



## Papatamus

CYNTHIA HILTS has issued LYRIC FURY. [Blond Coyote Records 888295 484558] A CD of 10 Hilts compositions [75:07] recorded 10/9&10/14. Her group is Lyric Fury [Jack Walrath-tpt, Lily White-as/ts, Lisa Parrott-bs/ss, Deborah Weisz-tbn, Marika Hughes- cello, Ratzo B. Harris-b, Scott Neumann-drm] and is made up of a number of outstanding New York area musicians. The group and strong compositions, make this a solid recording. With the amount of releases flooding the “market” and lack of name recognition, this release will most likely end up being overlooked. (Another case of all things I could be if I were named...). On a few tracks Hilts sings. The songs deal with declarations of peace and love and she delivers them effectively in a halting spoken style. This work often reminds me in spirit of a Mingus group effort in that the individual voice is really secondary to the overall musical designs. There is soloing however and in particular, Walrath, Parrott and Weisz stand out. The instrumental blend and crosstalk, along with the anticipation that the rhythms and directions of the compositions bring about, is reflective of Mingus. There are some mighty players in Lyric Fury and even so they are secondary to the sum of the parts. A wonderful record and some heavy compositions.

I believe CYNTHIA HILTS has only 2 other recordings out: STARS DOWN TO THE GROUND [Montana Artists Refuge Records 01] and SECOND STORY BREEZE [Blond Coyote Records 001]. Hilts' first recording [9/24&25/00] was the result of a 1999 residency at The Montana Artists Refuge, which closed its doors in 2011 after 18 years. This is a fascinating CD which features M.J. Williams who plays trombone, sings and co-produced with Hilts on this CD. She was also one of the four founders of the refuge and is a talented voice too little heard from especially as of late. Also aboard are Craig Hall [gtr], Mike Carey [b], and Brad Edwards [drm]. This a good example of the kind of unfettered artistic creativity that can result at an artist refuge. The 10 compositions [65:51] are all Hilts' originals in music and lyrics and they tell stories. Fortunately a lyric printout for most of the tunes is within the CD notes. I've listened to this music and it takes a few listens to absorb all its messages as much of this music/lyrics induces other memories. A wonderful and evocative production and still fresh 17 years after it was written. I am not sure how available this material is today but if you want to hear something fresh and original seek it out.

From about 2007, Second Story Breeze is the second release by Cynthia Hilts. Here she covers 7 originals along with “Love For Sale”, “My Favorite Things” and “Three Blind Mice” [60:52]. Hilts' singing is limited to “Love For Sale” and “Favorite Things” and 4 of her originals are sung, often in an exaggerated theatrical way. These are the weakest moments for me, others may find it a perfect fit à la Morgana King. Backed by Ron McClure [b] and Jeff Williams [drms], it is the left of center playing that I find most attractive. There is a touch of Monk and, as with the Montana Refuge CD, Mose Allison. A lyric printout on the originals would have been appreciated as it takes a moment to digest the lyrics. Hilts offers a full listening meal.