

Featured Artist: Ad Colen Quartet

CD Title: Free

Year: 2009

Record Label: Sweet Briar Music

Style: Various Jazz Styles

Musicians:

Ad Colen (tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone), Wiro Mahieu (double bass), Yonga Sun (drums, kalimba, percussion), Gé Bijvoet (piano), Wim Bronnenberg (acoustic guitar on Bicietto), Mark Alban Lotz (flute and alto flute on Carjive and Tricky Customer)



Review:

Free is the title of the fourth release on the Sweet Briar Music label for the Ad Colen Quartet. Covering a wide-ranging scope of tuneful sound-vistas, this newly restructured Dutch Jazz Quartet put forward a collection of compositions imaginatively full of richness and depth. The title *Free* is appropriate. The Ad Colen Quartet are unobstructed by any restrictive limits, and stretch out to meet whatever creative artistic ideas best suit their jazzy endeavors.

The opening track, "Turkey Walk," begins as a positive mid-tempo blues shuffle melody which forms a platform for Colen on tenor sax, and the other group members to improvise masterfully from. The path taken on "Tricky Customer" is a darker trail, with tints of jazz-fusion and hard-bop along the way. Colen is tuneful and crisp in his dialogues with all the group members, and Mark Alban Lotz contributes becalming flute. The keen imagery that is conjured up on this song is fantastic.

A very pretty pensive ballad, "Free," allows Ad Colen to demonstrate both his marvelous proficiency on the soprano sax, as well as his compositional skill. A feathery touch on percussion and kalimba is shown by Yonga Sun, only to be supplanted moments later with exploding splashes on his drum kit. As the song progresses, he subsequently retreats to a beautifully subdued touch in keeping with the reflective overall mood. The Dutch drummer is both versatile and virtuosic, and he tastefully keeps things in context on all the musical pieces on *Free*.

The groove between the musicians is strong on "Split," a mid to up-tempo harmoniously rhythmic treat fueled by some intense piano work by Bijvoet. The creative voltage level shown by all four ensemble musicians is palpable, and achieved easily in this inspired less than five minute track. The mood changes on "KPT," an attractive ambient chill meditative creation authored by Gé Bijvoet. Bijvoet's gentle piano moodily intertwines with Colen's sax to provide a cool and dramatic piece that is extremely satisfying.

"Solitude City" is highly atmospheric, with impressive energetic bass work by Wiro Mahieu that drives the rhythm as Colen and Bijvoet take turns providing leads. Yonga Sun once again plays a major role, skillfully alternating dashes of percussion with stout drumming. The clever jazz flute stylings of Mark Alban Lotz insert brilliant floating flavor to the highly addictive "Carjive." One can envision a cross-town rush-hour commute on this song; with the vehicles on occasion jockeying for position and from time to time encountering smooth sailing on their trek.

Colen closes the set dramatically with a display of almost effortless fluidity on "Achilles." As elsewhere on the disc, his lithe phrasing and lyrical tone allow this wistful tune to sing in its own voice. It is yet another emotionally involving piece, and further example of Colen's musical storytelling prowess.

Free is sophisticated and full of powerfully involving pieces which exhibit a sense of unity and, in my mind, classify as works of art. The Netherlands has reason to be proud of groups such as The Ad Colen Quartet. They strive as "keepers of the flame" to make sure that the Jazz tradition is kept alive throughout the globe.

Tracks:

Turkey Walk, Tricky Customer, Free, Split, KPT, Solitude City, Lost and Found, Carjive, Bicicletta, Achilles

Artist's Website: <http://www.adcolen.com>

Reviewed by: [Randall Parrish](#)

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