



ANDREW DICKESON ALBUM “GROOVE!”

Reviewed by Eric Myers

Personnel: Andrew Dickeson (drums), Rodney Whitaker (double bass), Wayne Kelly (piano)

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Andrew Dickeson: he has described pianist Wayne Kelly as an “undiscovered genius”... PHOTO CREDIT PETER TEA

In a recent radio interview Sydney drummer Andrew Dickeson described Wayne Kelly as an “undiscovered genius.” While that may be an overstatement, Kelly is certainly a very fine jazz pianist, tucked away in Canberra, out of the limelight. On the evidence of his recorded work I wish his playing could be heard more in Sydney. If he were playing at a nearby jazz club, I’d be there with enthusiasm, expecting the bop idiom to be given a solid workout.



Wayne Kelly: in medium tempos he locks in to the groove beautifully... PHOTO COURTESY ABC JAZZ

Kelly played beautifully two years ago on another session led by Dickeson, the album *Is That So?* which featured American saxophonist Eric Alexander. The repertoires on *Is That So?* and *Groove!* are similar: standards from the Great American Songbook and from jazz composers such as Monk and Ellington. The difference is that *Groove!* is a major step-up for Kelly. In the setting of the piano trio, the spotlight is now squarely on him, and there is nowhere to hide.

Dickeson and American bassist Rodney Whitaker, a great rhythm section, are fairly conservative at this session - sitting back, laying down the time, and providing a perfect springboard for Kelly's substantial talents. The pianist floats on immaculate rhythmic feels, and is given plenty of space in the music to shine.



American bassist Rodney Whitaker: part of a great rhythm section, sitting back, laying down the time, and providing a perfect springboard for Kelly's substantial talents....PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN



Another shot of pianist Wayne Kelly: floating on immaculate rhythmic feels, given plenty of space in the music to shine...

In medium tempos Kelly locks into the groove beautifully. At speed however, (Ellington's *Take The Coltrane*) and also at dead-slow tempos (Ellington's *Creole Love Call* and *Come Sunday*) he is less comfortable, and at times his playing can sound to my ears merely decorative. But, given the album's overall excellence, this is very much a minor quibble.
