

NICK MACLEAN QUARTET feat. **BROWNMAN ALI**

REVIEWS PAGE – after “Rites Of Ascension” release

"Maclean's foursome delivers jazz between the two poles of thoughtful introspection and powerhouse conveyance, taking influences from Herbie Hancock's primordial 1960's Blue Note era recordings featuring Freddie Hubbard, while simultaneously paying apt tribute to some of the greatest improvisers in jazz history."

- Memphis Marty, The Jazz Music Blog (Australia)

"From Canada comes this updated soul jazz in the vein of the Blue Note acid jazz compilations. Fresh and youthfully joyful reworkings of three Herbie Hancock standards lead the disc off before we settle into several of pianist Maclean's own compositions. Key to the sound is the gloriously expressive trumpeter Brownman Ali, who contributes one of his own tunes here, the funky "Madness of Nero", as well as producing."

- Hobart Taylor, KUCI 88.9FM (California, USA)

"...Nick Maclean may have set out to make this a homage to Mr. Hancock, he has, in fact also paid his proverbial, obligatory dues to the venerable pianist, he is ready – and has – moved on very quickly into a musical territory that has rightfully claimed as his own. “Goldberg Machine and “Elasticity of Time and Space” are two of the highest “highs” on this record. Each melody is so lyrical that often during the choruses one feels as if there is a spectral voice somewhere, “singing out the melody”. This is Mr. Maclean’s music, evocative of the poetry of feeling. It is also a great fortune to have fellow rhythmists in bassist Jesse Dietschi and drummer Tyler Goertzen along for the ride. And what a thrill it appears to be to have Brownman Ali to be the other lead voice on this recording. The trumpeter’s burnished notes – even those articulated using a wah-wah pedal effect – make for gleaming phrases and his solo on his original, “Madness of Nero” is utterly memorable...this music does more than just swing delightfully, but also seeks to reflect on more profound aspects of human existence. This together with the fact that you will be hard-pressed to find another production this good makes Rites of Ascension quite as unforgettable."

- Raul da Gama, Toronto Music Report (Toronto, Canada)

"Rites of Ascension [...] is a tribute to Herbie Hancock’s elemental 1960s Blue Note era recordings, and a daring original musical statement on its own. ... These four musicians [...] have a great synergy and drive, and some serious chops. Their renditions of Hancock’s four classics are full of energy and forward momentum while managing to retain the unhurried character of the earlier compositions. Maclean’s creative mind and aesthetics are obvious in every aspect of this album, his piano solos both lyrical and invigorating, supported by a stellar rhythm section. The album features fiercely strong trumpet solos from Brownman Ali, indicative of Freddie Hubbard’s style at times and distinctively unique."

- Ivana Popovic, The WholeNote (Toronto, Canada)

"Rites Of Ascension ... here’s a hot CD by a Canadian-based jazz group playing four pieces by Herbie Hancock mixed in with a plethora of original tunes by the leader [Nick Maclean] and trumpeter Brownman Ali, clearly one of the more arresting and individual players I’ve heard in a long time... this band is like a tonic; they wake you up and put some pep in your step! An outstanding album, one that should put the Maclean Quartet firmly on the musical map. No two ways about it, the Nick Maclean Quartet has staked out its claim in the jazz world and intends to stick around."

- Lynn Rene Bayley, The Art Music Lounge (Cincinnati, USA)