



JAZZ NEAR YOU



Advertise Locally Here

SHOWCASE ADS



Timoka

Walter Beltram



Starry Night

Jackie Allen



Nomina

Vector Trio



Mighty Long Way

Alvin Queen



Funkdaddy&3D

JuliousBass

Above The Battleground | Mike Lee | CAP
By Glenn Astarita

Based in New York City, Multi-Reedman Mike Lee has been receiving a good deal of attention these days and deservedly so. Lee's work with "The Village Vanguard Orchestra", Maria Schneider, performances with Sax titan Joe Lovano, gigs with Louie Bellson and others find Mike Lee in estimable company.

On his latest CD "Above The Battleground", Lee enlists Trumpeter Tim Hagans, Bassist Ben Allison, Pianist Matt Lee and Drummer Tim Horner. Here, Lee steps out as a first class composer, fine group leader and displays seasoned and proficient chops. On "Desert Storm", Lee comes across authoritatively with a commanding Tenor Sax delivery. Ben Allison and Tim Horner make for a fertile rhythm section as they frequently provide the sturdy backbone for ongoing dynamics as in Lee's "Holy Instant" where Lee picks up the Clarinet and rides atop a bouncy and cheerful melody line. The thematic movements are clear, concise and well stated. Lee is impressive on the licorice stick as he institutes phrasing that is clear toned and fluent.

The standard "The Best Things in Life Are Free" is a tour-de-force for Lee who rips through this classic with a deep husky Tenor Sax sound and displays remarkable improvisational skills as he occasionally wanders into free-jazz turf. Mike Lee teaches jazz improvisation at various Universities and Conservatories as his improvisational savvy is prominently displayed throughout "Above The Battleground".

Lee's composition, "Please Me" prominently features his fleet fingered and multi-toned Soprano Sax work and a thoughtful, moving piano solo by Matt Ray. Lee's rich tone and articulate phrasing coupled with sporadic intonations of extended notes and clever improv further exemplify Lee's technical gifts and sharp wit. Lee's "Leisure Suit" is an affable piece that touches upon early Horace Silver while his "Laws Of Chaos" is a fitting finale to a compositionally diverse outing and features fine soloing by Hagans as Lee stretches out on Tenor Sax. At this juncture, the listener may find his or herself tapping out the rhythms on an inanimate object.

"Above The Battleground" is just the beginning for this talented instrumentalist. No hidden agendas or filler material on this project. Lee 's a bright composer and knows how to breathe new life into standards. The talented Tim Hagans and the fine rhythm section consisting of Allison, Horner and Ray compliment Lee's deeply personal sound and sharp attack to the highest order.

For info visit <http://mikeleejazz.com>

Published: May 01, 1999