

By Bill Milkowski

5. Jean-Michel Pilc

"Giant Steps" (from *Welcome Home*, Dreyfus Jazz). Pilc, piano, Ari Hoenig, drums; François Moutin, bass. Recorded in 2001.

BEFORE

JM: [*Laughs at the intro that juxtaposes Mission Impossible's theme against The Pink Panther's before heading into the familiar theme*] That's cool, man. I could've done without *The Pink Panther* reference myself, but that's very cool. Who is that?

AFTER

JM: That was great. Again, there's a lot of interplay happening here. They're really playing in the moment, not just swinging off a structure in a typical bebop fashion. They're creating as they go along and come up with a different aspect of the structure, which I've found is always the best way to go. So this was fantastic. It's a really fresh arrangement.

BM: I like the openness. It could've been swung or been done Latin-y but he leaves it open, which I dug.

JM: It's what should've happened a while back when the nouveau bebop era hit. This is what I was imagining was going to be happening—sort of taking an avant-garde sensibility and then reinterpreting standards from a fresh viewpoint, improvising using different elements of these great songs rather than just playing the form straight up and blowing all of your licks over the changes. But he has found a very interesting way of looking at the changes from a different perspective.

BM: And that drummer sounds really tight and crisp here. I've heard him before. He's really good. Very nice trio.

Billy Martin, John Medeski and Chris Wood

Medeski, Martin & Wood

JazzTimes

AMERICA'S JAZZ MAGAZINE