

**Meantime****Frank Kimbrough**

Newvelle Records NV001LP

180g

Newvelle Records is a new label devoted to recently recorded jazz released exclusively on vinyl. Newvelle launched itself as a crowdfunding project, establishing a model for the recording artists to retain ownership and control of their work. Newvelle echoes what Coup d'Archet has been doing for some time—packaging fine LP pressings in deluxe packages with gorgeous artwork to deliver an aesthetically unique package. Where Newvelle departs from Coup d'Archet is its subscription-based model. You can't simply walk into a record store, or call up your online LP source of choice and order a copy of Meantime. You must commit to a series of six LPs at a cost of £320, €450, or \$375 outside the Euro zone. These prices increase as the series progresses, rewarding those who commit early (the quoted prices reflect a first bump because of this release).

While this may seem steep to those hoping to get their music free over the Internet, it seems a fair price if the music lives up to the level of quality exhibited by the presentation. Consider the packaging—the first thing you notice is the sheer beauty of the cover. Instead of the traditional LP cover art, with a photo of the artist and liner notes about the music, the Newvelle team elected to use the cover as a canvas to display artwork. For the first six releases, photographer Bernard Plossu's extensive catalog

was used. A black and white photo shares the front cover only with Frank Kimbrough's name and nothing else, with the album title displayed on the spine. Inside the foldout cover is a gorgeous colour photo. The back cover displays the artist's names and the list of compositions, with direction to Newvelle's website for further "liner notes". The inner sleeve reproduces a poem by Tracy K. Smith. The typography, paper quality and printing are all on the same high artistic level, recalling the days of printing presses and fine bindings. The album cover is slightly larger than a standard cover, making removal of the LP pain free and lessening the odds of split seams.

At the end of the day, inspired photographic covers and handmade quality packaging will not entice jazz music consumers to cross back over the Rubicon from lower quality and sometimes low cost digital delivery solutions to vinyl. That requires high quality music and sound. Newvelle's line up of talent for its first six records is absolutely stellar. In addition to this first release, they have recorded albums by Jack DeJohnette, Noah Preminger (with Ben Monder, John Patitucci, and Billy Hart), the Don Friedman Trio, the Ben Allison Trio, and Leo Genovese, featuring Esperanza Spalding and Jack DeJohnette—each and every combination of artists promising music worth hearing over and over again. This Kimbrough quintet includes Andy Zimmerman on tenor sax, Chris van Voorst van Beest on Bass, R.J. Miller on drums, and Riley Mulherkar on trumpet. Kimbrough's elegant playing

clearly shows his Herbie Nichols roots and his young group of sidemen hang with his deceptively simple rhythms to turn in a slow to mid tempo session that feels more European (think ECM) than New York.

Elan Mehler, one of the founding members of Newvelle, is a pianist and composer who spent 12 years in New York before relocating to Paris, and in so doing forged relationships with most of the artists featured on Newvelle. He studied with Kimbrough at NYU and fell under his spell. Kimbrough, born in 1956, is an elder statesman of jazz's regeneration as the titans of the classic jazz era leave us. He began his recording career in 1988 on Mapleshade, an 'audiophile' label, with *Lonely Woman*. Recording for Palmetto Records for over a decade now, he has garnered excellent reviews for his adventurous approach to music, both in the selection of material and execution of it.

The music was recorded by Marc Urselli at Eastside Sound in New York in December 2014, digitally recorded at 24 bit 88.2kHz and mixed to vinyl using an analogue console. The LP is pressed on clear 180-gram vinyl at MPO in France. The sound combines great dynamics and excellent detail. More importantly, the music and sound is good enough to demand repeated listening. Highly recommended. **DD**

RECORDING
MUSIC

