

Pacific Woods · Pool of Mirrors

A Review by David Steffen

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Listening to Jazz, through a variety of styles, one can often conjure up memories of people and places, sometimes maybe even aromas. For me, it is almost always a specific type of room. For example, Danilo Perez brings to mind Sweet Basil on 7th Avenue in New York. Diana Krall reminds me of the Oak Room at the old Algonquin on 44th Street. There are, however, times when my mind connects music with images or memories that in reality have no direct connection.

That happened recently when I sat down and listened to a new CD by Pacific Woods. The nature of the 8 tracks brought two clubs to mind. There is Smalls in New York City and the much older club, Jazz Café Alto in Amsterdam. In both cases I knew that the music on the Pacific Woods CD ***Pool of Mirrors*** would fit perfectly in these smallish, moderately-lit establishments. Both are places where you could take a table (preferably off to one side of the room), sit back, and get lost in the music. Harrison Goldberg (tenor, alto, and soprano saxophones) and Dave Jordan (electric bass guitar) paint a tapestry that enables the listener to get lost, happily.

Jordan and Goldberg clearly both love what they do, and their musical relationship on this album is part tango and part kabuki; and neither in a literal, musical sense. Like the tango, these two musicians offer a counterpoint, one to another. Like Kabuki, the music is highly stylized. Neither term should be construed as off-putting. This is a good thing! I could almost feel the perspiration on the brick walls at Smalls. I could almost smell the thick cigarette smoke at Café Alto.

Like a soothing thought when you begin to dream, ***Pool of Mirrors*** will take you away. As often happens, there are echoes of things you've already heard in their improvisations, but that familiarity is welcomed. This is a collection that is perfect for listening in the background with conversation; or with headphones or earbuds, and drifting off all by yourself. I'm always excited when a piece of music can take you away. Put the cd on and lose yourself in the atmosphere. As Chet Baker suggested, "Let's get lost."