

DownBeat Jazz Magazine (February 2015)

Peter Madsen's CIA Trio

Elvis Never Left The Building

PLAYSCAPE RECORDINGS

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There's a worry that an album of Elvis Presley covers could get real hokey in a hurry. Fortunately, pianist Peter Madsen and his CIA trio have just as many flourishes as The King himself. Madsen's arrangements detangle these songs deftly, making them new. They aren't bluesy rock songs anymore, but more akin to Herbie Hancock's approach to rock songs in 1995's *The New Standard*. Madsen, bassist Herwig Hammerl and percussionist Alfred Vogel get knee-deep in it and yield great results.

The opener, "Devil In Disguise," indicates that this album isn't going to be conventional. This is certainly a jazz trio album, and they're covering what should be rock standards, but they're arranged like contemporary jazz tunes. Vogel is downright zippy on these songs, with percussion on "Hound Dog" and "Can't Help Falling In Love" that add a special depth, telling stories and building worlds as much as he's part of a trio making music. Hammerl maintains a nice, lyrical backbone and unwinds well in his solos. This style of play isn't exactly rooted in the American tradition of jazz, but there's something indescribable that makes these arrangements and this instrumentation compelling. Madsen exhibits in these arrangements not only an appreciation of Presley's music, but the inherent understanding that the work remains relevant if made anew. It's a lyrical approach to the piano trio model that feels modern and inviting. —*Anthony Dean-Harris*

Elvis Never Left The Building: Devil In Disguise; Love Me Tender; Suspicious Minds; Jailhouse Rock; Hound Dog; All Shook Up; Surrender; Heartbreak Hotel; Can't Help Falling In Love; Don't Be Cruel. (68:31)

Personnel: Peter Madsen, piano; Herwig Hammerl, double bass; Alfred Vogel, drums/ percussion.