

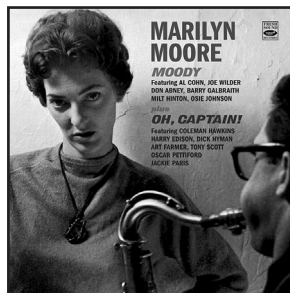
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Jussi Reijonen (unmusic)
 by Tom Greenland

Finnish-born Jussi Reijonen lived in North Africa and the Middle East growing up, cultural influences reflected in his debut release, which draws on musicians and musical styles spanning the greater Mediterranean area. Reijonen switches between oud (11-string Arabic lute) and fretless electric guitar, the last evoking the sound of a high-pitched acoustic bass. Reijonen's international team - Turkish pianist Utar Artun, Swedish bassist Bruno Råberg, Palestinian percussionist Tareq Rantisi and Spanish percussionist Sergio Martínez - are well equipped to negotiate the leader's multi-cultural vision. "Serpentine" and "Bayatiful" display strong Egyptian influences, the former a mashup of Arabic maqams (modes) Kurd and Hijaz, toggling between major and minor third intervals, the latter based on maqam Bayati, similar to the Western Phrygian mode but with a slightly higher second-scale degree. "Nuku Sie" opens like an Indian raga, the slowly developing theme articulated with graceful bends and ornaments on the fretless guitar, recalling the sound of an Indian sarod (fretless lute). "Toumani" (named for Toumani Diabaté) features fingerpicked arpeggios mimicking the two-thumb

'strumming' and cascading legato lines of Malian kora players. Songs like Coltrane's "Naima", "Toumani" and "Kaiku" (on which Reijonen's Fernandez Sustainer pickup functions like a built-in E-bow) have an ethereal vibe of open spaces and pregnant pauses, an antidote to the undertones of urban angst prevalent in much New York jazz.

At the CD release concert last month at Somethin' Jazz Club, Reijonen and Company (minus Martínez) performed the entire album, save for "Kaiku". As sole percussionist, Rantisi switched among djembe, cajón and various Middle Eastern drums, including tar, riq (both frame drums) and a small clay pot drum - even using a small whisk broom to brush the djembe - establishing a quiet, sparse backdrop. Artun's piano textures were light but emphatic, often consisting of fluid ornaments and two-handed figures that sounded similar to the tremolo-ed melodies of Arabic qanun (zither) players. Råberg was heard to good effect on the closing "Nuku Sie", trading phrases with Reijonen. Apart from "Serpentine" and "Bayatiful", the set, like the album, was generally minimalistic and understated, allowing the audience to fill in the empty musical spaces with their own imaginations.

For more information, visit jussireijonen.com



Moody/Oh Captain!
Marilyn Moore (Bethlehem/MGM - Fresh Sound)
 by Andrew Vélez

Often sounding remarkably like Billie Holiday on the 1957 album *Moody*, Marilyn Moore (who would have been 82 this month but died in 1992 at 60) had a style that was straightforward and affecting lyrically and rhythmically in her own right. She is accompanied by a stellar group, Don Abney and His Orchestra, including her husband Al Cohn on tenor saxophone along with bassist Milt Hinton, trumpeter Joe Wilder and guitarist Barry Galbraith, among others, with arrangements by Abney, Cohn and George Russell. She swings with an appealing baby doll wah-wah hornlike delivery on "Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby". It's just one of the jumping blues throughout. In tandem with Wilder's trumpet Moore's wailing is especially resonant on a little known gem, "Born to Blow the Blues", as well as with the Alec Wilder classic "Trouble is a Man".

Paired on the same reissue is a rediscovered gem on which Moore is joined by another outstanding jazz group, the Leonard Feather and Dick Hyman All Stars. The 1958 Broadway run of *Oh, Captain!* was a modest one, but Jay Livingston-Ray Evans' score is worth revisiting. Hyman's piano support is as solid as always, this time with Coleman Hawkins (tenor saxophone), Harry "Sweets" Edison (trumpet), with Hinton or Oscar Pettiford (bass). Moore makes something absolutely delicious of "Femininity" and no less excellent is "You Don't Know Him", with Jimmy Cleveland's trombone obbligato behind Moore, along with a full tenor chorus by Jerome Richardson. "You're So Right For Me" is a treat with Jackie Paris on additional vocal and a dashing full chorus by Hyman. "Give It All You've Got" gets a dozen earthy bars on baritone sax and piano by Tony Scott and Hyman, respectively, before some traditional blues from Moore. A memorably juicy and solid set, this jazz interpretation of a Broadway score definitely merits a fresh listen.

For more information, visit freshsoundrecords.com

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