

CD REVIEW Arild Andersen/Paolo Vinaccia/Tommy Smith (ECM)



When I first heard this trio in concert some years ago I was hugely impressed. Like many reviewers, I had been familiar with the work of bassist Arild Andersen and saxophonist Tommy Smith for a very long time, though drummer Vinaccia was new to me at the time of that first concert. Since their early days as a group they have advanced in dramatic fashion, and had a massive artistic success with the 2007 recording *Live At Belleville*, reviewed enthusiastically on this website and elsewhere around the world.

*Mira* is a more reflective work, but still a creation of immense power. Smith's saxophone, with its rich and vibrant tone, snakes smoothly around the muscular melodic bass lines of the masterful Andersen, while Vinaccia's drumming is always just perfect for each evolving musical moment. Most of the compositions are by Andersen, opening with two blues-infused tracks, 'Bygone' and 'Blussy', and ending in the closing track 'Stevtone', jointly composed with Kirsten Braten Berg and double tracked with Arild on electronics. Smith contributes the brief tune 'Kangiten', a haunting piece featuring him on the breathy shakuhachi (Japanese flute). Smith is also the joint composer, with Vanaccia, of 'Raijin', with the drummer beating deep and solemn tones on large tomtom before Smith enters, again on shakuhachi. The duet is an immensely successful improvisation. There's also a standard Burt Bacharach song, 'Alfie', which the trio often use in concert as an encore. Brilliant playing, and exceptionally well recorded at the Rainbow Studio in Oslo by the great engineer Jan Erik Kongshaug.