

Ken Shimamoto, New York, US:

It's always a thrill to stumble upon a young musician, influenced by but not in thrall to tradition, who's managed to forge an original expression out of the old idioms. One such is pianist-composer Yves Theiler, born Zurich, 1987, who leads a trio with bassist Luca Sisera and drummer Lukas Mantel on *Dance in a Triangle*, their second outing as a unit. As a leader, Theiler is confident enough to feature his men prominently on the lead-off track, "For Bass." Drummer Mantel is definitely a player to watch -- as likely to borrow ideas from his previous career as a hip hop DJ as he is to careen off into orbit like Tony Williams circa *Filles de Kilimanjaro*.

Theiler's compositions have the formal elegance of Herbie Hancock's, as well as more funk and grit than European jazzers often possess. For proof of the former, dip a toe in the title track, where Theiler plays electric piano; for the latter, dive into the mutant fatback R&B groove "Book of Peace." Theiler's technique is impeccable, but never flashy or showy, always serving the demands of the piece first. Every note he and his well-balanced group play demonstrates a rigorous musical intelligence.