



Cooke Quintet's approach to acoustic postmodern Jazz allows for a freedom of emotional expression. With solid grooves and explosions of energy and sound, CQ's music reminds one of the music being played by Ken Vandermark and John Zorn's Masada. The instrumentation is a twist on the classic jazz quintet, woodwinds, trombone, koto, cello and percussion. CQ plays in a cutting edge jazz style making use of modern forms like circle music and experiments with time and rhythm. They use various non-western scales and sounds as central points for launching into improvisations. This adventure in jazz is created by the unique sounds and ideas of the members of the group.

"this unit boasts great compositions in equally convincing interpretations. They foster Cooke's vision, ...with a sonic pallet that is adventurous without succumbing to superficiality. "

- Marc Medwin

Dusted Magazine, January 2007



The multi-instrumentalist Michael Cooke heads up the group, with his aggressive tenor saxophone style. This two time Emmy and Louis Armstrong Jazz Award winner plays a variety of instruments, you will hear him play soprano, alto & tenor sax, flute, soprano & bass clarinet, bassoon and percussion. Michael started playing jazz in High school where he played for homeless shelters in Atlanta. A cum laude music graduate University of North Texas, Michael has played in Europe, Mexico and all over the United States. Relocating to the San Francisco Bay Area, he has been exploring new styles and has been studying Larry Ochs "Radar" composition techniques. Denise Berardini of the San Francisco Beacon describes Michael's "talented sax flowing out color and tone with such feeling I haven't heard in quite a while. Michael plays with such dimension and flavor, that it sets (his) sound apart from the rest." Uncompromising, fiery, complex, passionate, and cathartic is how the All Music Guide labeled Michael's playing on "**SEARCHING**" by Cooke Quartet, "**Statements**" by Michael Cooke and "**The Is**" by CKW Trio.

A world-class trombonist Jen Baker's creative identity has no boundaries. She has spread her talents out over many genres of music, including classical symphonic, Renaissance, alternative/hard rock, free jazz/free improvisation, Gregorian chant, and new music. She is involved in expanding the traditional repertoire and usage of the trombone with particular regard to theatrical solos. She received degrees in music performance from Interlochen Arts Academy, Oberlin Conservatory, and Mills College. The San Francisco *Classical Voice* says that Jen's concerts are "...performed with brilliant mastery and virtuosity."

"Shoko Hikage, koto player extraordinaire will take you through the universe and beyond on her strings of sound. From Cherry Blossoms to John Cage, Shoko's performances will make you hear things you never even dream before." ---Lynda Hess, Artbeat. Shoko studied the koto with Chizuga Kimura, 2nd IEMOTO Seiga Adachi, 3rd IEMOTO Seiga Adachi of the Ikuta-ryu Sokyoku Seigen Kai. She graduated from Takasaki College with a major in koto music, and was immediately accepted as a special research student in Sawai Koto School where she subsequently received her master's certificate. Shoko moved to Honolulu to teach at the Sawai Koto Kai Hawaii. There, she held her first American solo recital at the Honolulu Academy of Arts Theater as part of the "New Music Across America" series. Shoko now lives in San Francisco, where she continues her pursuits in improvisational music and expanding the possibilities of the koto.

For over 15 years cellist Alex Kelly has been performing and recording a wide variety of Classical, non-Classical, and World Music styles. He has several graduate degrees in music, including a D.M.A. in cello performance, and was a member of the Wichita and Eugene Symphonies, the New Pickle Circus, and the Hundredth Monkey Ensemble. Alex's versatility is demonstrated in a variety of styles, which range Renaissance to Romantic, from avant-garde to rock. Alex frequently performs with Baroque cello, and with electric cello (enhanced with loop pedals and laptops). He is a classical musician as well as improviser and a jazz and rock musician. Alex has premiered over one hundred solo and chamber works. His other interests include conducting, electronic music, and ethnomusicology. Currently, he can be heard in performance with Joan Jeanreud (former cellist of the Kronos Quartet), the Drescher Ensemble, the CKW Trio, and "You Said Saturday."

