

Rob Luft

Riser

EDITION 1095

★★★★½

23-year-old Londoner Rob Luft has delivered the most fully-realized and rewarding debut album from a guitarist-composer since Julian Lage's 2009 outing, *Sounding Point*. Like Lage, Luft was a teen prodigy, performing at age 15 with the National Youth Jazz Orchestra. Eight years later he has concocted a remarkably original statement that highlights his prodigious chops and his singular gifts as a composer-arranger and sonic provocateur. He's backed in his first effort by an accomplished crew of keyboardist Joe Webb, bassist Tom McCredie, drummer Corrie Dick and secret weapon Joe Wright, whose blustery tenor saxophone infuses these 10 tracks with muscularity and daring.

The title track has Luft switching to acoustic guitar and arpeggiating behind Wright's warm-toned tenor before the piece opens up to an infectious West African Highlife feel, with the guitarist cleverly muting his strings for a kind of kora effect.

Luft and Wright unite on some tight unisons on the breezy "Beware," which features a lyrical, cascading solo by the guitarist. "Dust Settles" is Luft's power ballad, replete with req-



uise sparks at the crescendo, and "Shorty" showcases Wright's audacious tenor skronking. The suite-like "We Are All Slowly Leaving" opens on an introspective note with solo acoustic guitar, then gradually builds to an intense dance pulse with some audacious blowing by Wright and some ambient-noise textures by the intrepid guitarist.

—Bill Milkowski

Riser: Night Songs; Riser; Beware; Slow Potion; Different Colours Of Silence; Dust Settles; Shorty; Blue, White And Dreaming; St. Brian I; We Are Slowly Leaving. (49:29)

Personnel: Rob Luft, guitar; Joe Wright, tenor saxophone; Joe Webb, Hammond B-3 organ, piano, harmonium; Tom McCredie, bass; Corrie Dick, drums.

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