

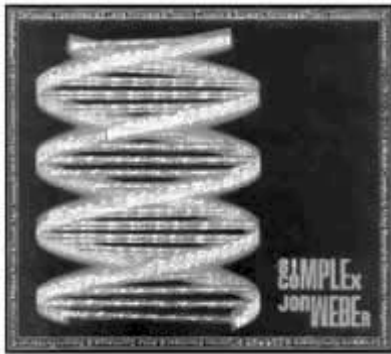
# ΑΠΟΨΗ

**MUSIC - MONDAY JANUARY 7, 2005**

**SYROS, GREECE**

## **SIMPLE COMPLEX - 2ndCenturyJazz Records**

Meet JON WEBER, one of the up-and-coming jazz names who excelled in 2004.



Jon Weber's fame may just be a matter of time. The tall 42 year old pianist with the long braid is not only a pure virtuoso with deep musical knowledge (although he is self-taught) and extraordinary memory (his repertoire includes countless tunes), but he is also a very talented composer whose music may be complex but can also be easily approachable by the listener. For the listener, what matters most are not the elaborate arrangements and harmonies nor the chord progressions but the natural and direct way that the music reaches his ears. That's exactly what the album's title («SIMPLE COMPLEX») implies; an album that offers Weber the opportunity to make the big step forward to wider recognition, that's for sure.

The long list of big names (vibraphonist Gary Burton, trumpeters Roy Hargrove and Diego Urcola, saxophonist Eric Alexander, bassists Avishai Cohen, N.H.Ø. Pedersen and Peter Washington and vocalist Kurt Elling) helps a lot. Sometimes, quality musicians are not enough to make a good album. Also essential are the right compositions, the tightness and harmonization, the chemistry as we call it. «SIMPLE COMPLEX» wonderfully combines all these qualities. Weber's compositions are strong and mature despite the fact that most of them were composed when he was a teenager. Some of the tracks sound like they were composed for the musicians involved. The soft-toned «While She's Dreaming» fits perfectly with Paul McCandless' (Oregon) oboe, the Coltraneish «Is It Only Me?» is ideal for Kurt Elling's voice and the melodic bossa «Jolie» matches with Gary Burton's style. With a range that spans from breathtaking harmonic and rhythmic changes («Drastic Steps», «Simple Complex») to the 60's simple groove atmosphere («Mister Kleckley»), Weber works more as a leader and as a composer and less as a virtuoso (although he has the proper skills and facility to do so) and, and this is one of the main reasons for «SIMPLE COMPLEX's» success.



## **- JON WEBER -**

**talks about his influences sharing thoughts about composing and improvisation and the musicians who participated in the recording of «SIMPLE COMPLEX.»**

«I wrote most of these tunes when I was a teenager. As an admirer of Coltrane, Hancock, Shorter, Miles, Corea, Tyner, Evans, Tatum, Tristano, Jarrett, if my composing or improvising borrows the style and manner of any particular artist, I hope that it is Wayne Shorter. Wayne said that 'Composition is improvising in slow motion, and improvisation is composition in fast motion.' While composing, (improvising in slow motion), you can create harmony and rhythm as complex as you'd like. However, as you speed up toward real-time, you need practice and discipline to maintain musicality while improvising on rapidly-moving chord changes or polyrhythmic grooves. I really admire Eric (Alexander), Gary (Burton), Diego (Urcola), Mark (Walker), Niels (Pedersen), Rubén (Alvarez), Avishai (Cohen), Matt (Clohesy), Peter (Washington) and Roy (Hargrove) for

each bringing their unique improvisational aesthetic and cerebral discipline to my brand of writing. I called them because I knew their advanced level of musicianship, discipline and spontaneity would elevate my music to a special life. When people who claim not to be jazz enthusiasts feel the joy and unpredictability in my compositions and arrangements, I am ecstatic. Music is the most miraculous form of human expression, and I am blessed to be a musician.»