



## Hedvig Mollestad *Tempest Revisited*

RUNE GRAMMOFON

★★★★

A much-loved Scottish comedian named his recent autobiography *Windswept and Interesting*. The title would serve as a tagline for Hedvig Mollestad's *Tempest Revisited*, except for the realization that her album doesn't get really interesting until the end, which is where the one outbreak of humor occurs. Conceived as a series of responses to fellow Norwegian (electronic) composer Arne Nordheim's *The Tempest*, Mollestad has constructed variations

and meditations that cover the same thematic ground. One might expect, given the provenance and instrumentation, to be reminded of classic Jan Garbarek or Terje Rypdal albums, but the music is actually more retro even than that, with a curious heads-and-solos feel that isn't unpleasing, but doesn't sound very 2021.

While "Kittiwakes In Gusts" seems all on one level — and thus not very evocative of small gulls in a gale — the following "418 (Stairs In Storms)" is all build-up, 11 minutes of it, with a tacked-on climax. The best tracks are the powerfully atmospheric "Winds Approaching," on which the small phalanx of horns makes most sense, and the closing "High Hair." Here, she lets the guys loose on a few big fat riffs.

It's an exciting album in many ways and testament not so much to Mollestad's guitar playing *per se* as to her ability to shape a group round the instrument, something Rypdal was never quite willing to do, always remaining the sole front voice. As such, it will appeal to many. Others might feel inclined to turn back to older records from the same windy corner of the world.

—Brian Morton

**Tempest Revisited:** Sun On A Dark Sky; Winds Approaching; Kittiwakes In Gusts; 418 (Stairs In Storms); High Hair. (40:50)

**Personnel:** Hedvig Mollestad, guitar, upright piano, handclaps, vocal; Martin Myhre Olsen, soprano, alto, baritone saxophones; Karl Nyberg, alto saxophone; Peter Eric Vergeni, tenor saxophone, flute; Marte Ebersson, keyboards; Trond Frønes, bass; Ivar Loe Bjørnstad, drums, percussion, gran cassa.

Ordering info: [runegrammofon.com](http://runegrammofon.com)

## Kevin Brady Electric Quartet *Plan B*

UBUNTU

★★★★½

Kevin Brady is a well-regarded drummer from Ireland. Bassist Dave Redmond is a countryman, while keyboardist Bill Carrothers and saxophonist Seamus Blake are both Americans. When they come together, they create a collective sound that is classicist, yet adventurous enough to insist on its own modernity.

The opening "Airbourne" sets the tone nicely; this is not "organ jazz" in the soulful, hard-grooving sense, but traditional hard bop with a little bit of extra funk in the drums and some early '70s fusion emanating from the Fender Rhodes. Brady's playing has an organic looseness and room sound that nods to classic '70s production, while Carrothers' shimmering keyboard brings to mind Return To Forever before it went full prog rock, with some Larry Young-ish psychedelia here and there. Redmond's bass is far from superfluous; in fact, his deep, almost dubby lines allow the Fender Rhodes to float like a cloud or deliver stinging solos without having to worry about providing any kind of anchor. And Blake never treats the other three as his backing band; even



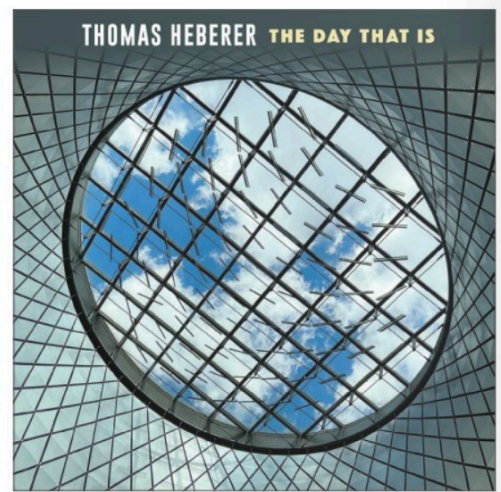
when he's soloing, he's listening. The ironically titled "Short 'n' Sweet" (it comes within 10 seconds of being the longest piece on the album) is a fast, almost danceable groove-a-thon that gives every player space to either solo or make an emphatic, but still supportive, statement. While "Suicide Squeeze" is a fascinating blend of bebop fluidity with '70s soul-jazz. Blake's long, limber excursions place his impressive technique in service of Grover Washington Jr.-esque melodic hooks.

—Philip Freeman

**Plan B:** Airbourne; Plan B; Short 'n' Sweet; Spindle Top; Suicide Squeeze; Quiet Beach; Out Of The Blue; Wanderlust. (55:45)

**Personnel:** Seamus Blake, tenor saxophone; Bill Carrothers, Fender Rhodes; Dave Redmond, electric bass; Kevin Brady, drums.

Ordering info: [weareubuntumusic.com](http://weareubuntumusic.com)



## Thomas Heberer *The Day That Is*

SUNNYSIDE

★★★★

Trumpeter Thomas Heberer's associations with the ICP Orchestra and the Nu Band bespeak an affinity for democratic institutions, so it's particularly ironic that the German-born, New York-based musician recorded *The Day That Is* on Jan. 6, 2021. This album does not wear politics on its sleeve, but the well-oiled mechanics of its compositions, the ensemble's collegial interplay and the music's inclusive aesthetics provide argument aplenty to not let a moment be defined by its worst aspects.

Heberer built the band in stages, working the rhythm section for a while before settling on fellow German ex-pat Ingrid Laubrock as its second horn. And while the group existed before the pandemic, he spent much of the time after the virus cleared his performance schedule developing a varied set of compositions for them to play. The title tune is so festive, and the leader's growling solo so playful, that you might not notice the music's complexity. "Seconds First" opens as a somber and hushed, but then splinters into a bristling free passage. And "Caro Pook" uses intricate, non-repeating unison figures as launching pads for swaggering forays by drummer Michael Sarin.

One suspects that another thing that Heberer did with his time off was tend to his chops. He negotiates the high pitches with unerring accuracy and fluid grace, and applies his circular breathing so discretely that you won't even notice how long his lines are, just how right they sound. John Hébert and Michael Sarin have a great, yin-yang partnership. *The Day That Is* goes a long distance towards redeeming the day on which it was made.

—Bill Meyer

**The Day That Is:** The Day That Is; Erg Chebbi; Seconds First; Caro Pook; Then There Were Three; The Sleeping Bag Unfolds; Closing The Gap; Jimi Metag; One For Roy; Mapping The Distance; The Sky Above. (43:08)

**Personnel:** Thomas Heberer, trumpet; Ingrid Laubrock, soprano and tenor saxophones; John Hébert, bass; Michael Sarin, drums.

Ordering info: [sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com)