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(Ken Waxman)

Baba Andrew Lamb Trio

The Night of the 13th Moon
LFDS Records 008

Andrew Lamb Trio

The Casbah of Love

Birdwatcher Records BW 006

Communicating the raw intensity which characterizes the most adept Free Jazz are two trio sessions featuring New York-based Andrew Lamb. Lamb who has been part of ensembles with Cecil Taylor and Warren Smith, plays tenor and alto saxophone, clarinet and flute on *The Casbah of Love*, and is backed by drummer Ryan Jewell, who has worked with the likes of Jack Wright and C. Spencer Yeh, and bassist/cellist Tom Abbs, who has played with just about everyone. Recorded three months later, *The Night of the 13th Moon* captures a first-time meeting at a Paris cellar club among Lamb, playing tenor saxophone only and two locals: bassist Yoram Rosilio, who has worked with Linda Sharrock and Jean-Brice Godet, and drummer Rafael Koerner, who has been part of the Big Four and Ping Machine.

Having played with Abbs over the years, Lamb's more comfortable program on *The Casbah of Love* is divided into 10 selections, with the three briefest displaying the individuals' instrumental versatility. Other than that, the razor-sharp nephritic tone ejaculated by the tenor saxophonist during the first few seconds of the first and title track of the American recorded disc, easily foreshadows the shape of timbres to come. Later his tenor tour-de-force is the penultimate "The Third Shadow", where irregular vibrations energetically shape the narrative. Notable too is his flavorful chalumeau-pitched clarinet lines on "New Moon on the Desert", which ascend to harsher tones after the bridge to complete Jewell's double ruffs and skittering, knitting woody bow stretches on Abbs' part that slide from tender to tenacious. In a corresponding fashion Lamb's flute peeps go from delicate to discursive back to dulcet, during "Embrace of the Twin Ponds" as its arabesques mix with the drummer's quieting slaps and judders and later bell-ringing as well as the bassist's spiccato story telling.

Abbs' guitar-like facility on cello makes "The Be in be to be" a stand-out as well. As the bassist propels a variety of moods with tough plucks and slippery slices, Lamb's mid-range tenor tones and Jewell's clattering rim shots struggle to keep up with him. Overall though the trio's defining moments are on tracks such as "Nights & Miracles" and "Intergalactic Parables" where built up motifs of repetitive rhythmic patterning and reed honks and echoes keep the pieces chromatic and corrosive, with inferences from Albert Ayler's "Ghosts" on "Nights & Miracles".

Ecstatic pressure is the overriding action suggested by the Paris improvisations with Rosilio's bass-string pumping and Koerner's collection of rolls and pops constantly moving forward along with Lamb's expansive and extended playing. Although each track is infused with an almost equal amount of intense playing from all concerned, "Set 01-B" shows all three's playing at its most profound. The logical outgrowth of the walking bass sequence that begins and balances the start of the set, Rosilio's string reverberations soon turn to logical up-and-down, scroll-to-bridge sliding with affiliated plucks and shading, while Koerner lets loose with a collection of press rolls, rebounds and cymbal splatters. With these textures as ballast Lamb uses finger and lip vibrations to snarl upwards split tones and timbre-extending altissimo breaks. As the improvisation extends he adds more and more fluttering repetitions that eventually slur and slide downwards to tongue stops and smears, climaxing with gospel-like tripled tongued vibrations that could approximate "Wade in the Water".

With this apex attained almost to the point of projecting back to Free Jazz's heyday, the saxophonist takes this gospelish suggestion and works through variations of the root phrasing and its extension. With his textures mow tougher, Lamb finally reaches a zenith of affiliated renal split tones and piercing glossolalia that splinter into unadorned spits and honks. With timbres bubbling from the saxophone's lowest notes to those past the expected to the almost impossible highest, he appends a coda of high-pitched squeaks.

If as many musicians assert acute spiritual improvisations can be attained, Andrew Lamb is an example of someone who can do so. Abbs and Jewell and/or Rosilio and Koerner make perfect enablers.

—Ken Waxman

Track Listing: *Casbah*: 1. The Casbah of Love 2. Song of the Wind and the Leaf 3. The Be In Be To Be 4. Wonders of the Morning 5. New Moon on the Desert 6. Nights & Miracles 7. Commemorating 8. Intergalactic Parables 9. The Third Shadow 10. Embrace of the Twin Ponds

Personnel: *Casbah*: Andrew Lamb (tenor and alto saxophone, clarinet and flute); Tom Abbs (bass and cello) and Ryan Jewell (drums)

Track Listing: *Night*: 1. Set 01-A 2. Set 01-B 3. Set 02 -A

Personnel: *Night*: Baba Andrew Lamb (tenor saxophone); Yoram Rosilio (bass) and Rafael Koerner (drums)