

Melismetiq is the brainchild of Icelandic trumpeter/composer Ari Bragi Kárason and Swiss drummer/composer Arthur Hnatek. In addition they have Israeli pianist Shai Maestro, and Canadian bassist, Rick Rosato. Truly an international quartet. It is worth mentioning that Kárason primarily plays the flugelhorn on this album.

Each player's talent and skill level is inevitable, but the beauty of this album is its effortless and natural flow. There is simply no urge to show off, but rather a desire to create beautiful moods, and even cinematic atmospheres. I often found myself visualizing things of beauty, inspired by the songs.

They do Björk's "Unison" justice, by sticking to the diatonic pop nature of it, with very gentle sprinkles of creative fills and colors, resulting in a beautiful rendition of an iconic song.

Kárason's "Pav" is one of the standout songs. The lovely odd meter phrygian intro is handed off to an gorgeous melody that is reminiscent of a heartfelt Scandinavian folk song, with the perfect balance of folky elements and delicate reharmonization, beautifully topped with Ari's lush and warm flugelhorn tone.

Hnatek's use of synthesizers is tasteful and delicate in "VRDP" and "The Roads That Never Meet," the latter having perhaps the most cinematic feeling, and fitting title. And Shai Maestro's short solo in "VRDP" is so delicate, with Debussy-like sprinkles.

Bottomline: A beautiful collection of strong tunes, performed effortlessly. Chord progressions sometimes in the direction of folk and pop, but that is certainly not a negative here. And tasteful use of odd meters here and there that never come off as forceful, but rather an integral part of the compositions. A thoroughly enjoyable listen. Five stars.

Veigar Margeirsson

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