

**Ellery Eskelin/  
Andrea Parkins/  
Jim Black**

*One Great Night ...  
Live*

HATOLOGY 683

★★★★

**Ellery Eskelin/  
Sylvie  
Courvoisier**

*Every So Often*

PRIME SOURCE 5010

★★★★



Ellery Eskelin figured out a long time ago that playing jazz the same old way was not just an artistic dead end, but a denial of the musical world around him. His solution was the trio with Andrea Parkins and Jim Black, which challenged convention not only with its unusual configuration—Parkins' main instrument is an accordion amplified after the fashion of Jimi Hendrix, her second a sampler—but what Eskelin had them play.

Rather than use composed heads as launch pads for solos or plunge headlong into unfettered improvisation, he embraces disruption by placing contrasting written and freely improvised events side by side. The juxtapositions work more like filmic jump-cuts or visual collages than conventionally programmatic suites. And while the trio plunders genres as disparate as bebop, samba, alternative rock and even fusion, they scrutinize each element with so con-

centrated a gaze that it melts like wax, all the better to twist it into a barely recognizable distortion. Combine these formal challenges with Eskelin's highly individual approach to his horn, which applies a marvelous tonal command across the registers to elongated non-repeating lines that zig where you expect them

to zag, and you've got a band that sounds like none other. Ironically, the trio's singularity has imposed its own challenge: how to keep growing, and not just keep sounding different? Eskelin's solution has been to add players, most notably English singer Jessica Constable. *One Great Night ... Live*, which was recorded in late 2007 at a one-off gig in Baltimore that capped a European tour with Constable, is the trio's first unaugmented recording since 2002's magnificent *Arcanum Moderne*. "For No Good Reason" is the album's grandest performance, dissolving effortlessly from music box environments to quizzical balladry to a hint of Jamaican dub; Parkins' sampler renders cinematic sound effects and pop gestures equally aptly.

But you needn't forgo listening to Eskelin if you can't warm up to the trio's idiosyncratic sound. *Every So Often* is a completely impro-

vised encounter with the Swiss-born, New York-based pianist Sylvie Courvoisier. She's hardly hidebound in her approach to her instrument; she makes entirely persuasive forays into her keyboard's innards and uses preparations to turn it into a percussion instrument. She also makes bold, finely articulated statements in a more conventional fashion, sounding as indebted to classical music as jazz.

Eskelin takes to this setting, which is less rhythmically exacting but more harmonically restrictive, with grace. He works in his horn's higher registers, sounding at times like a more patient but equally fluid Evan Parker. Courvoisier and Eskelin worked together for a while before they made this record, and it shows; despite their dissimilar backgrounds, they're quite compatible and even generous partners who understand how to balance complementarity with individual statement. Key to this record's success is its recording quality, which is clear and faithful.

—Bill Meyer

**One Great Night ... Live:** The Decider; For No Good Reason; Coordinated Universal Time; Split The Difference; Instant Counterpoint; I Should Have Known; Half A Chance. (69:13)

**Personnel:** Ellery Eskelin, tenor saxophone; Andrea Parkins, accordion, electric piano, organ, laptop sampler, grand piano; Jim Black, drums, percussion.

» Ordering info: [hathut.com](http://hathut.com)

**Every So Often:** Moderato Cantabile; Architectural; A Distant Place; Every So Often; Open Channel; Accidentals; Wave Off; Blind Spot; Processing. (60:03)

**Personnel:** Ellery Eskelin, tenor saxophone; Sylvie Courvoisier, piano.

» Ordering info: <http://home.earthlink.net/~eskelin/order.html>

**Kyle Asche  
Organ Trio**

*Blues For Mel*

TIPPIN' RECORDS 1006

★★★

**Jermaine  
Landsberger**

*Gettin' Blazed*

RESONANCE RECORDS 1009

★★½



Those interested in empty, pyrotechnic bombast should look elsewhere, whereas those in search of a mature record showcasing solid grooves, inventive melodies and an understated funkiness should look no further than the Kyle Asche Organ Trio's *Blues For Mel*.

Guitarist Asche, along with organist Mel Rhyne, who recorded several records with Wes Montgomery, consistently churn out solid, well constructed solos. Asche has a keen melodic imagination, and he effectively develops his melodies into substantive statements by framing them in question/answer units, modifying them sequentially, or by combining both methods. He rarely plays what sound like pre-packaged licks, thus his solos have an original, organic feel.

On Rhyne's medium-paced groover "Killer Ray," Asche elaborates his ideas and builds his

solo all while slowly ratcheting up the nastiness. Rhyne, whose percussive touch and slightly staccato articulation complements Asche's more relaxed and legato phrasing, isn't afraid to jump into a solo burning, as on "Nite Vidal"; he also exhibits a slower, more deliberate, measured style in which he uses ample space to set off his phrases—especially on the ballads "I Thought About You" and "Too Late Now." Drummer George Fludas is always locked in with Asche and Rhyne, and he contributes fine solos on "Snapshot" and "Nite Vidal."

Organist Jermaine Landsberger's *Gettin' Blazed* is in a completely different bag. Landsberger, making his U.S. recording debut, switched from piano to organ in 2001, thus his organ style is more pianistic, as he leaves the bass lines to bassist James Genus. *Gettin' Blazed* draws on stylistically varied material including a fusion-pop treatment of Django Reinhardt's "Babik," Horace Silver's "Filthy McNasty" (which features strong solos from Landsberger, tenor saxophonist Gary Meek, Genus and guitarist Andreas Öberg) and an uptempo swing take of Stevie Wonder's "Another Star."

Although the Latin "Brazilian People" has a

quasi-smooth jazz feel that stems from Meek's flute melody doubled with Landsberger and the presence of Genus' electric bass, its solos are pure bebop. Landsberger's solos on everything besides "Ballada Para J" and his "Night Ballad" are generally of the right-hand, single-note burning variety, as are Öberg's. Pat Martino contributes two excellent nimble guitar solos on the waltz "Sno' Peas" and "Brazilian People," and Landsberger and Öberg tear through his "Three Base Hit." *Gettin' Blazed* showcases a talented organist with diverse musical influences.

—Chris Robinson

**Blues For Mel:** Blues For Mel; Gentle Rain; Snapshot; I Thought About You; Nite Vidal; Killer Ray; Watch What Happens; Swedish Schnapps; Too Late Now; Forget New York; Who Can I Turn To?; Killer Ray (bonus radio edit). (63:36)

**Personnel:** Kyle Asche, guitar; Melvin Rhyne, organ; George Fludas, drums.

» Ordering info: [tippinrecords.com](http://tippinrecords.com)

**Gettin' Blazed:** Sno' Peas; Brazilian People; Ballada Para J; Three Base Hit; Valse Manouche; Romance; Babik; Another Star; Night Ballad; Filthy McNasty. (50:11)

**Personnel:** Jermaine Landsberger, Hammond B-3, Fender Rhodes; Pat Martino, guitar (1, 2, 6); Andreas Öberg, guitar; James Genus, bass; Harvey Mason, drums; Gary Meek, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute (1, 2, 9, 10); Kuno Schmid, synthesizer, Fender Rhodes.

» Ordering info: [resonancerecords.org](http://resonancerecords.org)