January 2015 at Town Hall in New York that I was a part of, as were countless other musicians. I found myself immediately after listening to his music and a lot of music my father was a part of, whether it was Keith's band or Old New Dreams, Liberation Orchestra... just listening to that music got in my ears again, and it was really deep and powerful. I guess I had the idea shortly after of putting a band together that would play Old and New Dreams' music and somehow take them as a point of inspiration. I had in mind the musicians I that wanted to ask to be a part of it – Ron, Scott and Brian – and I contacted them and immediately they got back to me and were like 'yeah, let's do it'.

Tell me about the repertoire.

We play a lot of Ornette's and Don's music and my dad's music, but I chose more of our originals and less of the Old and New Dreams book, and the songs we did take were the more well-known pieces. The thing about Old and New Dreams' music, and I think the same could be said of Ornette's music... the songs themselves are very complex, but they're not complex in terms of the pre-written material. They're like these little chants. One of the things that I've always loved about Old and New Dreams is that they can play so freely and abstractedly, and also very raw and angular. But they do it in a way that's so melodic and also rooted and grounded. There's a folk music quality, like it's somehow folk and free at the same time.

Ron Miles is a superb brass player. Had you always wanted to work with him?

I've been a fan of his for a long time. Ron chooses his notes like there's no wasted notes. Every one means something and is in service of beauty and melody. He's such a patient player and I've learned so much by playing with him. He's completely in the moment, and interactive and present, but he doesn't force anything. I think in that way he balances me a lot. I'd like to think that, at my best, I'm that kind of player too, but I can also rush things and force things. So we converse with each other well, and we also act as good foils for one another. **Kevin Le Gendre**