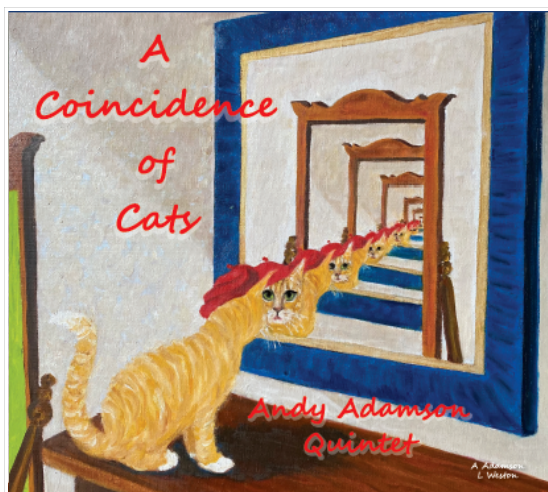




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Andy Adamson (piano); Ross Huff (trumpet, flugelhorn); Dan Bennett (sax); Bremen Andes (bass), Jonathan Taylor (drums)
No recording information

Andy Adamson is an American self-taught composer and musician, whose musical taste straddles many genres including, jazz, rock, pop, R&B, funk, Cuban and disco. His first quintet was formed in 2017 and this album features the band playing six original compositions by Adamson. The album's playing time is just 43 minutes – most tracks are around seven-minutes in length – I would have liked a little more music, but as the saying goes, quality is better than quantity.

The opening title track starts with a heavy funk bass line and strong backbeat before Adamson enters with a flurry of staccato-like pounding chords. There's even a touch of the avant garde, with bass and drums

duelling in a series of quick-fire fills. The horn section of Ross Huff on trumpet and Dan Bennett on tenor saxophone are superb and one of the highlights of this album: one moment harmonizing beautifully; the next engaging in call-and-response phrases or simply adding colours and tones to the sound. In the middle section, Adamson plays a long, flowing solo, followed by Bennett's powerful sax solo, and then Huff's soaring horn solo. The coda sees sax and trumpet playing in unison, and the tune is gently brought to its conclusion.

'Sagres By the Sea' is a cracking number that greets the listener with lapping waves sound effects (Sagres is a coastal town in the Portuguese Algarve), followed by a dramatic flourish on piano, pounding drums and crashing cymbals. The horn section doubles up on the theme and the piece features three dazzling solos. First off is Huff with a majestic solo on open trumpet, followed by some ferocious playing by Bennett on tenor sax, with fluttering notes and intense blowing (one can almost picture the veins on his neck standing out prominently, as some of the phrases hit the upper register), finally Andes enters with a tender, melodic bass solo.

On 'Hummingbird,' a sedate bass pulse and tinkling cymbals are accompanied by Adamson's slow, hesitant piano chords, the keyboardist leaving lots of space between each strike. You'd be forgiven for thinking that you were about to hear a ballad, but the band surprises the listener with a sudden flurry of notes from the horn section and a fizzing jazz-swing rhythm section, before returning to the slow section. The piece is topped off with scorching solos on piano (with drummer Jonathan Taylor lays out some open hi-hat), trumpet and sax – it's a performance that fizzes with energy.

By comparison, 'Lament' is a gentle - and moving - ballad played by Adamson – it's almost a solo piano piece, save for some delicate cymbal strikes by Taylor, and Andes' sweet bass solo. 'Morning Star' is another fine performance. Adamson plays a catchy piano riff over Taylor's metronome-like beat, before the harmonized horn section makes a dramatic entrance. An open horn solo by Huff takes flight, like an eagle swooping in the sky, while Bennett unleashes another energetic tenor sax solo, his forceful blowing occasionally causing his horn to squeak.

The album's closer 'Triplet,' also highlights the excellent horn section, which opens the number on full blast. Adamson lays down a funky piano riff, which the horns swirl around. Horns and piano engage in call-and-response phrases, before the horns break out. Solos on open trumpet and tenor sax drive the music forward, as Taylor's drumming becomes increasingly frenetic (he also plays a lively solo) – it's a powerhouse performance by the band, and a spirited ending to a very enjoyable album from a talented group of musicians.

Reviewed by George Cole