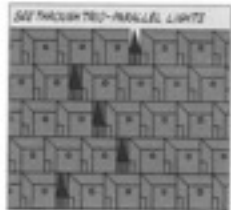


Musicworks - Spring 2015
Nick Storring

See Through Trio. *Parallel Lights*.

Woods And Waters Records.



See Through Trio's name is particularly apt, given the uniquely sheer compositional voice of Pete Johnston, the group's composer and bassist. Its other

members—Tania Gill (piano) and Karen Ng (saxophone)—have an impeccable ear for restraint and detail, and the tunes themselves often empty out into solos and duets. More generally though, things come down to the permeable sense of rhythm. Even when the group grooves together, as on the opening unisons of “Tiny Spirits Lifting,” the music is imbued with weightless momentum rather than being anchored by assertive drive. The time frequently feels stratified—individual melodies cutting their own ambling paths in syncopated asymmetrical counterpoint.

Yet even the most animated and labyrinthine pieces, such as “Blame The Numbers”, never feel as if the auditory field is fully saturated. The jaggedly slender dance of lines remains airborne, hovering just above the ground, each instrument gesticulating quizzically in its own distinct direction.

What's presented here bears an indelible connection to avant-garde jazz, particularly of the Dolphy lineage, with perhaps an equal relationship to modern chamber music imparted by the aforementioned transparency and a certain poise. The roaming melodies might even call to mind later Christian Wolff, though injected with an urgency—a cubist sort of swing.

Comprising three of Toronto's most skilled and downright interesting players, See Through Trio have burrowed deep into their own particular idiom. *Parallel Lights* speaks to that world and offers fresh intrigue at each turn.

—Nick Storring