

CD Reviews: NoReduce from Switzerland

25.08.2012 by Sohrabeyal Category [CD Review](#)

Text by Matt Cole



Artist: NoReduce **Title:** Jaywalkin' **Label:** nWog Records **Genre:** jazz

NoReduce's lineup consists of **Raffaele Bossard** on bass, **Dave Gisler** on guitar, and **Christoph Irrniger** on saxophone in addition to drummer **Nasheet Waits**, and the album presents songs that came into existence in the spring of 2011 in New York, while the Swiss contingent of the band was living there.

Individually, all of the musicians give fine performances. Irrniger's saxophone ranges from breathy long tones, to sweet and melodic playing, and out into free; all the while staying nicely lyrical. Gisler's guitar stretches over an impressive swath of sonic territory, sounding like a '50s or '60s science fiction keyboard (or theramin) at certain points (notably in the beginning of "Endangered," the album's opener), and shredding distorted solos only a song later in "The Slope" (named for Park Slope, Brooklyn). Likewise, Bossard's bass is everywhere it needs to be, whether playing chordal tones, counterpoint, lovely overtones and pedals, or just providing a proper funky and soulful bottom. And while I'm sure a book could (and someday likely will) be written on Waits' fine playing, on this particular album I noticed several things in particular: he manages to simultaneously hit the right points hard enough while adding tasteful and yet busy fills that impel the band without distracting the listener; he is one of the most musical drummers I can think of (this is especially noticeable on the track "Morningside Road"); and at one point (during "The Mouse") his playing sounded almost like a 2-part invention by Bach, translated for a drum kit.

However, the real strength of this album is the way these individually superior performances blend together into a sound that is very tight and together, and is very, very diverse in its sources yet creates a unified whole that is something more. Many of the songs feature sharp transitions between sections/feels that come off very smoothly, to the point that they sound natural and even easy, and not at all awkward; on "Morningside Road," they go from a sweet lyrical sax-led section to a funky, moving section with hints of New Orleans in the drums, and then back without missing a step. They blend polyrhythms well, notably in "Playground," and manage to meld a marching rhythm with more angular sounds in the title track, "Jaywalkin'." Even when they sound loose, they manage to stay tightly together; the album's closer "The House" at one point becomes almost a drunken blues-rock without losing underlying control, and are able to make a rhythmic wobble precess in "Faraway...But Close Enough."

Some other observations: During the beginning of "Faraway...," which comes on like a tornado, I noted that there can be a fine line between noodling over each other , and playing freely together while going somewhere, and this band is firmly on the right side of the line. And by the 5th Song, "Dope Factory," it was impossible not to observe that this No Reduce has a very large and well-deployed sonic palette.

The press release sent out with this album notes New York City's position as a jazz mecca; a nexus for the many vital nodes in the greater jazz world. The Big Apple is also a mecca for many other forms of music, and NoReduce is a very nice coming-together of both jazz cats from across oceans, and a lot of other musical influences besides jazz. As the Duke himself would say, this is just *good* music.

NoReduce has 5 upcoming performances in NYC & Pittsburgh in September.

18.9. Douglass St. Music Collective, Brooklyn/NY

19.9. Seeds, Brooklyn, Brooklyn/NY

20.9. The Shrine, NYC

21.9. Ibeam, Brooklyn/NY

22.9. Dance Alloy Theater, Pittsburgh/PA