Timothy Orr, while at Wesleyan University, studied drums with Edward Blackwell who pointed Tim in the direction of acoustic avant-garde music. Incorporating influences from all eras of jazz, rock and improvised music, Tim's sound balances time and tempo playing mixed with the explosive energy from the bop and free jazz eras, the sonic organization of contemporary classical music and the creative blurring freedom of spontaneous composition. Tim has played in a number of zydeco bands on both coasts, and in 2006 contributed to the soundtrack for Nasri Zacharia's film, "The Tale of the Three Mohammeds". Tim has also cultivated a career in the music industry and has held positions at Virgin, TVT, Arkadia Records, Jazz In Flight, the Brubeck Institute, and the Monterey Jazz Festival. He is a journalist for both DRUM! and Traps Magazine, and is the driving force behind CQ.

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The record brims with pugnacious loquacity alternated with spiritual depth and inquisitive-minded playfulness, helped by the strange timbral juxtapositions of the ensemble. The instrumentalists know their chops inside and out but never for a moment the music sounds manufactured, getting its energy from the very interplay that these akin souls are able to continuously generate and aliment with what I'd call "devotional fantasy".

- Massimo Ricci - Touching Extremes, May, 2007

Hey, great trio. The combination is really a good one for generating ideas and the gut guy can really play...

- Larry Ochs, ROVA Quartet

The San Francisco-based CKW Trio is an ambitious bunch who mix a variety of influences, both musical and cultural, and choose an unusual instrumental mix to make music that is very much in their own image.

- Jay Collins -One Final Note, 11 January 2005



The instrumental album was recorded earlier this year, and it has a truly unique sound. CKW Trio involves history, math, & science lessons — without lyrics — and would have made advanced theoretical physics tolerable in college!

- Risa Dotson -Eugene Weekly, Vol. 2004 No. 49, December 2004



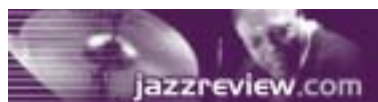
In twelve finely honed compositions, the absence of strongly defined diatonic chord sequences yields improvisations of tremendous space and depth. Cooke's rare ability to think "outside the box" reminds us that Jazz, in its best incarnation, is the sound of surprise. To be sure, Cooke's horizontal, tonal-center based approach reflects the influence of Eric Dolphy, Ornette Coleman, and other sonic innovators. However, these powerful forces have been internalized to the extent that Cooke sounds like no one else. All in all, this is an excellent session.

- James D. Armstrong, Jr., Editor, Music in Transition, Jazz Now October 2002

CKW clearly can go anywhere they like after this. Or they can go everywhere at once. Hard to book that trip on Amtrak, but it's doable. Try this; it's a humorous and accomplished journey into the not-too distant present. Music that, as the title says, simply 'is.' -Kenneth Egbert, Jazz Now February 2005



He presents each solo as a logical sequence of phrases rolling up into an integrated whole the flows as would a semi-swift current in a stream.....Cooke is innovative stamping each selection with his own voice and personalized style that depicts the path but does not clone any of the related styles. His infusion of multiple layers of instrumentation and sonic variations keeps the music challenging while providing all the ingredients for a diversified and well-rounded expedition. - Frank Rubolino, Cadence August 2002



Michael Cooke definitely has a lot to say and the multifarious talents to make you listen. If this CD doesn't get your attention, you are probably deaf. - Ted Kane, jazzreview.com September 2002

[The] multi-reed player and composer Michael Cooke leads a quintet with a highly unlikely instrumentation through seven original compositions that draw from a dizzyingly eclectic array of source materials... ethnic, classical, jazz, and free improv elements together in surprisingly cohesive fashion. -Dave Wayne, jazzreview.com April 2007

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