

# Maverick Visionary

When 1960s avant-garde jazz is discussed, tenor saxophonist and bandleader Charles Lloyd is seldom mentioned. He never caught the ear of the critics who lauded Coltrane, Coleman, Taylor, Aylar, Dolphy, Shepp, Cherry, et al., despite working in many of the same places and collaborating with some of them. Two important new issues shed much-needed light on Lloyd's contributions to that turbulent decade and his continuing trajectory as an artist. **Charles Lloyd: Arrows Into Infinity (ECM 5052 3780649; 113:00 ★★★★★)** is a warm, engaging documentary DVD about a maverick who always played it the way he heard it, regardless of the prevailing consensus. The two-CD set **Manhattan Stories (Resonance 2016; 42:35/42:13 ★★★★★)** docu-



Charles Lloyd

ments a short-lived yet vital Lloyd band of 1965 with guitarist Gabor Szabo, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Pete LaRoca. Both are reminders that despite commercial successes and periodic retreats from public life, Lloyd has always been a seeker and an original voice on the tenor and flute.

Los Angeles reed sage Buddy Collette referred Lloyd to Chico Hamilton after Eric Dolphy vacated the saxophone chair of the drummer's band. Lloyd quickly became its music director and stocked the Hamilton Quintet with his favored players: Hungarian refugee Szabo, and bass wunderkind Albert Stinson. That under-sung group made some fine inside/outside albums before Lloyd left for a cup of coffee with Cannonball Adderley and later assembled his own outfits.

His first quartet retained Szabo and Stinson, and added LaRoca. Stinson's muscular and pliant bass locked in beautifully with LaRoca's back-beat pulse. Szabo was free to harmonize with the tenor and spin his single-note lines across the beat (Lloyd introduced him to the music of Ravi Shankar), and the saxophonist was free to go anywhere he wanted: play the changes, spin new melodies, engage the rhythm or play free. Stinson's erratic personal life took him out of the band, and somehow Ron Carter found time away from Miles Davis to step in. *Manhattan Stories* catches that edition of the Lloyd Quartet at New York's Judson Hall (disc one) and the gritty Lower East Side bar Slugs' (disc two).

A converted tenor player (he switched from alto at Hamilton's request), Lloyd has always had a dimensional sound: large and roomy in the lower register, and light and airy on the top. His lyrical invention and across-the-bar flights made him one of the few Lester Young emissaries to the '60s generation—which didn't endear him to crit-

ics used to the torrential New York players.

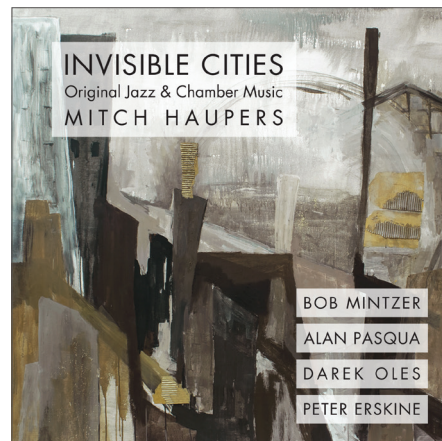
The band could swing subtly or hard—Carter and LaRoca made a formidable pair on tunes like "Lady Gabor" and "Slugs' Blues." They could play pretty and introspective, as on "How Can I Tell You." "Dream Weaver" makes its earliest appearance here with Lloyd the rhythmic master on display. The sound is cleaner on the Judson material, and appropriately rougher on the Slugs', but it's all quite rewarding.

Water is a recurring motif in the narrative of *Arrows to Infinity*. The archival footage from the early '60s to the present indicates that a component of Lloyd's sound has always been a liquid phrasing and fluid lyricism. Dorothy Darr (Mrs. Lloyd) directed this film with an insider's eye and ear to a gentle but deep soul.

Gerri Allen, Jason Moran, Stanley Crouch, Phil Schapp, Jack DeJohnette, John Densmore and Jim Keltner are among the many contributors. Lloyd speaks not a word about his groundbreaking quartet of the late '60s with Keith Jarrett, Cecil McBee and DeJohnette, leaving it to film clips and DeJohnette. That group won favor with the rock audiences and gave FM radio a jazz component. Cuscuna notes that Lloyd didn't pander to the crowd in the least. Among its fans was Manfred Eicher, who has recorded Lloyd with great sensitivity, and later on, pianist Jason Moran.

When Lloyd pulled back to soul-search in Big Sur, pianist Michel Petrucciani brought him out of hiding for beautiful instrumental summits. Later on, drummer Billy Higgins engaged the reclusive Lloyd for another round of great collaborations (they'd played in the late '50s). Tabla master Zakir Hussein, Allen, Moran and others let us know that Lloyd isn't finished with his explorations. **DB**

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## Mitch Haupers *Invisible Cities*

LIQUID HARMONY MUSIC

★★★

It is a truism that musicians will strut as much stuff as they can on their debut recordings. So, it should come as no surprise that longtime Berklee School of Music professor Mitch Haupers has a whole lot to say on *Invisible Cities*, his first solo recording at age 55. Rounding up a first-rate crew of collaborators, including Yellowjackets members Jimmy Haslip, Russell Ferrante and Bob Mintzer, as well as pianist Alan Pasqua and drummer Peter Erskine, Haupers sets out to showcase the breadth of his compositional approach. It is wide and varied, which makes for a somewhat uneven listening experience, albeit one with no shortage of high points.

One obvious standout is the level of musicianship; the core quintet of Haupers, Mintzer, Pasqua, Erskine and bassist Darek "Oles" Oleszkiewicz sounds exceptionally tight. Haupers' tart tone on electric guitar is an ideal match for Mintzer's reeds, and Erskine is his nuanced, urbane self, no matter what he is called on to do.

Where things really get shaken up is on Haupers' four-part centerpiece suite, which brings in elements of chamber music, opera and big band swing. Employing musicians from Berklee's faculty and the Boston Pops Orchestra, Haupers contrasts solo instruments against variations of horns and strings. The most ear-catching is "(In Came) Love, So Silent," primarily for the addition of the full-throated wordless vocals of opera soprano Brooke deRosa.

There is something for almost everyone; surprising turns, but nothing sonically that jars the senses. If Haupers records a follow-up, it will be intriguing to see where he heads. —James Hale

**Invisible Cities:** Veronica's Lake; Downtime; Isla Mujeres; Invisible Cities; Leoa; Four Minor Love Songs Suite: Take Comfort (In Rose's Garden, The Farmer And The Monarch, (In Came) Love, So Silent, Beacon Street); Waltz For Bill; P.S. Vita (Reprise). (55:12)

**Personnel:** Mitch Haupers, guitar, piano (6); Mike Miller, Brazilian guitar (4, 8); Bob Mintzer, woodwinds; Ann Bobo, flute (6); Sarah Brady, alto flute (6); Jan Halloran, clarinet (6); Barbara LaFitte, English horn (6); Brandon Fields, alto saxophone (6); Margaret Phillips, bassoon (6); Jay Mason, baritone saxophone (6); Dan Fornoro, John Daversa, trumpets (6); Bobby McChesney, trombone (6); Alan Pasqua, piano; Russell Ferrante, piano (6); Rika Ikeda, violin (6); Drew Ricciardi, viola (6); Eugene Friesen, cello (6); Isabelle Olivier, harp (6); Darek Oleszkiewicz, bass; Tony D'Amico, bass (6); Jimmy Haslip, electric bass (6); Peter Erskine, drums; Brooke deRosa, vocals (6); Winnie Dahlgren, bells (6).

**Ordering info:** [mitchhaupers.com](http://mitchhaupers.com)