



Live From Lockdown
Champion Fulton (s/r)
 by Scott Yanow

During the worst days of the pandemic, it would not be an understatement to say that jazz musicians had a very difficult time. Even the most fortunate, those who had savings and/or could teach and occasionally perform online, missed live audiences and interacting with other players. If one played the 'wrong' instrument (nearly everything except piano and guitar) and did not have a family member who was skilled on a complementary instrument, the options were much more limited in live-stream performances and live (as opposed to overdubbed) recordings.

Champion Fulton was more fortunate than most since she is a self-sufficient pianist-singer who has often performed solo, including on her weekly webcast *Live From Lockdown*. With her strong left hand, mastery of swing standards and distinctive singing, which, while not derivative, could fit easily into '40s-50s jazz, one never misses other instruments when she performs by herself. She has helped keep a tradition alive not by copying the past but by simply being herself.

Live From Lockdown is a duet album with her father, the excellent flugelhornist/trumpeter Stephen Fulton. Inspired by the sound, swing and wit of Clark Terry, the elder Fulton has his share of solo space while often being in a supportive role behind his daughter's powerful playing; his double time runs on "What Is This Thing Called Love" are particularly impressive.

Recorded on Nov. 13th, 2020, a few months before COVID vaccines became available, the music on *Live From Lockdown* is quite optimistic and an escape from the world's problems. The Fultons' performances of such timeless numbers as "I Hadn't Anyone Till You", "Moonglow", "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles" and "Look For The Silver Lining", plus a couple of themeless blues, lets one know that, with luck, the world is not coming to an end. One just has to play the music louder and continue being patient.

For more information, visit champion.net. Fulton is at Mezzrow Sep. 8th. See Calendar.



On Common Ground
Mike Sopko, Bill Laswell, Tyshawn Sorey
 (MOD Technologies)
 by George Grella

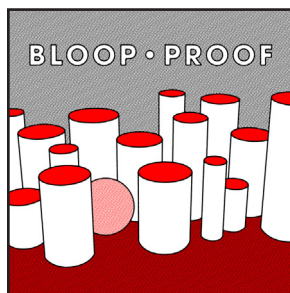
Bill Laswell has a devoted following, but this reviewer has always found him to be a frustrating of beguiling musician. His bass playing and the production work he does for himself and other musicians from behind the mixing board have distinctive and prominent styles. For many listeners that's more than sufficient. But for at least one, the long chain of music through the decades—various iterations of Material; albums of world music put out on his Axiom label; ambient records—has been forged with links of style that shine

with brilliance but don't seem to have the heft or strength to pull along anything of real significance.

This new album is another link. Credited to the trio of guitarist Mike Sopko, drummer Tyshawn Sorey and Laswell, this is very much a Laswell production. From the start, the sound is a dead giveaway. There are multiple instrumental colors that lie in a sonic emulsification placing everything not only on the surface but seemingly in the same location. It's not stuffy, but there's too little air and light in between the instruments to allow for anything other than a mellow hue. One expects musicians to come pouring out of the speakers, but instead the playing seems to collapse to some inward point that never escapes the studio confines.

The sonic homogeneity reflects what's going on musically. There are five tracks, a total duration of 55 minutes, and just not enough variation to sustain the whole experience. Energy is the primary focus, with Sopko scrabbling around the fretboard, Laswell throbbing underneath, Sorey filling up every other space. There's little in the way of specific rhythms or riffs; Sopko works with sound as much as notes, Laswell plays some riffs but mostly via rubato and Sorey undertakes what is essentially an extended solo. Individual moments are interesting, but the musicians themselves seem little interested in details. It's monotonous and slightly snobbish, like high-end furniture that looks sleek and can't be sat on.

For more information, visit modreloaded.com. Sorey is at Scholes Street Studio Sep. 18th with Stephen Gauci, Le Poisson Rouge Sep. 26th with Vijay Iyer and The Jazz Gallery Sep. 30th with Dave Liebman and Adam Rudolph. See Calendar.



Proof
Bloop (Lumo)
 by Stuart Broomer

Over the past two decades, trumpeter Lina Allemano has established herself as a key figure in jazz in Canada, an essential component in several bands and, since 2005, the leader of a stellar quartet with a subtly conversational dynamic all its own.

In 2013 she began to study extended techniques with Axel Dörner while dividing her time between Toronto and Berlin. The results can be heard on last year's *Glimmer Glammer* (Lumo), a solo recording ranging from stark bugle calls to circular breathing and multiphonics, and its exploratory spirit is further developed with *Bloop*, a Toronto duo with Mike Smith contributing live processing and electronic effects to transform the trumpet.

Allemano is a master of sonority, capable of dry lyricism and fire and that range has only expanded through the application of extended techniques and use of multiple small percussion instruments. Smith's processing, from loops to marked mutations and multiplications, makes Allemano a virtual orchestra. The duo's subtlety is apparent in the opening "Enchantments", from the initial wind-chime-like percussive rattle of tin and/or glass, with phrase endings that reveal processing. The initially doubled trumpet sound further blurs the question of extended technique or signal processing in a dream-like piece in which trumpet voices are gradually added electronically.

The mix of acoustic and electronic mutation continues in "Decanted", with rapid flurries of muffled

notes, and in the sometimes pointillist, sometimes garbled explosions of "Recanting". That titling complements the creative ambiguities of the music, extending from these punning mysteries that link wine-making and changed beliefs to prophetic mushrooms. On "Oracle of Chanterelle" Smith processes Allemano's warm flugelhorn-like tone into a drone and duet. "Cremini Oracle" presents a solemn choir of muted and open trumpets of sufficiently stark grandeur to suggest the electronic medieval.

For more information, visit linaallemano.com. Allemano live-streams Sep. 12th at [facebook.com/festivalofnewtrumpetmusic](https://www.facebook.com/festivalofnewtrumpetmusic).



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