

**The Guest House**  
Trio M (Enja)  
by Sean O'Connell

Trio M is the best kind of leaderless trio. Each member composes, each member solos and when they play live even the stage patter is shared. For their second album pianist Myra Melford, bassist Mark Dresser and drummer Matt Wilson have combined for a cohesive collaboration that shows their ease of interaction.

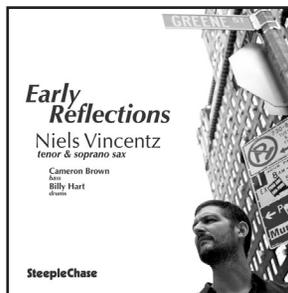
The album opens with the cinematic title track. Wilson's drums shuffle behind Melford's montuno before making way for a plunking solo by Dresser. His bass pops and slides with funky confidence before Melford provides a spiraling solo of her own. Wilson's playful homage to Don Knotts leaves a lot of space for his drums to fill in around Melford's high-low phrases. Her two-handed solo becomes an intense conversation with stuttering snare. Wilson's chamber ballad "Hope (for the Cause)" puts Dresser and Melford on the same path, interacting sweetly and slowly over subdued brushes. Melford's "The Promised Land" turns up the heat with a strong backbeat. Melford employs her whole forearm to play a frenetic solo that assaults the piano from top to bottom.

The 12-minute Dresser composition "Tele Mojo" incorporates a treated piano that knocks like a

woodpecker on a vibraphone. Melford's extended solo builds into an almost bluesy cadence, her subtle left-hand comping drawing the most from her higher-register soloing. Dresser offers a quiet solo before Melford makes a hectic return, playing cat and mouse across the keyboard. "Even Birds Have Homes (to Return to)" is Melford's homage to Iraqi poet Muhammad Mahdi Al-Jawahiri. Wilson's tuned bells ring over Dresser's cascading bowed strings while Melford provides an introspective solo. The album closes with Dresser's "Ekoneni", the trio at their most upbeat, bouncing through a near calypso that draws percussive sounds from everybody's instruments.

With the three bandmembers immensely busy and scattered across the US, it is a rare treat for them to meet, hence the five-year gap between albums. Here's hoping the next one comes in less time than that.

For more information, visit [enjarecords.com](http://enjarecords.com). This group is at *The Kitano Apr. 7th*. See Calendar.



**Early Reflections**  
Niels Vincentz (SteepleChase)  
by Ken Dryden

Born to Danish parents temporarily in the US, Niels Vincentz lived in his birth country for a few years but

returned to Denmark in 2003, where he has been working with small groups and big bands. Now in his 40s, Vincentz' just-released debut recording is a trio date (recorded in 1999) with two veterans: bassist Cameron Brown and drummer Billy Hart (who utilizes brushes throughout much of the session).

Vincentz' big-toned tenor is buoyed by his seasoned rhythm section, especially in the bluesy, strolling setting of the Victor Schertzinger-Johnny Mercer standard ballad "I Remember You", which also includes an intricate bass solo. Vincentz switches to soprano sax for a playful setting of the Jule Styne-Sammy Cahn gem "It's You Or No One", in which he never runs out of steam in his creative solo. He's back on tenor for Coltrane's infrequently recorded "26-2", where the composer's influence is palpable.

The saxophonist penned the rest of the material for this session. The infectious postbop vehicle "Scandicci" is dedicated to the late soprano sax great Steve Lacy, though the composer plays it on tenor, with Brown's sterling work prominent throughout the track. "Boy's Birthday" is introduced by Brown and Hart, setting up a perky calypso rhythm as Vincentz plays a vocal-like melody before launching into his adventurous improvisation on soprano. Returning to tenor, Vincentz has the rhythm section set up "Little Sister", a loping waltz with plenty of twists, all navigated with ease by the trio. The joyful "Happy Medium" sounds like it could have been written in the early '60s, though there's nothing old-fashioned about this performance. "Reaching" is another loping tune, with Vincentz playing a spacious, wistful soprano over the hip, funky rhythm section.

For more information, visit [steeplechase.dk](http://steeplechase.dk). Vincentz is at *Zeb's Apr. 13th*. See Calendar.

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