

## Hear This

**Saxophonist Patrick Cress' combo Telepathy is onto something special, if not extrasensory.**

BY SAM PRESTIANNI

The best jazz improvisers bring a kind of sixth sense to the stage that enables them to meet the ever-shifting challenges of in-the-moment musicmaking. Some call this perceptual power intuition. Others speak of the phenomenon in terms of a spiritual connection. Twentysomething saxophonist Patrick Cress makes his case by dubbing his group Telepathy. Although the notion of mind-reading your bandmates' every move is more often a lofty ambition than a standard approach, even among veteran players, Cress' eponymous CD debut, set to be released in the next month or so, shows that he's onto something special, if not extrasensory.

His dynamic combo with clarinetist Aaron Novik, drummer Tim Bulkley, and bassist Joe Lewis boasts one of the freshest sounds in town. Pairing the energized swing of hard bop with the inventive harmonies and rhythms of the avant-garde, Telepathy plays jazz like it was meant to be played -- with composed abandon. Cress' tunes give the musicians sturdy yet flexible structures for letting loose with propulsive, unified fireworks.

On "Darkness Prevails," a muscular Mingus-like groove, the rhythm section is both locked and loose, which provides an ideal framework for the horns to soar. On "Predicate," a simple series of variations on the opening theme develops into an unexpectedly meaty mix with the horns punching fat notes in and out of the syncopated beats. Whether waxing lyrical on the Ornette Coleman classic "Lonely Woman," or delving into dense abstraction on "Descension Into Madness," the individuals in Telepathy are clearly working as one toward a common goal.

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