

REBEL EXTRAVAGANZA

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ALBUM REVIEW: KILTER – AXIOM

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In the interest of full disclosure, let's be clear. I know as much about the inner workings of jazz as you do about what I had for breakfast, and, by and large, I feel that it's a joke I'll never get the punchline of. It's math masquerading (mathsquering?) as music, and I never had a head for numbers, so...

On the other hand, what this *does* do is free me up to enjoy – or not – the style on a purely visceral/emotional level. Either it speaks to me, or it doesn't, and there's literally zero historical context from which I approach such music. *Axiom* is the first full-length by Brooklyn's KILTER, and its three members have individually done session/guest work with by my count around a billion artists, of which I recognize three (John Zorn, Trey Spruance and IMPERIAL TRIUMPHANT, for those who care).

All this is pushed aside, though, which the lumbering, thunderous 'Ax And Spear' implodes your aural cavity, for those of us unfortunate enough to be listening through headphones and at high volume. The sax of Edward Rosenberg III blisters the air, while the rhythm section of Laurent David and Kenny Grobowski [bass, drums respectively] strikes true with the intensity of a cue ball in a gym sock, an ideal introduction to both band and album.

'Beasts Of Summation (Intro/Outro)' are smoky speakeasy crawls, bookending 'Out Of Kilter', which starts off with the feeling of coming doom ala the Jaws theme, soon enough devolving (evolving, revolving?) into a dark carnival atmosphere, vocally reminiscent of some of DIABLO SWING ORCHESTRA's more straightforward compositions, all the while Grobowski proving himself a master of off-kilter (see what I did there?) time signatures. After listening to his work over the course of *Axiom*, I have a new respect for drummers as the workhorses of the jazz trio, considering the effort put in not only to hear where the music *is*, but where it may end up in the next second.

'Vandermeer' slinks and slithers along, nearly jaunty, the sonic portrait of a pimp walk, the chaos-brewed 'Kafkanated' and sparse 'Pitiless Garment' ushering us along to the climax of 'Spherical Bastards'. The finale of an album like this is of most import, and, in this case, does its job admirably, a slide show of the past 45 minutes. I'm still not sold on jazz. But I'm on board with *Axiom*, and more than likely wherever KILTER goes from here.

Review By: Lord Randall

KILTER

Axiom

Independent

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