

Mitch Kessler: Saxophonist / Composer



Erratica

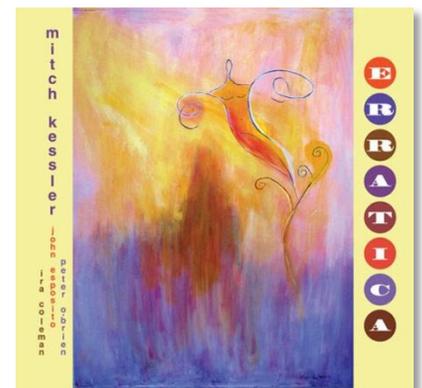
“...technically adventurous as well as arrestingly cerebral. groov[ing] at a high thermometer reading. . . aglow in white heat. . . The ensemble jumps through narrow portals with an abandonment of fear.” - Cheryl K. Symister-Masterson Chronogram

“...marks the long-awaited debut of saxophonist Mitch Kessler....A brilliant beginning, and one to hopefully be followed soon with more great studio work by Kessler.” - Peter Aaron Roll Magazine

“...breathtaking....the sax and piano do an amazing job of shadowing one another, swirling tight lines around that are consistently inter-connected with the immense rhythm team flowing superbly underneath....The interplay between the tenor and the drums is just unbelievable. In a more perfect

world, this disc would be played constantly on WBGO so that it had a chance to be heard and bought by the jazz-loving masses.” - Bruce Lee Gallanter Downtown Music Gallery

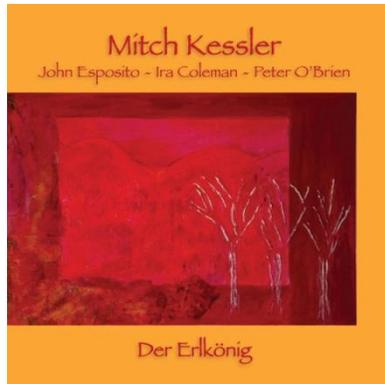
Mitch Kessler grew up in New York City, where he studied saxophone and Jazz improvisation with Billy Kerr before matriculating at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. There, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Jazz Studies and a Master of Arts degree in Composition, studying saxophone with legendary woodwind instructor Joe Allard, composition and orchestration with William Thomas McKinley, and Jazz arranging with Jaki Byard and Roger Ryan. During that period, Mitch performed with Jaki Byard’s Apollo Stompers and the New England Conservatory Jazz Ensemble, as well in small groups in Boston clubs.



[Link to Erratica](#)

After moving to New York State’s Hudson Valley region, Mitch began to collaborate with John Esposito and other artists creatively associated with Sunjump Records. This led to the release in 2009 of his debut album, *Erratica*. A prolific composer, Mitch chose to

present eight of his original compositions on that album, drawing on his arsenal of post-Dolph/Coltrane, Free Jazz, early 20th-century German Expressionism and the Blues. He was accompanied by an acrobatically flexible trio comprised of pianist John Esposito, bassist Ira Coleman and drummer Peter O'Brien.



[Link to Der Erlkonig](#)

Mitch followed *Erratica* with *Der Erlkönig* (2011, Sunjump Records), featuring the same rhythm section and eight more Kessler originals. These included an arresting setting of Göthe's eponymous Gothic poem, with a recitation of it in the original German. Reviewing *Der Erlkönig* in The Downtown Music Gallery, Stephan Moore wrote, "Kessler has again delivered an intricate and creative balance of songwriting and musicianship. . . demonstrat[ing] an immediacy and beauty not heard in American Jazz for a while. . . flow[ing] freely between post-modern structures, spiritual themes and funky syncopations. This will be a real discovery for everyone. Mitch Kessler is well on his way to establishing himself as

a new force on the scene."

In 2011, Mitch played soprano, alto and tenor saxophones, bass clarinet and flute on a recording session Sangeeta Michael Berardi's upcoming Sunjump release, *Mr. P.*, and he appears in filmmaker Burrill Crohn's upcoming documentary on guitarist Berardi's life as a painter/poet/musician. In addition to performing with his quartet, Mitch is preparing for his next CD release and will be playing and recording with the expanded multimedia version of John Esposito's A Book of Five Rings ensemble.

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