

Lucid Culture

GREAT MUSIC THAT'S NOT
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Bobby Avey Makes an Auspicious Debut

Pianist **Bobby Avey's** debut album *A New Face* instantly elevates him into the ranks of formidable 21st century players like **Vijay Iyer**, **Gerald Clayton**, and **Marc Cary**. Intense, forceful and fearless, Avey has a powerful lefthand like Kenny Barron, a fondness for ominous modal excursions and a vivid sense of melody that hovers between the noir, the Romantics and Olivier Messiaen at his most otherworldly. Along with the other members of his trio, bassist **Thomson Kneeland** and drummer **Jordan Pearlson**, this album features the always estimable **Dave Liebman** guesting on soprano and tenor sax on four tracks. The chemistry between players matches the quality of the compositions: if there's been a better jazz debut album this year, we haven't heard it.

The opening track, *Late November* begins with a machine-gun circular motif that Avey eventually leaves to the bass and drums and hovers over with a noirish glimmer – and then takes it down to a minefield of modal incisions on the third verse. Much of this album has a bracing third-stream feel and this is a prime example. Meanwhile, throughout most of the song, Pearlson and Kneeland lock in and hammer with Avey, something they do with considerable relish throughout the album. The second cut, *In Retreat* is a potently evocative, bitter, brooding ballad, Liebman adding understated grey tones over Avey's richly melodic crescendos, agitated but completely in control. Kneeland takes it out into the depths with a woundedly syncopated solo. *Delusion* is a study in understated chromatics and rhythmic shifts, another Kneeland solo early on its quiet highlight. The title track kicks off with a tense, macabre-tinged bass solo which Avey expands eerily – it's a Sam Fuller film played out in the churchyard at Saint-Sulpice, Liebman playing the role of semi-friendly ghost.

After the stalker intro of *Less is Less Than Half*, the drums prowl around Avey's minimalism, building to a crashing McCoy Tyner style lefthand hook that winds up in a hammering, fiery, percussive blaze. By contrast, *Influence*, a duo piece for piano and tenor, shifts between a golden age late 50s vibe and an uneasily unwinding, ripplingly horizontal piano soundscape. The final cuts here reach genuinely majestic heights. *Insight* unfolds with Avey hammering on an insistent staccato pedal note, expands to a chromatic vamp that he roams around, eventually a marvelously terse chromatic bass solo, and then it all comes together, glimmering and intense. Likewise, *Time* unfolding finally throws restraint to the wind after giving Liebman the chance to rove expansively and then finally plunge into the rhythm section's staccato syncopation before Avey and then Pearlson take it all the way up. Avey's ceiling is pretty much as high as he want to go with it. Hope you like traveling, dude.

August 10, 2010 - Posted by [theamyb](#) | [Music](#), [Reviews](#), [jazz](#), [music](#), [concert](#), [review](#) | [Music](#), [jazz](#), [messiaen](#), [gerald clayton](#), [piano jazz](#), [jazz review](#), [album review](#), [music review](#), [jazz piano](#), [McCoy Tyner](#), [third stream](#), [jazz pianist](#), [dave liebman](#), [bobby avey](#), [bobby avey a new face](#), [bobby avey](#)

About

Our mission: to spread the word about great music that's not trendy.

Created in April, 2007 as the online presence for a somewhat notorious, now discontinued music and politics e-zine, Lucid Culture is as much a resource for adventurous fans of music and the arts as it is a necessary antidote to the reactionary, lockstep conformity that pervades much of the blogosphere. We celebrate the kind of edgy creativity that was for centuries part of the public consciousness, but which the entertainment-industrial complex and its evil twin, the corporate media, did their best to push to the fringes. Our goal is to lead the way in returning it to its rightful place in the public eye. If you're really interested, here's a [somewhat tongue-in-cheek interview](#) with one of Lucid Culture's founders.

One of our primary goals is to provide an accurate overview of what's available to audiences in New York, this multicultural city we call home, without stooping to political correctness. We also endeavor to give equal time to women artists without being obvious about it. In addition to live music, we also regularly review cds, art shows and the occasional book, film or DVD. We haven't yet used the blog to post recipes or cute cat pictures, but...you never know.

If you missed American Idol last night and are wondering who got the boot, you won't find the answer here. Nor is this the place to go for the latest news on Aimee Mann or Gogol Bordello, wonderful as they both are. Lucid Culture is where you might discover the next Aimee Mann or Gogol Bordello before they get really popular. Like the music, art and artists we cover here, we fly pretty much under the radar. It gives us a lot of freedom and a certain exclusivity – you might even call it cachet. We're happy to share it with you.

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Lucid Culture offers four essential resources:

- A [NYC live music calendar](#), which when we post it extends several weeks ahead. We've been putting a new one up about once a month, with pretty much daily updates.
- Regular reviews of live shows and albums.
- A fairly comprehensive, detailed, constantly updated guide to [New York area live music venues](#).
- And a [myspace page](#), which we haven't paid much attention to lately, but still encourage you to use as your own personal online listening room. As we continue to discover good bands and artists, we'll add them to the page. We're not on facebook - a presence on that Nazi fascist site would kill any claim to underground cred that we might make. And since we're not located in Iran, where twitter is an essential tool – uh oh, tanks and guns coming over the bridge now, duck! – we haven't signed up for twitter either.

Why the focus on live music, as opposed to recordings? At this point in history, with the internet enabling independent artists to sell directly to the public, the major labels will soon be finished (at least as far as new product is concerned). Likewise, the majority of the indie labels will soon be toast (although there are a few specialty labels who seem certain to continue to thrive). For these reasons, live shows are where pretty much everything is happening right now. By all means, please continue to support your favorite independent bands and artists by buying their albums and merch, if you have the money, and going to their shows.

We also have access to an archive of over a thousand concert reviews dating from the early 1990s, most of which are previously unpublished, which we put up from time to time when we don't have anything new ready to go. If you're a musician, artist, filmmaker, writer, etc. and you think you have something that fans of edgy music and the arts might enjoy, contact us at [lucidculture \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:lucidculture[at]gmail.com).

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