

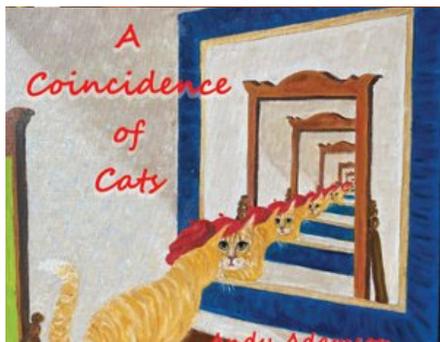
Andy Adamson Quintet: A Coincidence of Cats

By **Raul Da Gama** - Jul 13, 2022



If you are from Detroit and have lived through the experience of Motown Records and the roster of musicians who became institutions as a result of that Berry Gordy's iconic label, then you could not possibly avoid the funk that crept into black American music as a result of it. The **Andy Adamson** who shows up to play on this recording may be more direct in his funky music elsewhere, or on other projects. On this quintet recording he is less direct, but altogether more evocative of that idiom of playing style. Yet it's inescapable and this music is all the better for it.

The music by Mr Adamson on this recording has more to do with the creation of tone poems [of the Richard Strauss-like kind]. The colours and textures that are evoked by piano, brass and



woodwinds are culled from a sonic palette that is rich, and makes the sonic poetry of this music vivid and quite absorbing. Although the music appears to move from through-composed sections to improvised ones, the moving is seamless and so you are never distracted into trying to describe in wooden words what this music sounds like.



The opening piece – “A Coincidence of Cats” – is so much more than a whimsical title [both for album and piece]. It serves to illustrate the intent of this music – which is to be created as a series of highly evocative and eloquent lyrical sonic works. While not lacking in a myriad of poetic influences, the ‘spectral’ nature of the work itself suggests a proverbial and perhaps unconscious nod to Gérard Grisey.

None of these songs are lacking in expressive intensity. As a matter of fact the contrapuntal voices shares [particularly] between brass by **Ross Hull** and woodwinds by **Dan Bennett** bring essentially euphonious textures and an edgy vitality that makes the ‘spectralism’ and the adjuncts that go with it a force to be reckoned with. In fact when minor variations are harmonically employed, the sinister darkness comes over the music emphasising the essence of the tone poetry of the music.

The ferocious arpeggios and rolling right hand frenzy that Mr Adamson employs [when he is not hammering ink-dark chords with his left hand] will make it impossible for a listener **not** to be bewitched by this music. “Triplet” is a wonderful example of this. The song is also a reminder that the quintet is also reliant on rhythms and tempi of various metre creating a kind of cyclical and elliptical waveforms [on the part of bassist **Brennan Andes** and the rolling thunder of the drums together with a near-incessant hissing of the cymbals from the flying hands of drummer **Jonathan Taylor**].

To sum up, if not the very last word on this music, this is still a finely played programme that can be recommended with absolute confidence.

Tracks: 1: *A Coincidence of Cats*; 2: *Sagres by the Sea*; 3: *Hummingbird*; 4: *Lament*; 5: *Morning Star*; 6: *Triplet*

Musicians: **Andy Adamson:** piano; **Ross Huff:** trumpet and flugelhorn; **Dan Bennett:** saxophone[s]; **Brennan Andes:** bass; **Jonathan Taylor:** drums

Released – 2022

Label – Andros Records

Runtime – 43:28





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Raul da Gama is a poet and essayist. He has published three collections of poetry, He studied at Trinity College of Music, London specialising in theory and piano, and he has a Masters in The Classics. He is an accomplished critic whose profound analysis is reinforced by his deep technical and historical understanding of music and literature.

