

New England Performer magazine

JAZZ COMPOSER'S ALLIANCE ORCHESTRA

Dreamland

(Cadence Records)

★★★1/2

Produced by Darrell Katz, Jim Harp (track 6), and Robert Lyons (track 8). Engineered by Tina Hanson, Jim Harp (track 6), and Jane Pipik and Frank Cunningham (track 8). Recorded at Blue Jay Studios, Carlisle, MA, and Harp Recording Studios, Braintree, MA (track 6). Track 8 recorded live November 19th, 1989.

Musicians: Featured soloists include Diana Herold (vibes), Rob Scheps (tenor sax), Bob Pilkington (trombone), John Dirac (guitar), Dave Harris (trombone), John Carlson (trumpet), Mike Peipman (trumpet), Andrew D' Angelo (alto sax), Doug Yates (alto sax), and Rick Peckham (guitar).

Song Titles: Tonk, Chimera, Cake Smear'd On Car, Dancing On A Table, Zen And the Art of Cab Driving, Hot Winds Over Cool Breeze, Left Overs, Monk.

Writers: Darrell Katz, Ellington/Strayhorn, Albert Collins

Comments: Another winner from the Jazz Composer's Alliance Orchestra. They've proven time and time again that they're a group of musicians with a consummate taste for the outrageous, and their musical frontiers are almost limitless.

My favorite selection on the CD was "Chimera", penned by JCA founder Darrell Katz. It starts with a vibraphone ostinato in 6, over which free playing in the horns is superimposed. Throughout the piece, free time sections are interspersed with heavy grooves, over which soloists Dave Harris, Rob Scheps and John Dirac deliver the goods. I thought John Dirac's guitar solo on this particular tune was Nasty, with a capital "N". Rob Scheps honking and wailing were also frantically impressive.

The live tune on the CD, "Monk", is a nice closer. Recorded back in 1988, it features the always unpredictable saxophone of Julius Hemphill.

Extremely ingenious writing, tight ensemble performances, and outstanding individual solos make this CD a great package. I'm just wondering how far the limits of jazz composition will be taken by Katz on the group's next release. — *Matthew Bowman*

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