

What the press has said about:

ERGO

QUALITY ANATOMICAL MUSIC SINCE 2005

ACTUATOR 2006

Lineup: Brett Sroka: trombone, computer; Carl Maguire: Rhodes electric piano, Prophet synthesizer, electronic effects; Damion Reed: drum

"BEST DEBUT: Ergo *Quality Anatomical Music*" – **Best Of 2006 List, All About Jazz-New York**

". . . explores the intersections of electronic music, Jazz improvisation, and smart Rock bands like Radiohead or Sigur Ros. . . Sroka has huge ears and catholic tastes, using these to good effect on this moody and memorable recording."

– **Jason Bivins, Cadence Magazine**

"Solid musicianship and a vision are what ERGO is all about, and they absolutely are on to something very special."

– **Steve Caputo, Inside Connection Magazine**

"Sroka is more interested in charting new musical territory than simply revisiting the traditions of J.J. Johnson."

– **Mike Shanley, JazzTimes**

". . . fully incorporates other-worldly aspects of electronica, with Crimonesque washes and colors that almost put you in mind of King Crimson. The three-piece band sounds much bigger than it actually is."

– **J. C. Lockwood, The Merrimack River Current** (Northern Massachusetts)

"Pianist Carl Maguire's debut solo release for the German "Between the Lines" record titled "Floriculture" was one of the true modern jazz surprises of 2006. Yet, with this trio effort recorded in New York City, we are presented with a horse of a different color. Here, Brett Sroka mingles largely; probing trombone lines with Maguire's synth and electric keyboard treatments. It's a sinuous blend of subtle effects, firmed up by Damion Reed's asymmetrical rhythmic maneuvers.

And for music of this ilk – where electronics are often abused or overwrought – this trio professes a seamless electro-improv alignment of the musical spirits. Some of these works sport a chromatic edge, whereas gently rolling hills, spiked with dynamically-oriented peaks present a rather bizarre, yet irrefutably enticing vista. They soar into the red zone every so often, but the music crosses that indefinable frontier, teeming with intuitive experimentation, probing jazz dialogues and EFX-drenched avant-garde stylizations. Uncannily cohesive and an enormously compelling listening experience... " – **Glenn Astarita, Ejazznews.Com**, September 20, 2006

"...this music is not anything that you might hear at Jazz at Lincoln Center, or your local mainstream radio station, for that matter. Labels are only as good as the information they provide, so saying it is on the "fringes of jazz" or "beyond jazz" is a bit meaningless, but suffice it to say that there are a lot of electronics beyond what a Fender Rhodes can do, and there is nothing remotely close to a 32-bar AABA structure to be found here.

You are entering a sonic universe, but more importantly, a music which reveals itself as most definitely structured and well thought out. . . .memorable themes which develop over time. Each track has a life cycle which carries it forward...rather than just spacing or tripping out duration...

The action is not in the form of soloing in the normal sense, but rather a collage of sounds, with Maguire's keyboards and synthesizer creating a bottomless ocean... Within this dense flux floats Sroka's trombone...

Sroka's trombone rarely sounds immediately recognizable as such...

Reid's drumming is everywhere, and he provides a kind of glue which holds things together. . . .a layer of percussion...

Many types of jazz allow you to lose yourself within them, and *Quality Anatomical Music Since 2005* most certainly does that, but from quite a different angle. Recommended."

– **Budd Kopman, All About Jazz**, September 06, 2006

"2006 playlist: We listen to a lot of music, privy as we are to advance releases and publicity teases, so narrowing the field down to our most-played 30 albums is actually quite a winnowing. . . Here's what filled our ears this year. . .

Ergo – *Quality Anatomical Music Since 2005* (Actuator). Experimental electronic music from Brooklyn by way of Sun Ra. Band goals include "trying to reconcile the 600 years of technology between trombone and computer."

– **Roberto Friedman, Bay Area Reporter** (San Francisco)

"Two strong showings by pianist/keyboardist Carl Maguire: the quartet release *Floriculture* (Challenge) and the experimental electronica of the trio Ergo" - **David Adler**

". . . judging from a recent set at the Cornelia Street Café in Manhattan Sroka's music is more interesting than ever. The improvisation stretches more readily in different directions with fewer individuals on the bandstand"

– **Thomas Staudter, The Gazette** (Westchester County, NY)

**Miscellaneous press quotes on Ergo:**

"Ergo's trombonist Brett Sroka, keyboardist Carl Maguire and drummer Shawn Baltazor are all part of a generation for which Autechre and Sigur Ros are as pressing concerns as Armstrong and Sun Ra. That's certainly evident in the band's timbral sophistication, spacey contours and slinky grooves."

– **Steve Smith, Time Out, New York**

"The trombonist Brett Sroka, the keyboardist Carl Maguire and the drummer Shawn Baltazor make up this atmospheric collective, which takes full advantage of electronic programming and cross-genre appropriation... ."

– **Nate Chinen**, *The New York Times*, April 23, 2009

"An Ellington fiend who likes to get his computerized space-dub on, the trombonist has lots of sound sculpture in him. His rather dramatic art music is both texturally rich and compositionally engaging."

– **Jim Macnie**, *The Village Voice*

"...Lexington native Brett Sroka has found a way to turn the trombone into the coolest instrument since the bass clarinet. He plays in a band called Ergo, which blends blip-hop electronica with jazz. This trio consists of drums, keyboards, and Sroka's unruly trombone. Sure, we'll bet he looks cool playing his electronic music... You can see Ergo tonight..."

– **Christopher Muther**, "editor's picks," *The Boston Globe*, February 26, 2004

"The city has always been known for its under-the-radar jazz talent. This gig — happening tonight only — is a great example of how substantial that talent can be... Here's a great chance to check Sroka's dynamic and distinguished ideas in action, while catching a glimpse of the underground."

– **John McCormick**, *Flavorpill.Net*