



Allegory
Adam Rogers (Criss Cross)
by Sean Fitzell

After establishing a solid reputation as part of the fusion collective Lost Tribe and as a sideman with the likes of Michael and Randy Brecker, Ravi Coltrane, and others, guitarist Adam Rogers is flexing his considerable chops as a leader. *Allegory*, his sophomore effort, adds tenor saxophonist Chris Potter to Rogers' quartet with pianist Edward Simon, bassist Scott Colley, and drummer Clarence Penn. It features ten original compositions that display Rogers' quirky, syncopated melodies and clean, fluid guitar style over driving (often odd-time) rhythms.

Potter's saxophone adds weight to the melodies, many of them played in unison with Rogers. The arrangements are straight ahead with pronounced heads and solo sections. But the interplay between the musicians and their improvisatory abilities keeps things unpredictable. On "Phrygia", Colley plays a thematic bass solo over the Eastern-like changes, and Potter blisters through the upper registers of the tenor during his lead, prodded by the flourishes of Penn. "Genghis" also features a guitar-saxophone melody, which slowly unfolds over a plodding, funky groove. Rogers displays his classical guitar technique on "Red Leaves", a spacious ballad that also features a lyrical bass solo. "Angle of Repose" is another unhurried piece with room for the musicians to explore the sparse melodic movement. Conversely, "Cleveland" is an energetic piece with melodic twists and turns that the musicians solo over adeptly.

To celebrate the release of *Allegory*, Rogers performed two sold-out sets at the Jazz Gallery last month. Bassist James Genus and drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts provided the rhythm for him and Potter. As on the CD, "Confluence" kicked things off and Watts' relentless ride-cymbal propelled Rogers' first solo. Watts and Potter had several spirited exchanges and the drummer seemed to push the saxophonist to dig deeper into the tunes - and Potter ably accepted the challenge. The bluesy vamp "Purpose" got an especially raucous workout, highlighted by Watts' only solo of the first set. The show had raw, kinetic energy often originating with the rhythm section, which provided a solid foundation for the soloists.

The crowd's approval and the solid tunes on *Allegory* show that Rogers has developed nicely into the role of leader and suggests a promising future.

For more information visit www.crisscrossjazz.com. Rogers